



Department of Geography  
Western University

## Geography 2153

*Environment, Economy and Society (Intersession 2016)*

### COURSE SYLLABUS

#### **Class details:**

<i>Location:</i>	<i>Social Science Centre (SSC) – Room 3028</i>
<i>Days and Hours:</i>	<i><u>Classes:</u> Monday, Tuesday and Wednesdays 12:00-2:00</i>

#### **Instructor:**

*Chad Walker*

*PhD Candidate, Western University*

#### **Contact Information**

*Office: SSC – Room 1424*

*Email: cwalke26@uwo.ca*

*Office hours: Monday 9:30am – 10:30pm*

#### **A brief note...**

This syllabus is "dynamic", it may change throughout the term. Though the basic structure of the course (e.g., weighting of evaluation components) will not change, topics and readings may need adjusting along the way.

#### **Introduction**

This is a survey course regarding the relationships between environmental change, the economy and (you guessed it) society. Through a social science lens, you will learn of the economic and social systems that often encourage environmental harm or degradation. There will also be a highlighting of environmental ethics and the roots of our environmental crisis. You will hopefully begin to question your own moral compass in terms of the environmental harms we bring forth through our lifestyles. While some of what we talk about will border on environmental science, an in-depth knowledge of environmental science is certainly not required for doing well in this course.

This course consists of six lecture hours per week. These will consist of a mixture of lectures and discussion. Some lecture class time may even be devoted to tutorial-style discussion.

The REQUIRED course text chosen is ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY (Robbins, Hintz and Moore). Either the first or second editions of the text will suffice for the purposes of the six-week course. See amazon.ca for the well-priced first edition text. Additional readings will be made available through OWL. Students are responsible for completing readings prior to each class (see timetable below). Reading will not only help you in doing well on the exams and assignments but will also certainly help your participation grade which will be awarded at the end of term.

## Evaluation

Component	Weight
Participation	10%
Pop Quizzes (3)	10%
Assignment 1	15%
Midterm Exam	20%
Photo-reflection assignment (2)	15%
Final Exam	30%

You must complete all course components to pass the course.  
No electronic devices - e.g., phones, calculators are allowed at the midterm or exam.

## Course goals and objectives

- To help the student to understand the complexities of the connections between environmental problems and socio-economic conditions from which they emerge
- To facilitate the student's ability to think and write critically about their own environmental ethic as well as today's environmental changes and solutions to them

## Lecture Schedule

Date	Lecture topic	Required reading
May 16 <sup>th</sup>	General course introduction, Intro to concepts of sustainability	Introduction (Robbins) – <i>Recommended</i>
May 17 <sup>th</sup>	Population - the source of environmental problems?	Population and Scarcity (Robbins)
May 18 <sup>th</sup>	Economic systems & the environment	Markets and Commodities (Robbins); ; Morals Matter (Stone)
May 23 <sup>rd</sup>	NO CLASS (Holiday)	n/a
May 24 <sup>th</sup>	NO CLASS	n/a
May 25 <sup>th</sup>	Discussion of Morals Matter; "The Tragedy" & Public vs Private ownership	Institutions and "The Commons" (Robbins); Collapse: Tale of Two Farms

		(p. 1-15)
May 30 <sup>th</sup>	Discussion of Collapse;	Environmental Ethics (Robbins)
May 31 <sup>st</sup>	Environmental risks and hazards; risk perception	Risks and Hazards (Robbins)
June 1 <sup>st</sup>	Environmental theory and Political Economy	Political Economy (Robbins); Whence comes wealth? (Davidson)
June 6 <sup>th</sup>	Discussion of Whence comes wealth?; Making sense of the natural world	Social Construction of Nature (Robbins)
June 7 <sup>th</sup>	The wicked problem of climate change	Carbon Dioxide (Robbins)
June 8 <sup>th</sup>	Midterm exam	Trees (Robbins)
June 13 <sup>st</sup>	TBA	Tuna (Robbins)
June 14 <sup>th</sup>	TBA	Bottled Water (Robbins)
June 15 <sup>th</sup>	TBA	TBA
June 20 <sup>th</sup>	Group assignment due;TBA	TBA
June 21 <sup>st</sup>	TBA	TBA
June 22 <sup>nd</sup>	TBA	TBA
June 27 <sup>th</sup> or June 28 <sup>th</sup>	Final Exam	

## Examinations – General

There will be two formal examinations during the term (see schedule). The first will take place during regular class period and you will be given all of the time needed; up to 120 minutes.

