

# **SUSTAINABLE FUTURES: ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS (ENST2001 A)**

## **Fall 2025 Course Syllabus**

Department of Geography & Environmental Studies, Carleton University

**Instructor:** Meera Karunanathan (she/her)

**Office:** B450 A Loeb

**Office hours:** by appointment

**Lectures:** Tuesdays: 14:35 – 17 :25

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**Brightspace:** <https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/369900>

**Teaching Assistant:** TBC

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this course, we will explore histories, theories and practices of building sustainable futures. We will investigate the spaces of hope, creativity and resistance where communities are developing and defending healthier, more dignified and just socio-natural relationships. We will engage critically with dominant programs of top-down sustainability that uphold systems of climate injustice, racial capitalism and settler colonialism. We will draw inspiration from case studies of social movements and communities organizing to make another world possible. Using popular education and critical pedagogy methodologies, students will be invited to pursue their curiosity on the possibilities for happier more just and sustainable futures.

A significant portion of the course will focus on Indigenous scholarship and movements on Turtle Island. In the second portion of the course, we will study grassroots movements and intellectual contributions from other parts of the world including Rojava, Chiapas and Cochabamba.

**\*This course has a playlist! Check it out at:**

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0gzP6y0brlj55c9tPU2MRU?si=c035bac6d1a246d6>

## **PREREQUISITES**

Second-year standing in the Environmental Studies program or permission of the Department.

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Engage critically with popular and academic constructions and contestations of sustainability;
- Acquire a deeper knowledge and understanding of Indigenous land and environmental justice struggles;
- Strengthen thinking, research and advocacy skills through class discussions and assignments;
- Develop or further refine a personal environmental ethic and;
- Discover ways to apply knowledge and engage directly in building sustainable futures.

## FORMAT

The course meets in person on Tuesdays for three hours. It consists of lectures, seminars and field work. Students are invited to be active participants. You will take turns leading class discussions, engage in collaborative learning activities and work in small groups on a final project. Students are encouraged to use the Brightspace discussion board to interact with one another rather than reading the material in isolation. The discussion board will be monitored regularly by the teaching team.

The course includes a mandatory field trip. (See schedule for details.)

## MATERIAL

There is one required book in this course:

Estes, N. (2019). *Our History is the Future: Standing Rock versus the Dakota Access Pipeline and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance*. Verso Books

Available at: [https://www.versobooks.com/en-ca/products/600-our-history-is-the-future?srsltid=AfmBOoqdTeoONVT10idGjnOfRh05HacyTqClf5W0a2C\\_Wj9HGUK5brs](https://www.versobooks.com/en-ca/products/600-our-history-is-the-future?srsltid=AfmBOoqdTeoONVT10idGjnOfRh05HacyTqClf5W0a2C_Wj9HGUK5brs)

Ebook:\$13.99

Hardback: \$35.95

All other material will be available via ARES on Brightspace unless indicated otherwise.

\*Please note that course content may be modified at the discretion of the instructor. Please follow email and Brightspace updates.

## EVALUATION

Assignment	Weight	Description and due date
<b>Contributions to the learning community</b>	<b>15%</b>	Evaluation is based on attendance, contributions to class discussions, participation in class activities and other visible efforts to support the collective learning environment including participation in Brightspace discussion boards and engagement with guest lecturers.
<b>Learning journey</b>	<b>5%</b>	Share the story of your journey as a learner in 500 words. See details on assignment description sheet on Brightspace.  <u>Due date:</u> Sept 16 (or before your second class for those who join the course late.)

