

CARLETON UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY & ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES
ENST 2001A, FALL 2020

SUSTAINABLE FUTURES: ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Instructor:	Jamie Brownlee
Classroom:	virtual
Class Time:	Tuesday 8:35-11:25am
Office Hours:	email or by appointment (see details below)
Email:	jamielbrownlee@cunet.carleton.ca
Phone Number:	613-899-2193
Pre-requisites:	second-year standing in the Environmental Studies program or permission of the Department

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Human activities have transformed local and planetary ecosystems, resulting in major environmental threats and challenges. This course will examine some of the most pressing environmental problems in Canada and around the world, including their history, root causes and consequences. Throughout the course, we will discuss how environmental problems are connected to larger social processes and institutions, such as the structures of global capitalism, state and political systems, culture and ideology, and relations of power and inequality. This course will also critically evaluate different responses and solutions to environmental problems, including their benefits and limitations. We will review some innovative ways that individuals, social movements and institutions are working to protect ecosystems and encourage ecological restoration. Finally, we will examine how the concept of sustainability has been constructed and contested, as well as how citizens, consumers and activists might envision a more just and balanced relationship with the natural world.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This is a social science course, so students will be encouraged to think critically about how social, economic and political conditions underlie environmental problems and competing conceptions of ecological sustainability. How are current ecological challenges, and responses to them, connected to our social and intellectual history? How are powerful groups and institutions able to define particular understandings of sustainability and solutions to environmental problems? What are the connections between social and economic inequality, and environmental degradation and renewal? More generally, this course will challenge students to identify and interrogate their beliefs and assumptions about environmental problems and sustainability, and to identify opportunities for engagement with these issues beyond the boundaries of the classroom.

TEACHING AND LEARNING IN AN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT (PLEASE REVIEW THIS SECTION CAREFULLY)

Asynchronous Course through cuLearn

Because of the pandemic and the rules in place to ensure physical distancing, this course will be **delivered online in an asynchronous format**. In an asynchronous course, the instructor and students share information in a virtual course space. Asynchronous courses do not have live, scheduled meetings online. Rather, students will access weekly recorded lectures, course readings, assignments and other materials on **cuLearn**. If you have not already done so, please familiarize yourself with the cuLearn platform. For additional assistance, you can access these cuLearn support sites:

cuLearn Student Support Site

<https://carleton.ca/culearnsupport/students/>

cuLearn Online Learning Orientation

<https://carleton.ca/online/online-learning-orientation/>

cuLearn Assignments Student Support Page

<https://carleton.ca/culearnsupport/students/assignment/>

While there is a scheduled day and time associated with the course (Tuesday 8:35-11:25am), students can move through the course materials on their own schedule and at their own pace. However, students are expected to pay close attention to assignment deadlines and exam dates.

I will send out a **group email** at the beginning of each week to: summarize the topics and learning objectives for the week; provide a reminder of any important deadlines; outline instructions for assignments and exams; and, more generally to keep us on track.

Lectures and Readings

Each week, I will be posting a series of **lecture videos** on cuLearn where I present and discuss course content. The lectures will be posted at the beginning of each week, and they will remain on cuLearn for the duration of the term. I have also posted the **required readings** for each week that complement and build upon the weekly lectures on cuLearn.

It will be your responsibility to watch these lecture videos, do the readings, and understand and engage with the content provided. While you can watch (and re-watch) lectures and complete readings on your own time, I recommend that you adhere as closely as possible to a weekly schedule to avoid falling behind in the course.

How to Communicate with Your Instructor and TAs

This course will not have scheduled weekly office hours. However, I am available to answer any questions you may have, to provide feedback and clarification, and to help if you experience difficulties. Please feel free to **email me** at any time with questions about the course (e.g., technical or logistical issues, substantive questions about lecture/reading content, etc.). **I respond to emails promptly**. There are also two teaching assistants (TAs) for this course, and you are welcome to email them with questions as well. Contact information for both TAs can be found on the right side of the cuLearn home page.

Most of the time, course-related questions can be answered by email, so please try this first. However, if you feel you need a more detailed discussion with me, you can contact me **by phone** or we can schedule an appointment for a one-on-one **Zoom meeting**. This will require that you have Zoom installed on your computer.

Please note that any requests for accommodations or alternate arrangements regarding assignments or exams should be made directly to me. Please give me as much notice as possible and I will do my best to accommodate you.

Technological Requirements

This course requires access to a computer and high-speed internet. Information Technology Services (ITS) has [specific language](#) on the minimum requirements for online learning, guides on [browser requirements](#) to help your cuLearn experience run smoothly, as well as information on how to access [conferencing tools](#) such as Zoom. If you have any questions regarding technology that is supported by the university, you can contact ITS directly at: <https://carleton.ca/its/contact/>

Additional Information and Supports for Students

Below is a list of university resources to support students in online learning at Carleton.