The format of the midterm is mixed. To try and accommodate all learning styles, the exam will be split into three sections. There will be multiple choice, short answer, and an essay.

The format for the final examination is undecided at this point. It is very likely that it will follow a similar pattern as is described above for the midterm. More information concerning the format will be made available to students shortly. The final exam will focus on material from the second half of the course but will included important ideas and concepts from the entire term.

## Missed Exams

If you are unable to take either examination on the date listed in this syllabus (or in Western's final exam list) please notify me at least 2 weeks prior of your prior commitment. If accepted, you will be presented

with an alternative examination to be completed before the regularly scheduled exam. Any other request made after the two week window will require official documentation in order to be excused and made available a new time to write your exam.

## **Midterm**

Weight: 20%

Duration: 2 hours

Date: June 8th

Location: SSC 3028

Possible Format: mixed, all answers on exam paper.

i. Multiple choice and true/false - 20

MC usually 1 of 5 choices (a - e)

NOT scantron, circle on exam paper

no "correction factor" (i.e., NO subtraction of incorrect answers from correct answers)

### **ii. Definitions**

### **iii. Short Answer**

Material Covered:

All lectures and readings up until the end of the class immediately prior to the midterm date. The focus will be on lectures, but the readings typically overlap the lectures considerably. Generally speaking you do not have to know specifics like who said what in what year for the multiple choice, but it could not hurt to know some of the more important figures mentioned in class to round out your definitions and short answer.

## **Final Exam**

Weight: 30%

Duration: 3 hours

Date: TBD

Location: TBD

Format: mixed, all answers on exam paper. (100 marks)

**i. Multiple choice and true/false - (15 marks)**

- MC usually 1 of 5 choices (a - e)
- NOT scantron, circle on exam paper
- no "correction factor" (i.e., NO subtraction of incorrect answers from correct answers)

## **ii. Definitions**

(25 marks)

- 5 marks ea.
- choice - you will choose 5 from at least 7
- identify what the thing is, why it is important, how it relates to other things in environment and health research and provide an example(s)
- I have been told by students that I, "expect a lot in a definition". I agree.
- only those definitions that include an example will receive full marks
- space - use only the space provided - approximately 1/5 of a page

## **iii. Short Answer**

(30 marks)

- 10 marks ea.
- choice - you will choose 3 from at least 5
- address the question directly and include at least one example
- examples- only those short answers that include at least one example will receive full marks
- space - use only the space provided - approximately 1/3 of a page

## **iv. Essay**

(30 marks)

- choice - you will choose 1 from 2
- address the question directly and include examples
- space - use only the space provided - approximately 2 1/2 pages
- outline - though there are no marks explicitly awarded for this, sketch an outline on the extra sheet of paper provided (back of last page)

## Material Covered:

All lectures and readings for the entire term. You are also responsible for material you might use in an essay answer. That is, the essay question will be quite general and will allow you to draw on material from the entire course. The focus will be on lectures, but the readings typically overlap the lectures considerably. Generally speaking you do not have to know specifics like who said what in what year for the multiple choice, but it could not hurt to know some of the more important figures mentioned in class to round out your definitions and short answer.

## Course Text:

- Robbins, P., Hintz, J., & Moore, S. A. (2010 or 2014). Environment and society: a critical introduction. John Wiley & Sons.
- Other readings will be made available via the links in the schedule and/or WebCT Owl

## Exam advice

Although I believe there are no 'secrets' for doing well on the exams in this course, I can offer the following short list of helpful hints:

1. **Attend lectures regularly and take good notes**
2. **Actively participate and ask questions that interest you.** Sparking interest in the course material is something I strive for and not only will this help make the class more enjoyable but you will very likely do better in the course as a result.
3. **Meet with fellow classmates** in between classes and particularly before the exams to go over material. Learning others' ideas on the issues brought forth in class may help your understanding.
4. **Visit office hours.** I have set them up to help you. Please take advantage of this and if the time does not work for you, email me and we can set up a time.

## Assignments

### Submission Policy and Late Policy:

Material will typically be handed in online through OWL (before class starts). There will be a 10%/day penalty for material handed in late (not including weekends, clock starts "ticking" at the START of class). I will not accept assignments once the papers are 'handed back' to the rest of the class.

