



Places, Boundaries, movements, & Environmental Change

GINS 3020A



Global & International Studies (BGInS)
Carleton University Fall 2025
Format: Synchronous
Prerequisite: 3rd year standing

Instructor: Marylynn Steckley,
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Office Hours: Wed. & Thurs.
5:30-6:30pm
Dunton Tower 2113

Course Description

Environmental change as a result of human activity has reached planetary proportions: 2010-2019 was the hottest decade on record; we have lost one-third of our arable land in the past 40 years; commercial fish species have been in decline for decades; and while atmospheric carbon levels have never been higher, oil production is not keeping up with demand. The challenges of rapidly intensifying social inequality and extreme environmental events are also causing worrying socio-political trends: discrimination, wall-building, and violence. The urgency to improve our understanding of human-environment relations and environmental change in a global context has never been greater. In this course, we will explore the relationship between globalization, environmental change, social perceptions, and possibilities for change.

Learning Objectives

1. Identify and critique dominant theorists/theoretical positions related to themes of human-environment relations *and* describe examples of how these themes relate to environmental change.
 2. Assess human causes of environmental problems and design possibilities for remedying environmental problems through policy and advocacy.
 3. Identify and articulate your own relationship to the environment, environmental change, and a key concept of environmental ethics related to Ishmael.
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Readings

Robbins, P. 2022. Environment and Society: A Critical Introduction, 3rd edition. Wiley-Blackwell.

Quinn, D. 1992. Ishmael. Bantam Books.

Hickel, J. 2018. Why Growth Can't Be Green. *Foreign Policy*.

Evaluation

<u>Following Communication Protocol</u>	5 %
<u>Attendance</u>	10 %
<u>Reading Comprehension Quizzes</u>	30 %
<u>Test #1</u>	15 %
<u>Test #2</u>	15 %
<u>Book Review</u>	15 %
<u>Advocacy Piece</u>	10 %

Late Policy: Deductions of 10% per day begin immediately after the deadline. Assignments that are more than seven days late will not be accepted and will receive a grade of zero. Assignments will not be accepted by e-mail. You are expected to keep a copy of all assignments.

Land Acknowledgement

As we learn together, we acknowledge we are on Treaty Six Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. We pay respect to the First Nation and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.

Course Schedule, Readings, and Quiz Deadlines

Week 1, Sept 3rd: Give it to me straight: How bad is the climate problem?	
Quiz 1 Reading	Robbins. Chapter 2: Population & Scarcity. AND Robbins. Chapter 4. Institutions & "The Commons."
Week 2, Sept 10th: Part 1: Is population the problem?	
Quiz 1	Due: September 10th 10am
Quiz 2 Reading	Robbins. Chapter 8. Social Construction of Nature. AND Robbins. Chapter 11 Carbon Dioxide

Week 3, Sept 17: Is nature <i>natura</i>?	
Quiz 2	Due: September 17th 10am
Quiz 3 Reading	Robbins. Chapter 6, Risks and Technology. AND Robbins. Chapter 14, Uranium
Week 4, Sept 24: The Carbon Problem	
Quiz 3	Due: September 24th 10 am
Quiz 4 Reading	Robbins. Chapter 16 Lawns AND Chapter 10. Trees.
Week 5, Oct 1: WARNINGS! Why don't we listen?	
Quiz 4	Due: October 1st 10 am
Quiz 5 Reading	Robbins. Chapter 3. Markets & Commodities. AND Hickel. 2018. Why Growth Can't Be Green?
Week 6, Oct 8th: Risk Perception: From French Fries to Fukushima/Review	
Quiz 5	Due: October 8th 10 am
Quiz 6 Reading	Chapter 18 French Fries & Chapter 5, Environmental Ethics
Week 7, October 15th: Test 1/Book Review Workshop	
Quiz 6	Due: October 15th 10 am
Test 1	
Quiz 7 Reading	Chapter 17. Bottled Water. AND Chapter 15, Tuna
Fall Break: October 20th-24th	
Week 8, Oct 29th: Paradigms and Pineapples: Why Environmental Stories Matter	
Quiz 7	Due: October 29th 10 am
Quiz 8 Film	Film: The End of Medicine
Week 9, Nov 5th: Tree Planters and Toilet Paper: The Unexpected Politics of Trees	
Quiz 8	Due: November 5th 10 am
Quiz 9 Reading	Chapter 7 Political Economy & Chapter 10 Racialized Environments
Week 10, Nov 12th: Can We Have it All?: Capitalism, Climate and the Future of the Planet/Review	
Quiz 9	Due: November 12th 10 am
Deadline: Establish Advocacy Piece Group on Brightspace by Nov 12th, 10 am	
Week 11 Nov 19th: Test 2	
Test 2	
Week 12, Nov 26th: Presentations and Potluck	
Week 13, Dec 3rd No Meeting, Students Complete Summative Assignment	