<b>Unsettling sustainability assignment</b>	<b>15%</b>	<p>*You are required to attend a <b>field trip on October 7</b> as part of this assignment.</p> <p>See details on Brightspace.</p> <p><b><u>Due date: October 14</u></b></p>
<b>Reflective essay on <i>Our History is the Future</i></b>	<b>20%</b>	<p>1000 word essay on the book <i>Our History is the Future</i> by Nick Estes.</p> <p>See details on Brightspace.</p> <p><b><u>Due date: November 4</u></b></p>
<b>Fish bowl</b>	<b>15%</b>	<p>We will use the “fish bowl” method to begin each seminar with a lively, informal student-led discussion on the readings (both supplementary and required readings).</p> <p>Sign up for one fish bowl no later than Sept 16. (See links to sign-up sheet for fall term on Google doc via Brightspace.)</p>
<b>Final group project</b>	<b>30%</b>	<p>We will brainstorm ideas and create a list of options for group or individual projects based on your interests on <b>October 14</b>.</p> <p><b><u>Due dates:</u></b>  Proposals presented in class on <b>November 11</b> (5%)  Final assignments due and presented in class on <b>December 2</b> (25%)</p>

## COURSE SCHEDULE

<b>Date</b>	<b>Theme and activities</b>	<b>Course Material</b>
September 9	<b>Introduction and overview</b>  <b>Community Agreement</b>	<b>The Gift We Give One Another:</b> A Community Agreement Resource from the BCcampus Anti-Racism Anti-Hate Working Group <a href="https://bccampus.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/AR-AH-Community-Agreement-MAR-17-letterhead-3.pdf">https://bccampus.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/AR-AH-Community-Agreement-MAR-17-letterhead-3.pdf</a>
September 16	<b>Introduction to key</b>	<b>REQUIRED</b>

	<p><b>concepts and methodologies used in this class.</b></p> <p>*Learning journey due at the beginning of class.</p>	<p>Hurwitz, L. and Bourque, S. Settler Colonial Primer. <i>Unsettling America, Decolonization in Theory and Practice</i>. <a href="https://unsettlingamerica.wordpress.com/2014/06/06/settler-colonialism-primer/">https://unsettlingamerica.wordpress.com/2014/06/06/settler-colonialism-primer/</a></p> <p>Hatami, A. &amp; Firoozi N. Decolonizing Sustainability through Co-responsibility</p>
September 23	<p><b>Indigenous Environmental Justice</b></p>	<p><b>REQUIRED</b></p> <p>McGregor, D. (2018). Mino-Mnaamodzawin: Achieving Indigenous Environmental Justice in Canada. <i>Environment and Society: Advances in Research</i> Vol 9, pp 7-24.</p> <p>Kimmerer, R. W. (2015). "The Gift of Strawberries." In <i>Braiding sweetgrass</i>. Milkweed Editions. <a href="https://indigenous.abbyschools.ca/sites/default/files/3.%20%20The%20Gift%20of%20Strawberries%20Excerpt_0_0.pdf">https://indigenous.abbyschools.ca/sites/default/files/3.%20%20The%20Gift%20of%20Strawberries%20Excerpt_0_0.pdf</a></p> <p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY</b></p> <p>Vásquez-Fernández, Andrea M ; Ahenakew pii tai poo taa, Cash. (2020). Resurgence of relationality: reflections on decolonizing and indigenizing 'sustainable development' <i>Current opinion in environmental sustainability</i>, 2020-04, Vol.43, pp.65-70</p> <p><u>Case studies:</u></p> <p>Black, K. (2021). These First Nations are Taking Safe Drinking Water into their own Hands. <i>Broadview</i> <a href="https://broadview.org/water-boil-advisory-first-nations/">https://broadview.org/water-boil-advisory-first-nations/</a></p> <p>Tiny House Warriors <a href="http://www.tinyhousewarriors.com">http://www.tinyhousewarriors.com</a></p>
September 30	<p><b>Unsettling sustainability Part 1</b></p> <p>*Final project proposals discussed in class.</p>	<p>Readings provided in assignment guide on Brightspace.</p>