Carleton Online: supporting students in the online learning environment

<https://carleton.ca/online/>

Webinars: Get Ready for Your Online Courses

<https://carleton.ca/online/webinars/>

Resources for Students Learning Online

<https://carleton.ca/teachinglearning/2020/resources-for-your-students-learning-online/>

Tips for Students Learning Online

<https://students.carleton.ca/2020/03/top-ten-tips-to-study-online/>

Centre for Student Academic Support

<https://carleton.ca/csas/>

Student Service Information

<https://students.carleton.ca/coronavirus/service-information/>

International Students

Learning online can present a unique set of challenges for international students who may be connecting to courses from their home countries. Please feel free to reach out to me with any concerns or problems you may be experiencing. Below is a list of university resources to support international students at Carleton.

International Student Services Office

<https://carleton.ca/isso/>

The Global PALS (Peer Advisors Lending Support) Program

<https://carleton.ca/isso/globalpals/>

International Student Services Office Newsletter

<https://carleton.ca/isso/services-for-current-students/isso-newsletter-sign-up/>

Online Events and Workshops for International Students

<https://carleton.ca/isso/events-2/>

READING MATERIALS

- Students are not required to purchase books or a course pack for this course! 😊
- All assigned readings will be available through cuLearn.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

1. ***SHORT ASSIGNMENT, DUE OCTOBER 13TH*** **20%**

For this assignment, you are asked to analyze the state of knowledge around a particular environmental problem, with a focus on the kinds of responses that have been proposed or put in place to encourage sustainability. Additional information about the assignment will be provided the first week of class. The paper should be approximately 5-6 double-spaced pages. It is due on October 13th and should be submitted electronically via cuLearn. Late papers will be penalized 5 percent per day.

2. ***MIDTERM EXAM, OCTOBER 20TH*** **20%**

The midterm exam will be a combination of short answer and essay-type questions. It will cover material from both the lectures and the assigned readings (weeks 2 through 5). The exam will be a *take-home, open-book exam* and will be administered through cuLearn. Additional information will be provided the first week of class. Please note that all take-home exam work must be that of the individual student. Submitting a take-home exam written in whole or in part by someone else is a violation of the university's plagiarism policy.

3. ***FINAL PAPER, DUE DECEMBER 8TH*** **35%**

For the final paper, you will be asked to select your own paper topic, understanding that it must be relevant to the issues addressed in the course. While the paper can draw on some of the weekly readings, it should also reference additional academic sources. It should be approximately 12-15 double-spaced pages. Papers will be graded on the quality of your research and writing, strength of your arguments and analysis, and your ability to situate your arguments within existing debates. Students are invited to discuss paper ideas with me at any point during the term (though this is not mandatory). Additional information will be provided the first week of class. The paper is due on December 8th and should be submitted electronically via cuLearn. Late papers will be penalized 5 percent per day.

4. ***FINAL EXAM*** **25%**

The final exam will be a combination of short answer and essay-type questions. Please note that the final exam is *not cumulative*. Therefore, it will cover material from both the lectures and the assigned readings in the second half of the course only (weeks 7 through 11). Additional information will be provided the first week of class. The final exam will be a *take-home, open-book exam* and will be scheduled by the university in the exam period. Please note that all take-home exam work must be that of the individual student. Submitting a take-home exam written in whole or in part by someone else is a violation of the university's plagiarism policy.

GRADES

In accordance with the Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar (p. 45), the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 57-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62	D - = 50-52
F = Below 50			

Please note that 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.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Carleton provides [academic accommodation to students](#) for reasons of disability, religious observance, pregnancy and/or parental leave, sexual violence, and student activities.

Providing accommodations means providing alternatives to students who cannot perform the essential requirements of their academic programs due to the reasons mentioned above. At no time does academic accommodation undermine or compromise the learning objectives that are established by the academic authorities of the university.

This section provides a brief overview of the accommodations policy and process. Please contact [Equity and Inclusive Communities](#) for a full explanation.

Religious Observation

A request should be made in the first two weeks of the academic term, or as soon as possible where the scheduling of an event or activity conflicting with a religious obligation does not appear in the course outline or calendar. A list of multi-faith holy days is accessible through the [Equity Services website](#). Instructors can also contact Equity Services to confirm the eligibility of a religious event or practice.