EVALUATION

Following Communication Protocol (5%)

To ensure effective communication in this class, here's how you should approach asking questions:

1. **Use the Q&A Forum on Brightspace:** This is your primary platform for course-related and logistical questions. Before posting, check if your question has already been asked.
2. **Detailed Assignment Questions:** Schedule a phone or Zoom meeting with your TA for specific assignment inquiries.
3. **Thematic or Personal Questions:** Schedule a phone or Zoom meeting with the instructor during office hours. Fill out your preferred time, name, and topic on the office hours calendar.
4. **Sensitive or Unaddressed Questions:** If unable to use Brightspace, your TA or the instructor's office hours, request a phone meeting via email. Use the subject line "GEOG3206 Meeting Request" and include available times, your phone number, and a brief purpose statement.

48-Hour Window Policy: To support effective communication and minimize stress, I strive to promptly address your assignment questions early in our course, ensuring thorough preparation for your assignments and tests. Rushed communication and potential frustrations are more likely just before assignments or tests are due, and after grades have been released. This policy is designed to foster optimal communication practices: Please refrain from emailing questions within 48 hours before or after assignment due dates or test periods. Emails sent during these periods will not receive a response until the window has passed, except in cases of illness. If you are unwell, you may still contact me following the guidelines outlined in No. 4 of our communication policy above.

Appeals Policy: If you wish to challenge a grade, you must do so within seven days of receiving your assignment or test results. To appeal a grade, your first step is to contact your TA. Please draft a polite message requesting a meeting to discuss any questions you have regarding your assignment or test grading. Include a brief, half-page appeal outlining the specific grading discrepancies you've identified. Only valid appeals will be reviewed. Please approach your TA respectfully and courteously when seeking to appeal a grade.

Attendance & Participation (10%)

I expect punctuality and active participation in class discussions and group activities. You are allotted two absences per term, which should be reserved for instances of illness or emergencies preventing class attendance. Beginning with your third absence, regardless of the reason, your grade will be penalized by 1% for each subsequent absence.

Quizzes (30%)

In this class, you are expected to complete 8 of the 9 available Brightspace Quizzes. Each quiz is worth 3.75%, totalling 30% of your final grade. Quizzes are based on the weekly Readings from our text "Environment and Society" by Paul Robbins. Quizzes are comprised mostly of Multiple-Choice Questions, with some True/False questions. Quizzes are open-book and will be completed online on Brightspace. You will have 45 minutes to write each quiz, after which your quiz will be automatically submitted. All quizzes are available from the start of the term, and you are welcome to work ahead. Quiz

answers are available immediately after the Quiz deadline. There will be no re-writes and no make-up Quizzes.

Tests (15% and 15%, 30% total)

This class includes two closed-book, in-class tests. You will have approximately 1.5 hours to write each test, and they are scheduled for Week 7 and Week 11. Each test is worth 15%, totalling 30% of your final grade. The tests cover material from lectures. If you miss one test and wish to make up your grade, you must provide documentation such as a medical certificate, bereavement notice, or hospitalization record. You will then coordinate with the professor to schedule a make-up test. In some instances (for example, extended illness), I may make an exception for one Test to contribute to your entire Test Grade (i.e. waiving your participation on one test). Missing both tests is not permitted; the second missed test will result in a zero grade.