October 7	<b>Unsettling Sustainability Part 2</b>  <i>Field trip to Akikodjiwan (Chaudiere Falls) and Zibi Development</i>	Readings provided in assignment guide on Brightspace.
October 14	<i>Unsettling sustainability assignment due before class.</i>  Brainstorming on final project proposals (mandatory in-class exercise)	Read: Estes, N. (2019). <i>Our History is the Future: Standing Rock versus the Dakota Access Pipeline and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance</i> . Verso Books. Chapters 1, 2 &3
October 21	Reading week (No class)	(Read <i>Our History is the Future</i> )
October 28	<b>Water, land and Indigenous resistance</b>	<b>REQUIRED</b>  Estes, N. (2019). <i>Our History is the Future: Standing Rock versus the Dakota Access Pipeline and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance</i> . Verso Books.
November 4	<b>Degrowth</b>  <i>*Our History is the Future Assignment due.</i>	<b>REQUIRED</b> Demaria, F., Kallis G., & Bakker, K. (2019). Geographies of degrowth: Nowtopias, resurgences and the decolonization imaginaries and places. <i>Nature and Space</i> , pp. 431-450.  Nirmal, Padini, and Dianne Rocheleau. "Decolonizing Degrowth in the Post-Development Convergence: Questions, Experiences, and Proposals from Two Indigenous Territories." <i>Environment and Planning. E, Nature and Space (Print)</i> , vol. 2, no. 3, 2019, pp. 465–92, <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/2514848618819478">https://doi.org/10.1177/2514848618819478</a>  <b>SUPPLEMENTARY</b> <a href="https://greattransition.org/publication/the-degrowth-alternative">https://greattransition.org/publication/the-degrowth-alternative</a>

November 11	<b>Final project proposals</b>	No readings. We will use this class to present and receive feedback on final project proposals.
November 18	<b>Social ecology</b>	<p>Agboya, Ercan. (2020) Ecology in Democratic Confederalism. In <i>Social Ecology and Democratic Confederalism: A Reader from Make Rojava Green Again</i> Pp.33-54.  <a href="https://makerojavagreenagain.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Social-Ecology-and-Democratic-Confederalism-eng.pdf">https://makerojavagreenagain.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Social-Ecology-and-Democratic-Confederalism-eng.pdf</a></p> <p>Bookchin, M. (2007). What is Social Ecology? <i>Social Ecology and Communalism</i>, AK Press.  Reprinted in <i>Social Ecology and Democratic Confederalism: A Reader from Make Rojava Green Again</i>. Pp.9-27  <a href="https://makerojavagreenagain.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Social-Ecology-and-Democratic-Confederalism-eng.pdf">https://makerojavagreenagain.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Social-Ecology-and-Democratic-Confederalism-eng.pdf</a></p> <p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY</b>  See agroecology map for case studies:  <a href="https://www.foei.org/what-we-do/food-sovereignty/agroecology-map/">https://www.foei.org/what-we-do/food-sovereignty/agroecology-map/</a></p>
November 25	<p><b>The Commons and radical action from below</b></p> <p><b>Guest lecture:</b>  Marcela Olivera</p>	<p><b>REQUIRED</b></p> <p>Dwinell Alexander and Olivera, Marcela. (2014). The water is ours damn it! Water Commoning in Bolivia. <i>Community Development Journal</i>, Volume 49, Issue suppl_1, January 2014, Pages i44–i52.</p> <p>Brily, Anya. (June 25, 2020). Zapatistas: Lessons in community self-organization in Mexico. Open Democracy.  <a href="https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/democraciaabierta/zapatistas-lecciones-de-auto-organización-comunitaria-en">https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/democraciaabierta/zapatistas-lecciones-de-auto-organización-comunitaria-en</a></p> <p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY</b>  Martinez-Torres, M.E. and Rossett, P.M. (2014). Latin America: Horizontal dialogue, Agroecology and CLOC/Via Campesina. In <i>Rethinking Latin American Social Movements: Radical Action from Below</i>. Rowman &amp; Littlefield Publishers</p>