Pregnancy and/or Parental Leave

Requests for parental leave must be made in writing to the Registrar's Office. A student who is pregnant may request a temporary modification to their program. The student should meet with the instructor(s). The department chair/director and the faculty dean can assist in the discussion. An Equity Services advisor can also be consulted if a student has questions about pregnancy and/or parental leave.

Students with Disabilities

The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the PMC at 613-520- 6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to arrange for your Letter of Accommodation to be sent to your instructor at the

beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, contact your instructor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the [PMC website](#) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton’s Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support.

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, see [the policy](#).

Contacts

<p>Equity Services 503 Robertson Hall 613-520-5622 equity@carleton.ca carleton.ca/equity</p>	<p>Paul Menton Centre 501 University Centre 613-520-6608 pmc@carleton.ca carleton.ca/pmc</p>
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STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- 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 original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Classroom teaching and learning activities, including lectures, discussions, presentations, etc., by both instructors and students, are copy protected and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s). All course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, recorded lectures, outlines, and other materials, are also protected by copyright and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s).

Students registered in the course may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use only. Students are not permitted to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial or non-commercial purposes without express written consent from the copyright holder(s).

IMPORTANT DATES

September 7 Labour Day – University Closed.

September 9 Classes start.

September 23 Last day for registration and course changes in Fall and Fall/Winter courses.

September 30 Last day to withdraw from Fall term and Fall/Winter courses with a full fee adjustment.

October 9 December exam schedule available online.

October 12 Thanksgiving Day – University closed.

October 26-30 Fall break, no classes.

December 11 Fall term ends. Last day of Fall term classes. Last day for academic withdrawal from Fall term courses.

December 12-23 December exams: Final examinations for Fall courses, mid-terms for Fall/Winter courses. Exams are normally held all seven days of the week.

December 25-January 1 University closed.

COURSE CALENDAR

WEEK ONE – SEPTEMBER 15TH

INTRODUCTION

- Introduction to the course: overview, themes, readings, exams and assignments
- Teaching and learning in an online environment

READINGS

- Angus, Ian. 2016. “A Second Copernican Revolution” in *Facing the Anthropocene: Fossil Capitalism and the Crisis of the Earth System*. New York: Monthly Review Press. pp. 27-37.

WEEK TWO – SEPTEMBER 22ND

CONFRONTING OUR EXTRACTIVIST LEGACY: COLONIALISM, ENCLOSURE OF THE COMMONS AND THE RISE OF CAPITALISM

READINGS

- Rifkin, Jeremy. 1991. “A Private Nature” in *Biosphere Politics: A New Consciousness for a New Century*. New York: Crown. pp. 38-47.
- Broswimmer, Franz. 2002. “The Modern Assault on Nature: The Making of Ecocide” in *Ecocide: A Short History of the Mass Extinction of Species*. London: Pluto Press. pp. 54-69.
- Klein, Naomi. 2014. “Beyond Extractivism: Confronting the Climate Denier Within” in *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*. Toronto: Knopf. pp. 161-187.

WEEK THREE – SEPTEMBER 29TH

CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTALISM AND SUSTAINABILITY: THE RISING POWER OF BIG BUSINESS AND THE PROMISE OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

READINGS

- Bakan, Joel. 2004. “Business as Usual” in *The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power*. Toronto: Viking. pp. 28-59.
- Dauvergne, Peter. 2018. “Total Destruction?” and “The Business of CSR” in *Will Big Business Destroy the Planet?* Cambridge: Polity Press. pp. 1-14; 38-55.

WEEK FOUR – OCTOBER 6TH

CAPITALISM VERSUS NATURE: EXAMINING THE IMPACTS OF CAPITAL ACCUMULATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH, AND THE POTENTIAL OF THE DEGROWTH MOVEMENT

READINGS

- Angus, Ian. 2016. “The Great Acceleration” and “Capital’s Time vs. Nature’s Time” in *Facing the Anthropocene: Fossil Capitalism and the Crisis of the Earth System*. New York: Monthly Review Press. pp. 38-47; 111-125.
- Ellwood, Wayne. 2014. “On the Road to Degrowth” in *The No-Nonsense Guide to Degrowth and Sustainability*. Oxford: New Internationalist. pp. 156-185.

WEEK FIVE – OCTOBER 13TH

OUR CONSUMPTION PROBLEM: INEQUALITY, CONSUMER CULTURE AND THE ALLURE OF GREEN CONSUMERISM

READINGS

- Assadourian, Erik. 2010. “The Rise and Fall of Consumer Cultures” in *State of the World: Transforming Cultures, From Consumerism to Sustainability*. New York: Worldwatch Institute. pp. 3-20.
- Beder, Sharon. 2009. “Turning Children into Consumers” in *This Little Kiddy Went to Market: The Corporate Capture of Childhood*. London: Pluto Press. pp. 6-22.
- Pierre-Louis, Kendra. 2012. “The Green Car Myth: Thinking Beyond the Tail Pipe” and “Our Consumption Problem” in *Green Washed: Why We Can’t Buy Our Way to a Green Planet*. New York: Ig Publishing. pp. 70-85; 152-161.

