Welcome to the course!

Ecological concerns have begun to permeate our collective consciousness, and – as the current COVID-19 pandemic has shown us – so has our vulnerability as a species. Ocean acidification, poisoned air, forest clear-cutting, ozone depletion, global climate change, toxic waste sites – the list goes on – all weigh heavily on our personal and intellectual lives. We are part of the planet we are destroying.

This course introduces you to the scope and seriousness of present ecological concerns, and explores some of the prevailing human-nature relationships undergirding both environmental degradation and sustainability.

We will carry out this exploration in part by touching on some of the major writers and classic essays in the field. Class lectures will be online and asynchronous (see explanation next page on what that entails), supplemented by audiovisuals, guest speakers (pre-recorded, available on Quercus) and tutorials.

Course Objectives

The course is intended as a broad-based introduction to the study of the environment. The objectives of the course are:

1) to provide students with a “functional literacy” in some of the foundational ideas and concepts in the study of the environment;

2) to help students gain a greater knowledge of, and appreciation for, the sundry ecological challenges confronting the planet;
3) to create an educational atmosphere that is respectful, challenging, engaging, and informative; and to help students learn to think critically about environmental issues, and to express their ideas clearly and effectively.

Lectures and tutorials

i. The ENV100 (Summer) course will be conducted entirely online. Lectures and tutorials will be conducted asynchronously: this means that you do not need to connect at specific times to access and follow the course (with the exception of one test).

ii. Each 12 noon on the day of the regularly scheduled class (Tuesdays and Thursdays), the recorded lecture will be made available on Quercus in video format complete with slides. You can send questions between lectures via email to the instructor which to which he can respond in subsequent lectures.

iii. Tutorials will be lead by TAs, where they will provide a mixture of online chat rooms, email inquiries, videoed how-to sessions.

iv. You will be required to submit essay-type assignments via Turnitin.

v. Note that for all hand-in times, a 12 noon Eastern Standard Time of the day in question will be assumed.

Course Material

One course book and a collection of readings:


Other mandatory and suggested readings are available through our library system via Quercus.

Accessibility

This is an online version of the course; it will be a new experience for many of us (including the Instructor!) Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course! We will try to accommodate disability/health considerations as much as possible. Should you require accommodations, please feel free to the instructor or TA and/or Accessibility Services at (416) 978 8060; [http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as](http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as).

Course Evaluation

1. Short writing assignment based on readings to ascertain students have read and understood readings; due May 19, worth 15% of total mark
   - This will be done under the direction of the TAs who will offer help in tutorial videos or handouts (asynchronous). To be handed in using Turnitin.

2. Timed Quiz: May 26 (30 minutes online – with 30 questions), worth 20% of total mark
• Multiple choice questions on Quercus covering comprehension of material classes 1-6 that will have to be completed within a single and continuous 30 minute time period after commencing. Two times will be available on this date (earlier and later) to accommodate people in divergent times zones.

3. Mid-term test: due week of June 2; worth **25% of total mark**
   • Short answer and essay components dealing with material from classes 1-8 that will be made available May 28. To be handed in using Turnitin.

4. Final Assessment: post class period, **40% of total mark**
   • Short answer and essay components. Covers material from the whole course. The questions will be posted on Quercus June 11; the assessment will be due June 19. To be handed in using Turnitin.

**lateness: a loss of 1% per day of lateness for assessments 1, 3 and 4.**

**Turnitin**

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism (procedures and codes for doing this will be passed on to students by email). In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site. However, should students choose not to use the Turnitin.com service, they will be required to submit all rough work (all notes demonstrating original drafts).

**Academic Integrity**

Academic misconduct at the University of Toronto is defined by the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. Generally, academic misconduct is any behaviour, intentional or otherwise, that gives a student unearned or unfair advantage in academic work over other students.

The Code outlines the responsibilities of all parties in the teaching and learning relationship, and the ethical principles which characterize the pursuit and transmission of knowledge in the University. All members of the University’s academic community are expected to be familiar with and abide by the regulations set in this Code. Section B of the Code describes specific offences and who is considered a party to these offences. Section C describes the procedures for cases involving students. Appendix C provides the Provost’s guidelines about sanctions when a student is found to have engaged in academic misconduct.

As a student, you alone are responsible for ensuring the integrity of your work and for understanding what constitutes an academic offence. Be sure to inform yourself on what is covered under the Code, and if you are not sure, seek guidance from your professor or TA.