Tests will be written in class, either on the student's personal computer or a borrowed laptop from ITS. Students may choose to write tests on paper, and a paper test copy can be requested, but it must be done at least one week before each test date. Tests will be proctored both by in-class proctors and using a remote proctoring service provided by Scheduling and Examination Services. You can find more information at <https://carleton.ca/ses/e-proctoring/>. The minimum computing requirements for this service are as follows:

Hardware: Desktop, or Laptop

OS: Windows 10, Mac OS 10.14

Internet Browser: Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Apple Safari, or Microsoft Edge

Internet Connection (High-Speed Internet Connection Recommended)

Webcam (HD resolution recommended)

Note: Tablets, Chromebooks and Smartphones are not supported at this time. Windows-based tablets are not supported at this time.

Book Review (15%):

Summary: This assignment is designed to get you thinking about your personal response to environmental change, including your feelings, and how your new knowledge might impact your behaviour. It is motivated by Daniel Quinn's questions in his novel, *Ishmael*:

But why? Why do you need prophets to tell you how you ought to live? Why do you need anyone to tell you how you ought to live?"

You might consider: how has this book impacted your understanding of human-environment relations? And: How has your perception of environmental ethics been challenged or changed? In this assignment, you will be expected to ground your discussion in scholarly literature and relate your review to one or more of the themes we have covered in this class.

Project Components:

In concrete terms, your project will include:

1) **Introduction (150-250 words):** lay out the main themes or scope of your research and review. Remember, you are not expected to examine the book as a whole, but rather to dig into core concepts or themes that were most impactful or interesting to you. Identify the scope of the issue, or problem that you are discussing, use 1-2 pieces of data, statistics and/or quotations (whichever are appropriate) to set the stage and identify why this issue is significant. *Note that the use of statistics, or data, that enhances your discussion will not count as the 10 scholarly sources that you will use in your literature review.

2) Summary & Literature Review (800- 1000 words): offer a brief discussion of the aspects of the book that you have chosen to explore in your paper. Support this section with academic literature that enhances your discussion. You are expected to engage with 10 (no more, no less) academic journal articles. These sources should be used for information beyond “data points” or “statistics,” and should instead be used to discuss arguments or counterarguments to the issue or problem you are exploring. Please be sure to provide the full citation-- including DOI-- in your bibliography. We will check these on marking.

3) Personal Reflection (500-600 words): Discuss the impact of the book on your history, personal journey, and/or goals and future aspirations. How has this book impacted you? Draw from concrete life experiences, your feelings and responses. You are also expected to use direct quotations from the text to bolster your discussion.

4) Conclusion (200-350 words): In the conclusion, go beyond summarizing your analysis and offer insights on possible solutions for change, and hopes for the future—that is, what hope do you see, what changes might you make, what recommendations would you offer to your readers?

Project Format

In terms of style and format, please start with the headings in bold in the description above: Introduction; Summary and Literature Review; Personal Reflection; Conclusion. Then make them yours by relating them directly to your unique project. For example, "Introduction: Animal Ethics in Ishmael", or “Personal Reflection: control freaks and letting go, lessons from Goliath." Be sure to also take care to choose an appropriate and catchy title. Your title should reflect your unique research report and findings. Avoid vague titles- and make it your own!

Please include page numbers in your report, use Times New Roman font of 12” size, 1” margins, and submit as a PDF document on Brightspace. Emailed assignments will not be accepted. You must use a recognized referencing style, but the style that you use is your choice. Consult the Marking Guide below to ensure you are well-prepared to succeed on this project.