WEEK SIX – OCTOBER 20TH

- MIDTERM EXAM

OCTOBER 27TH – FALL BREAK, NO CLASS

WEEK SEVEN – NOVEMBER 3RD

HOW WE EAT: INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURE, FOOD SUSTAINABILITY AND THE RISE OF THE FOOD MOVEMENT

READINGS

- Pierre-Louis, Kendra. 2012. “How We Eat” in *Green Washed: Why We Can’t Buy Our Way to a Green Planet*. New York: Ig Publishing. pp. 33-56.
- GRAIN. 2012. “Food and Climate Change: The Forgotten Link” and “The International Food System and the Climate Crisis” in *The Great Food Robbery*. Nairobi: Pambazuka Press. pp. 97-109.
- Roberts, Wayne. 2013. “Seeds of Hope: The Rise of the Food Movement” in *The No-Nonsense Guide to World Food*. Oxford: New Internationalist. pp. 141-175.

WEEK EIGHT – NOVEMBER 10TH

SUSTAINABILITY AND PUBLIC POLICY: CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY FROM HARPER TO TRUDEAU

READINGS

- Turner, Chris. 2013. “Landscape at Twilight” in *The War on Science: Muzzled Scientists and Wilful Blindness in Stephen Harper’s Canada*. Vancouver: Greystone. pp. 17-46.
- Lukacs, Martin. 2019. “How Justin Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the (Alberta Carbon) Bomb” in *The Trudeau Formula: Seduction and Betrayal in an Age of Discontent*. Montreal: Black Rose Books. pp. 95-113; 122-130.
- Pineau, Pierre-Olivier. 2019. “Reconciling Environment and Economy: Promises Kept, but Gamble Lost” in L. Birch and F. Pétry (eds.), *Assessing Justin Trudeau’s Liberal Government*. Quebec City: Laval University Press. pp. 193-203.

WEEK NINE – NOVEMBER 17TH

A NATION DIVIDED: EXPLORING DEBATES ABOUT TAR SANDS, PIPELINES AND INDIGENOUS RIGHTS IN CANADA

READINGS

- Natural Resources Defence Council. 2014. “Tar Sands Crude Oil: Health Effects of a Dirty and Destructive Fuel.” NRDC Issue Brief. pp. 1-8.
- Poitras, Jacques. 2018. “The Last Thing Out of Town” in *Pipe Dreams: The Fight for Canada’s Energy Future*. Toronto: Viking. pp. 265-282.
- Klein, Naomi. 2014. “You and What Army? Indigenous Rights and the Power of Keeping Our Word” in *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*. Toronto: Knopf. pp. 367-387.

WEEK TEN – NOVEMBER 24TH

THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS AND OUR RENEWABLE ENERGY FUTURE: THE CASE FOR PUBLIC OWNERSHIP, ENERGY DEMOCRACY AND A GREEN NEW DEAL

READINGS

- McKibben, Bill. 2012. “Global Warming’s Terrifying New Math.” *Rolling Stone*, July 19. pp. 1-13.
- Klein, Naomi. 2014. “Public and Paid For: Overcoming the Ideological Blocks to the Next Economy” and “Planning and Banning: Slapping the Invisible Hand, Building a Movement” in *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*. Toronto: Knopf. pp. 96-119; 120-141.
- Klein, Naomi. 2019. “The Capsule Case for a Green New Deal” in *On Fire: The Burning Case for a Green New Deal*. Toronto: Knopf. pp. 280-291.

WEEK ELEVEN – DECEMBER 1ST

GREEN CAPITALISM OR SYSTEMS CHANGE? CLIMATE RESTORATION, ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM AND THE GROWTH OF THE CLIMATE MOVEMENT

READINGS

- Klein, Naomi. 2014. “The Leap Years: Just Enough Time for Impossible” in *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*. Toronto: Knopf. pp. 449-466.
- Klein, Naomi. 2019. “Stop Trying to Save the World All by Yourself” and “Movements Will Make, or Break, the Green New Deal” in *On Fire: The Burning Case for a Green New Deal*. Toronto: Knopf. pp. 129-136; 259-271.

WEEK TWELVE – DECEMBER 8TH

- Course wrap-up
- Submit final papers
- Final exam preparation