		Blue Communities in Latin America, Solidarity and Self-determination: <a href="https://www.blueplanetproject.net/index.php/blue-communities-in-latin-america-solidarity-and-self-determination/">https://www.blueplanetproject.net/index.php/blue-communities-in-latin-america-solidarity-and-self-determination/</a>
<b>December 2</b>	<b>Final Project Presentations</b>	

## COURSE POLICIES

### Submission of written assignments and late penalties

Assignments must be submitted via Brightspace on the due date. I do not accept assignments submitted via email. Late assignments may be subject to a reduction of the overall mark at the rate of 5% for each calendar day past the due date. Students facing extenuating circumstances must schedule an appointment to discuss alternative arrangements for missed or late assignments.

### Communications

In order to avoid answering the same question multiple times, I encourage students to post questions seeking clarification on assignments or course content on Brightspace. For questions of a personal nature, please email the teaching team using your Carleton email account with “ENST 2001 ” in the subject heading. Please note that we may not respond to emails over the weekend.

Finally, email is an acceptable medium for simple inquiries, but not for complex questions. If your question cannot be answered in a sentence or two, please schedule a meeting.

### Grades

In accordance with the Carleton University Calendar, the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

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

To be considered in good standing, students must receive a grade of D- . 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.

### Drop date

Please consult the Carleton University Calendar for the last day in the term to withdraw from a course with full fee adjustment at: <https://calendar.carleton.ca/academicyear/>

## **Netiquette**

All students are expected to adhere to Carleton University's Expectations of Student Behaviour Online while participating in Brightspace discussion boards. For more details see: <https://carleton.ca/online/online-learning-resources/netiquette/>

If you have any questions or concerns about **online conduct**, please contact the Manager of Student Conduct and Harm Reduction, Dillon Brady, at [DillonBrady@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:DillonBrady@cunet.carleton.ca).

You will find more information at:

- <https://carleton.ca/online/online-learning-resources/online-discussion-tips/>

## **Copyright of Course Content**

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

## **INSTRUCTIONAL AND CONDUCT OFFENCES**

Carleton University has clear and firm policies regarding instructional and conduct offences. Instructional offences include among other activities cheating, contravening examination regulations, plagiarism (see details below) and submitting similar work in two or more courses without prior permission. Further information about University regulations which define and regulate these offences can be found at:

<https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

## **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 original 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;
- 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; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Please note that you are not permitted to submit substantially the same piece of work submitted elsewhere for academic credit for evaluation in this course.

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.

### **Generative Artificial Intelligence (e.g. ChatGPT)**

Using AI tools to generate content for assignments, and presenting it as one's own original work, as well as copying or paraphrasing the content produced by AI tools without proper citations or the instructor's consent, are both considered to be in violation of academic integrity. See Carleton's policy on [academic integrity](#) for more information:  
<https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

### **ACADEMIC ACCOMODATIONS**

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](https://students.carleton.ca/course-outline)).

### **CAMPUS RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS**

For information about resources and services for students including counselling services, academic support and writing tutorial services please visit: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/current-students/student-resources/>

## Student 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. For more information, please consult: <https://wellness.carleton.ca>

If you are in crisis and need urgent counselling support, call Counselling Services at **613-520-6674** (press 2) (available 8:30 a.m to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday) or come in person to the main counselling clinic (2500 Carleton Technology and Training Centre Building) and indicate that you are in crisis and need to speak to someone urgently.

### 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/>
- Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

### Services for Indigenous Students:

The Centre for Indigenous Support and Community Engagement (CISCE), formerly known as the Centre for Indigenous Initiatives, supports First Nations (status and non-status), Inuit, and Métis students, staff, and faculty by providing culturally safe spaces for dialogue and learning. The Centre provides weekly, monthly and annual programming for students and also develops and delivers resources and training to educate the Carleton community about Indigenous histories, worldviews and perspectives. To learn more about the services offered, please visit <https://carleton.ca/indigenous/cisce/students/>. If you have any questions, you can email [Indigenous@carleton.ca](mailto:Indigenous@carleton.ca)