Advocacy Piece (10%): This project will be oriented towards a practical call for change in the form of a 1-minute creative piece. Your advocacy piece will draw from one of the environmental challenges that we covered in the class and should be directed to the audience appropriate for the solutions or change that you are proposing. The purpose of advocacy is to share information to help bolster support for a cause, or initiative or propose a change to policy or behaviour. My hope is that this project helps you move beyond critical reflection and the danger of climate apathy” to get you active in coming up with remedies and advocating for meaningful change that can help solve the climate problem. To offer some examples, if you choose to explore the health implications of air pollution, you might create a 1-minute commercial that is directed towards commuters. Or, if you’re interested in the links between toilet paper production and deforestation, you might offer a 1-minute pitch for sustainable toilet paper or bidets. Your advocacy piece can take the form of your choosing: a radio spot; a television commercial; a public service announcement; a skit; a comedy bit - the possibilities are endless! Get creative and be inspired!

On this assignment, you may work independently or in groups of up to four members. If you are working in a group for this assignment, your group must be established on Brightspace by December 1st, after which point you cannot change groups, or decide to work independently if you were already in a group. If you are working in a group, one grade will be assigned for each group, and all group members will receive the same grade. Choose your group members wisely. You will present your 1-minute advocacy pieces on presentation day, on our final day of class.

Book Review “Ishmael” Marking Guide

Criteria	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Below Expectations	Points
Introduction (150-250 words)	Clearly identifies main themes/scope. Effectively uses data, statistics, or quotations. Provides compelling significance. (10-15 points)	Identifies themes/scope with some vagueness. Data/statistics/quotations present but not fully integrated. (6-9 points)	Fails to identify themes/scope. Lacks proper use of data/statistics/quotations or demonstrates no issue significance. (0-5 points)	15
Summary & Literature Review (800-1000 words)	Focused summary connected to issue/problem. Integrates 10 scholarly sources cohesively. Demonstrates nuanced understanding. (25-30 points)	Engages with scholarly literature but may lack depth or consistency. Some sources not well-aligned with the discussion. (15-24 points)	Underdeveloped or unfocused summary. Fewer than 10 sources or poor integration/relevance. Lacks meaningful engagement. (0-14 points)	30
Personal Reflection (500-600 words)	Thoughtful reflection supported by concrete experiences and direct quotations. Clear connection to personal history/themes. (12-15 points)	Reflection is thoughtful but lacks depth or concrete examples. Quotations and experiences present but underdeveloped. (8-11 points)	Superficial reflection lacking insight or connections to themes. Minimal or no use of quotations/experiences. (0-7 points)	15
Conclusion (200-350 words)	Summarizes analysis effectively with original insights and thoughtful recommendations. (10-15 points)	Summarizes analysis but insights/recommendations are vague or lack originality. (6-9 points)	Fails to summarize effectively. Lacks insights, recommendations, or meaningful discussion of solutions/hope. (0-5 points)	15
Writing	Writing is inspired, demonstrates high-quality ideas, uses detail and specific examples, integrates direct quotations effectively, and includes creative and appropriate titles. (10-15 points)	Writing demonstrates quality ideas but lacks inspiration, detail, or effective integration of quotations. (6-9 points)	Writing lacks inspiration, specific examples, or effective use of quotations. Ideas are unclear or superficial. (0-5 points)	15
Mechanics & Presentation	Writing is clear, well-organized, error-free. Proper citation format with DOIs included. (5 points)	Writing is clear but contains some grammatical/organizational errors. Citation format mostly correct. (3-4 points)	Writing is unclear or poorly organized, with frequent errors. Citation format incorrect/incomplete. (0-2 points)	5
Total				100
* Flexibility: Allow room for grader discretion in cases of exceptional effort or extenuating circumstances*				