The Code divides academic offences into nine categories:

1. Altering, forging or falsifying documents other than academic records (B.I.1.a)
2. Possession or use of unauthorized aids (B.I.1.b)
3. Impersonation (B.I.1.c)
4. Plagiarism (B.I.1.d)
5. Submission of work for which credit has previously been obtained (B.I.1.e)
6. Submission of work containing purported statement(s) of fact or reference(s) to concocted sources (B.I.1.f)
7. Altering, forging or falsifying an academic record (B.I.3.a)
8. Any other misconduct to obtain academic credit or advantage (B.I.3.b)
9. Assisting another student in committing an offence (B.II.1.a)

Each offence can involve different types of student actions. I encourage you to consult the central U of T Academic Integrity website for examples of what actions can constitute academic misconduct.

Online Communication Policy

Please use email as a professional tool of correspondence that communicates in a respectful manner. Always place the course name and number in the subject heading of your email. Directly address the instructor or TA by name, and always provide your own (full) name as part of your message.

When emailing your instructor or TA, make sure you write "ENV100" in the subject line. All non-emergency questions should go on the COURSE DISCUSSION BOARD on Quercus; The TAs will regularly check the board and will answer your questions there. Remember to read through the discussion board and course announcements to avoid redundancy. Non-emergency emails that are better directed to the discussion board will not receive a reply. The same applies for emails without the course code in the subject. As with email, all communication on the discussion board will follow the same etiquette as outlined above.

Missed Tests / Re-marking Policy – Timeline and Protocol

In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, the University is temporarily suspending the need for a doctor’s note or medical certificate for any absence from academic participation. Please know that you can now use the Absence Declaration for all absences even if the website still refers specifically to COVID-19. You can find the tool on ACORN in the Profile and Settings menu Absence Declaration tool on ACORN.

Make-ups for missed tests will occur later in the term at the discretion of the TA. Students should contact the TA, as soon as possible via email to make the necessary arrangements. Declarations should be submitted and brought to the attention of the TA no later than one week after returning to health and participation in the course. If the student does not come forward with one week, the TA or the instructor may consider a request to extend the deadline, but is under no obligation to do so.

For concerns about the marking of tests, please discuss the matter first with the TA who marked your work. Should you wish your test paper to be remarked for a miscalculation of marks, please contact the TA. For marking of content, you may not simply request that the whole work be re-examined merely because you feel the mark is too low. Please note that in re-examining the work, the TA is free to lower the mark if she/he deems it merits it. If unsatisfied with your mark, it is only after you have
met and discussed your work with the TA who marked your work that you can come to the instructor with your concerns.

**Quercus**

Students are responsible for keeping informed about the course and its content via the course website on Quercus ([https://q.utoronto.ca/](https://q.utoronto.ca/)). All documents and resources required for the course, except for the course textbook, will be accessible through this website.

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What do you think?

Václav Havel, Czech playwright, essayist, poet, dissident and president of Czechoslovakia, 1989-92, wrote: “Hope is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.”

Where do you think we might locate hope today?

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Outline - ENV 100 Introduction to Environmental Studies (Summer 2020)

*All readings will be available through Quercus via the Library Reserves module.*


**PART 1: Revealing what we’ve been doing to the planet and to one another**

**Class 1 (Tuesday May 5)**

*We go over course requirements and goals and begin the semester by introducing dimensions of a defining term for our time: the ‘Anthropocene’.*

**Required readings:**

- “We All Lose in the War against Nature,” by Stephen Scharper, pp. 63-64, in *FES*.

**Suggested reading:**


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*Where do you think we might locate hope today?*
Class 2 (Thursday May 7)

From its earliest (and heroic) messenger, Rachel Carson, to contemporary scientific frameworks all sounding environmental alarm bells, we continue to learn about this epoch of humans altering nature through chemicals.

Required readings:

- “Nature’s Dangerous Decline ‘Unprecedented’ Species Extinction Rates ‘Accelerating’”

Suggested reading:

- Global Assessment Summary for Policymakers (excerpts for deeper explanations and graphics of the above IPBES report) [https://www.dropbox.com/sh/yd8l2v0u4jqptp3/AACpraYjOYWpTxAFv5H-2vrKa/1%20Global%20Assessment%20Summary%20for%20Policymakers?dl=0&subfolder_nav_tracking=1](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/yd8l2v0u4jqptp3/AACpraYjOYWpTxAFv5H-2vrKa/1%20Global%20Assessment%20Summary%20for%20Policymakers?dl=0&subfolder_nav_tracking=1)

Class 3 (Tuesday May 12)

We continue to learn about the Anthropocene by examining the state of the world’s oceans which – as Mitchell tells us – are “our main life-support system, controlling the planet’s temperature, climate and key chemical cycles.”

Required reading:


Class 4 (Thursday May 14)

We look at climate change and its effect on the land and its soil and we learn who loses most in our war against nature.