### Illness/Medical Absence

Please see the following policy:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf)

And now some messages from our lawyers... plagiarism and Turnitin.com

## **Plagiarism**

The Department of Geography has a zero tolerance policy towards plagiarism. If a student commits plagiarism, the instructor will assign a grade of zero to the assignment. A second instance of plagiarism is regarded as a scholastic offense and will be dealt with according to The University of Western Ontario policy for Scholastic offenses. The most common offense is failing to cite properly - if you quote directly, cite the author! You do *not* get the benefit of the doubt (you are not presumed innocent until proven guilty) when such offenses are committed. That is, the burden of proof is reversed. Can you prove "it was an accident" (this is a rhetorical question)? The following is an excerpt from the university secretariat:

"Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf) "

## **Turnitin.com**

**Unfortunately turnitin has "caught" offenders in this class**, please do not be the next one - it is awkward for everyone involved. If you write and cite properly this tool ensures your paper is not marked relative to that of somebody who is plagiarizing. The university has provided this mandatory wording: "All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and [Turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)"

Go to the [Timetable section](#) of the syllabus for turnitin login information.

## **Group Assignment:**

**Due** – June 20<sup>th</sup> 2016

*Full details will be posted soon.*

## **3. Photo-Reflections (2)**

These will represent 15% of your overall grade in the course. It is intended to provide a chance for you to summarize a concept of the course through creative and dynamic means. The idea of this assignment was created by a former colleague Dr. Beth Hundey in 2011. Her value seen in the project is that it:

*"...engages alternate learning styles and encourages students to engage with the material more closely and with a greater understanding by applying concepts to their own experiences".*

#### **DESCRIPTION OF PHOTO-REFLECTION ASSIGNMENT**

This description is an abbreviated version of what the students will receive at the beginning of the course. The assignment will be handed in at the end of term, with the intention that they will try to relate concepts in lectures and labs to their own experiences throughout the course. See Appendix for one example photo-reflection.

#### **Introduction:**

In your day-to-day life and in your travels, you have likely been intrigued by interesting landscapes, landforms, weather patterns, etc. in your surroundings. An understanding of Physical Geography allows us to appreciate these phenomena in a different way, as we begin to understand the processes that create the features that we see. Whether it be an opportunistic plant taking root in a crack in the pavement, a magnificent canyon with layers upon layers of striations, or rain that falls but never quite reaches the ground, Physical Geography is everywhere. In this assignment, you creatively apply the concepts you have learned in any component of Geography 1300b.

#### **Deliverables:**

Compile or take 4 *original* photographs that you find interesting and that remind you of something you have learned in Geography 1300b. With each photo, include a typed description of the component/s/ processes of physical geography as you perceive them in the photograph.

#### **Format:**

Acceptable formats include:

- Printed photos with descriptions
- Photoblog with text (e.g. tumblr or other blog site), or
- Other – check with your TA.

A detailed description is listed below (with permission from Dr. Hundey) and can be taken as the general guidelines for the project. While the project was originally designed for an Introductory Physical Geography class, the same ideas will be used with reference to hazards and human health in this class. You may choose to focus on the physical processes and/or cultural/social/political effects you find important. **NOTE: for this class, you are only to submit one photo and keep your commentary to less than 500 words.** Details about how to submit will be explained later.

### **Marking (out of 7.5)**

Your job is to convince me that you understand the potential relationships between risk/exposure and health in your photographs, *not* that you can simply research and regurgitate information about a phenomenon or place. To illustrate the depth of your understanding, focus on what can be seen in the photograph and make specific reference when possible to components within the photo (picture quality and originality, /2.5; commentary /5= 7.5 total).

## **Mental Health**

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit the site below for more information on mental health resources:

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/>.

**Western's commitment to accessibility-** The University of Western Ontario is committed to achieving barrier free accessibility for persons studying, visiting and working at Western. Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 or visit <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/> for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

**Extra Credit -** There will be absolutely no opportunity for extra credit in this course. If you are having difficulty and especially if you are fearing failing the course it is best if you come see me and/or the TA as soon as possible.

**Classroom Etiquette-** It is expected that you will show up to class ready and able to participate each day while remaining respectful of others in the class and their feelings and beliefs. Cell phones will be absolutely banned from use during lectures and tutorial sessions. Please turn all devices to silent or

off prior to the start of class and if you are expecting a call/text that is important please notify the TA or myself prior to and we will be glad to accommodate. If you are late for class and wish to enter lecture or tutorial please do so quietly and never in the middle of a group's presentation. It is distracting to others and disrespectful to the educational goals of your classmates.