Advocacy Piece Marking Guide

Category	Exceptional (18-20)	Proficient (15-17)	Satisfactory (10-14)	Needs Improvement (0-9)	Points
Creativity/Originality	Demonstrates outstanding originality, innovation, and creativity. The advocacy piece presents ideas in a fresh and unique way that engages the audience.	Displays a solid level of creativity and originality. Ideas are well-presented and engaging but may not be entirely novel.	Shows some creativity, but the piece relies on conventional or predictable approaches.	Lacks creativity and originality. The piece feels generic or uninspired.	20
Clarity/Communication	The message is clear, compelling, and easy to understand. The piece effectively communicates its purpose and engages the audience.	The message is clear and effective but could be more compelling or engaging.	The message is somewhat clear but lacks impact or is difficult to understand in places.	The message is unclear or poorly communicated.	20
Relevance to Advocacy Topic	Directly and effectively addresses an environmental advocacy topic, demonstrating a deep understanding and connection to the subject.	Addresses the environmental topic effectively but may lack depth or nuanced understanding.	Addresses the environmental topic but may lack depth, focus, or full alignment with advocacy goals.	Does not clearly address the environmental advocacy topic or demonstrates minimal understanding.	20
Audience Engagement	Highly engaging, tailored to its intended audience, and evokes a strong emotional or intellectual response.	Engages the audience effectively but could be more targeted or impactful.	Engages the audience somewhat but lacks a strong or consistent connection.	Fails to engage the audience or lacks consideration of audience needs.	20
Technical Execution	Polished and well-executed, demonstrating excellent attention to detail, including visual, auditory, or written elements as applicable. Timely, with good pacing, and adheres to the 1-minute length requirement.	Well-executed but may have minor technical flaws. Generally maintains good pacing and meets the length requirement.	Functional but may have noticeable flaws, uneven pacing, or slightly exceed the length requirement.	Poorly executed, has poor pacing, or significantly fails to meet the 1-minute length requirement.	20
Total					100
* Flexibility: Allow room for grader discretion in cases of exceptional effort or extenuating circumstances*					

Final Grade Approval: Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points, is the following:

Percentage	Letter Grade	12-point scale	Percentage	Letter Grade	12-point scale
90-100	A+	12	67-69	C+	6
85-89	A	11	63-66	C	5
80-84	A-	10	60-62	C-	4
77-79	B+	9	57-59	D+	3
73-76	B	8	53-56	D	2
70-72	B-	7	50-52	D-	1

Mental Health: As a University student, you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you.

Emergency Resources (on and off campus): <https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

Carleton Resources:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Off-Campus Resources:

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389, <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
- Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

Policy on The Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools:

As our understanding of the uses of AI and its relationship to student work and academic integrity continues to evolve, students are required to discuss their use of AI in any circumstance not described here with the course instructor to ensure it supports the learning goals for the course.

AI use in this course: Students may use AI tools for sharing ideas, clarifying challenging concepts, or getting started on projects. Some acceptable uses include:

- Brainstorming ideas (e.g., generating essay topics with ChatGPT, using Microsoft Word's Smart Lookup to find inspiration and related topics).
- Creating outlines (e.g., using AI to structure an essay or presentation flow, using Microsoft Word's Outline View with AI suggestions).

- Providing definitions or explanations of complex concepts (e.g., using AI to explain a difficult theory, e.g., using Microsoft Word's Researcher tool to find relevant information).

Documenting use of AI: It is necessary to document your use of AI in this course, using the following guidelines:

- Identify and cite AI-generated text (e.g., 'The following paragraph was generated by ChatGPT/Microsoft Word's Researcher tool'). Please consult resources on the [Library website](#).
- Review, edit, and ensure the accuracy and originality of final submissions.
- AI-generated content should not exceed 30% of the total assignment length.

Why have I adopted this policy? This policy supports the use of AI as a supplementary tool, helping students develop ideas and structure their work while emphasizing the importance of transparency and personal engagement with the content. AI can be used for inspiration and foundational support, and can encourage students to critically assess and refine AI-generated material.

Plagiarism: The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as "presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own." This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT)
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment
- using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own
- failing to acknowledge sources with proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotation marks."

Academic Accommodation: Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (students.carleton.ca/course-outline). For an accommodation request, that is up to 5 days, please complete the [Academic Consideration for Coursework Form](#) and send a copy to your TA.

Communications: Carleton E-mail Accounts: All email communication to students from BGInS will be via official Carleton University email accounts and/or Brightspace. As important course and University information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton and Brightspace accounts.