Required reading/viewing:

- “Climate Chaos in the South - The Victims' Story,” Video by National Film Board of Canada, Antwerp: Wereldmediateek, 2010; available at [http://go.utlib.ca/cat/12007819](http://go.utlib.ca/cat/12007819)
- “It’s Time We Stopped Treating Soil Like Dirt,” *The Guardian* YouTube Network; available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=373&v=BSHR4sUZpcw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=373&v=BSHR4sUZpcw)

PART 2: Analyzing our current context

➢ Short writing assignment (first assessment) due May 19
Class 5 (Tuesday May 19)
Building from last week’s class, we begin our analysis by examining what Scharper calls ‘unequal ecologies’, understanding the unmistakable connection between what we do to Earth systems and to one another. We will also discuss timed quiz to be done May 26.

Required readings:
- “Option for the Poor and the Option for the Earth: Toward a Sustainable Solidarity,” by Stephen Scharper, pp. 154-165 & 170-171, in FES.
- “The Poor Bear Burden of Environmental Hazards,” pp. 41-43, by Stephen Scharper, in FES.

Class 6 (Thursday May 21)
“The devastation of the planet that we are bringing about is negating some hundreds of millions, even billions, of years of past development of the earth,” Thomas Berry tells us; this is not the result simply of cultural, historical changes. Perhaps one of the reasons for this mess is our mistaken understandings about the human within biotic and urban communities.

Required readings:
- “From Community to Communion: The Natural City in Biotic and Cosmological Perspective,” by Stephen Scharper, pp. 135-153, in FES.

Timed quiz (second assessment) due May 26

Class 7 (Tuesday May 26)
Considering that you (and I) have spent most of our lives in this all-consuming world of ours (education), does it not seem odd that we never (or rarely) discuss what it is all for? We will discuss the upcoming midterm assessment.

Required readings:

Questions for Mid-term (due June 2) will be made available May 28

Class 8 (Thursday May 28)
Ecofeminism critiques patriarchal violence, capitalism, colonialism, and gender discrimination. Finding parallels between the oppression of nature and the oppression of gender, it offers insight into fostering liberation for women and the natural world.

Required readings:
  http://trumpeter.athabascau.ca/index.php/trumpet/article/view/358

Suggested reading:
PART 3: Redeeming creative spaces for new life-giving relationships


Midterm (third assessment) due June 2

Class 9 (Tuesday June 2)
"Most of us sense that the Earth is more than a sphere of rock with a thin layer of air, ocean, and life covering the surface," James Lovelock tells us, adding, "We feel at home here...." What might happen if we actually think this way? We will also use this time for review of mid-term exam.

Required readings:

Class 10 (Thursday June 4)
No other discipline (economics) dictates so pervasively and so incessantly how we conduct our lives every day; perhaps it’s time to challenge the gods of the market economy that we have created.

Required readings:
- "Reverend Billy’s Crusade against the ‘Shopocolypse’, pp. 30-32, in FES.

Suggested Reading:

Class 11 (Tuesday June 9)
Thomas Berry stresses that our destructive patterns of living cannot be critiqued effectively or sufficiently from within the traditional humanist ethics or religions, as these have arisen out of a cosmological perspective that places the human being at the center of ethical deliberations, separate from the natural world. Here we explore Indigenous traditions which have allowed Indigenous peoples, for the most part, to perceive a numinous presence within nature and thereby recognize that each aspect of the planet has its own inner life or subjectivity.

Required readings:


**Suggested Reading:**
- “Moment Two & Moment Three,” (Remainder of chapter “The Ecological Crisis”) by Stephen Scharper, in *FES*.

**Class 12 (Thursday June 11)**

*To wrap things up, we will do a review of the course, go over the final exam, but not before reminding ourselves of our human frailties, the complexity of the world, and how much we really can (and cannot) know about it (at least anytime soon).*

**Required readings:**
- “The Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill: Would the Precautionary Principle Have Averted This Disaster?” by Stephen Scharper, pp. 115-120, in *FES*.

**Final (fourth) assessment made available; due June 19**

The 16-year-old Swedish climate change activist Greta Thunberg began protesting outside the Swedish parliament in August 2018 when she was 15 about the need for immediate action to combat climate change. She has since galvanised young people to become activists for the environment. On 15 March 2019, over a million students in 112 countries around the world joined her call in striking and protesting...
Suggestions for further reading (in case there’s a topic that interests you)

The following books and/or resources can be found normally through our library system; at this time, however, some materials might not be available due to the Covid-19 restrictions. Please check online.

**Economics/commerce and environment**


**Ethics and environment**


**Religion and environment**


**Sustainability and environment**


Science and environment

Worldviews and environment

Film and Environment
The Truman Show, US 1998, dir. Peter Weir
The China Syndrome, US 1979, dir. James Bridges
Avatar, US 2009, dir. James Cameron
Babette’s Feast, Denmark 1987, dir. Gabriel Axel
WALL-E, US 2008, dir. Andrew Stanton
The Grapes of Wrath, 1940, dir. John Ford