ENST 4000 (Winter 2026)– Seminar in Environmental Studies (The Politics of the Anthropocene)
Department of Geography and Environmental Studies

"Airshow" by Fred Herzog, 1968 © Equinox Gallery.

"The conquest of the earth... is not a pretty thing when you look into it..." – Joseph Conrad, 1899

"But where the danger is, also grows the saving power." – Friedrich Hölderlin, 1803

Tuesdays 8:35-11:25

Instructor: David Hugill, david.hugill@carleton.ca

Standard Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:30-15:30, or by appointment
Course Brightspace Page: https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/365417

Updated November 20, 2025

1. Course Description

What are the political, social, ethical, and cultural implications of living in an age where human activity has become the dominant force shaping the planet's environments? Our goal this semester is to think critically about this question. To do so, we will take a deep analytical dive into the meaning and politics of the term "Anthropocene."

ENST 4000 is an advanced seminar designed to give you an opportunity to build upon and apply the analytical skills and disciplinary expertise that you have acquired throughout the course of your university career.

You should expect the following from our work this term:

- o **Active Discussion**: This is a discussion-based seminar. It is *critical* that you do the readings in advance and come to class prepared to discuss their contents. The success of this course hinges on active in-class engagement. The significant weight given to participation (20%) as a portion of the final grade reflects this fact.
- o **Challenging material**: The weekly readings (generally about 50-75 pages in length) are challenging. You should start reading at least a few days in advance of the seminar.
- o **Timely feedback**: I will do my best to return all assignments within two weeks of submission.

2. Learning Outcomes/Course Objectives

This course aims to give you opportunities to:

- o Develop an in depth understanding of the Anthropocene concept, and its contested status
- o Engage with cutting edge /contemporary research in the field of Environmental Studies
- o Consider the political implications of human-driven environmental and climatic changes
- o Engage in comradely classroom exchanges
- o Develop high-level communication skills

3. Texts & Course Materials

Required texts are available online (via the Ares portal on our course Brightspace page) and/or at the MacOdrum Library reserve desk. If you like to read physical books, you might consider purchasing one or both of the following texts, which are used extensively in this course.

1. Simon Lewis and Mark Maslin (2018), *The Human Planet: How We Created the Anthropocene* (Pelican Books), $18.99 (feel free to look for a used copy!)
2. Jason W. Moore (ed.) (2016), *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism* (PM Press), $36.95 (feel free to look for a used copy!)

4. Course Calendar

Date//Theme	Required Readings
Week1: January 6 // Introduction and Course Policies (+ the Anthropocene's "Ur" Text)	o Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoermer (2000), "The 'Anthropocene'" in *The International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGPB: A Study of Global Change of the International Council for Science (ICSU) 41*, pp. 17-18. *NO NEED TO READ IN ADVANCE*
UNIT 1: ANTHROPOCENE	
Week 2: January 13// Anthropocene 1	o Simon Lewis and Mark Maslin (2018), "The Meaning of the Anthropocene" in *The Human Planet*, pp. 1-17 o Simon Lewis and Mark Maslin (2018), "Defining the Anthropocene" in *The Human Planet*, pp. 295-327.
Week 3: January 20// Anthropocene 2	o Simon Lewis and Mark Maslin (2018), "Globalization 1.0, "The Modern World" in *The Human Planet*, pp. 149-187. o Kyle Powys Whyte (2017), "Our Ancestors' Dystopia Now: Indigenous Conservation and the Anthropocene," in *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities*, pp. 206-215
Week 4: January 27// Anthropocene 3 *__A1__ due by February 1st at 11:59PM	o Simon Lewis and Mark Maslin (2018), "Globalization 2.0, "The Great Acceleration" in *The Human Planet*, pp. 225-265. o Roger Kiel (2017), "The Urban Political Ecology of Suburbanization," in *Suburban Planet,* pp. X-X
UNIT 2: CAPITALOCENE	
Week 5: February 3 // Capitalocene 1	o Jason W. Moore (2017), "The Capitalocene, Part 1: On the Nature and Origins of our Ecological Crisis," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 44(3): 594-630 o Hartley, Daniel (2016), "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, and the Problem of Culture," in *Anthropocene or Capitalocene: Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*, pp. 154-165.
Week 6: February 10// Capitalocene 2	o Jason W. Moore (2018), "The Capitalocene Part II: Accumulation by Appropriation and the Centrality of Unpaid Work/Energy," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 45(2): 237-279. o Francoise Verges (2017), "Racial Capitalocene: Is the Anthropocene Racial?," on the Verso Blog, https://bit.ly/3vT5npK
Winter Reading Break (February 16-20)	
Week 7: February 24// Midterm	o No assigned readings.
Unit 3: CHTULUCENE/NECROCENE/PLANTATIONOCENE	
Week 8: March 3// Human Entanglement and Chtulucene	o Eileen Crist (2016), "On the Poverty of our Nomenclature," in *Anthropocene or Capitalocene: Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*, pp. 53-71. o Donna J. Haraway (2016), "Staying with the Trouble: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chtulucene," in *Anthropocene or*

	Capitalocene: Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism, pp. 34-76.
Week 9: March 10// Plantationocene and Necrocene *A2 due by Sunday March 15th at 11:59PM	o Sophie Chao et al (2024), "The Plantationocene as Analytical Concept: A Forum for Dialogue and Reflection," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 51(3), pp. 541-563. o Justin McBrien (2016), "Accumulating Extinction: Planetary Catastrophism in the Necrocene," in *Anthropocene or Capitalocene: Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*, pp. 53-71.
UNIT 4: INTERLUDE	
Week 10: March 17// CUAG visit????	o No assigned readings
UNIT 5: EPISTEMIC OBJECT PRESENTATIONS	
Week 11: March 24// Epistemic Object Presentations (1-8)	o No assigned readings
Week 12: March 31// Epistemic Object Presentations (9-16)	o No assigned readings
Week 13: April 7// Epistemic Object Presentations (17-25) ***A3** Epistemic object reports due Sunday April 12th at 11:59PM	o No assigned readings

5. Evaluation

*see complete grading rubrics on course Brightspace page.

Assignment	Weight	Short Description
Participation	20%	A quantitative/qualitative evaluation of student engagement (including attendance and active classroom participation). **N.B.** *Participation is a significant portion of your mark because seminars only succeed if people show up and are prepared to discuss the assigned readings!*
In-Class Responses	5%	Two in-class oral reflections (aim for about 2-3 minutes of comments) on weekly readings. Written responses are not required, the aim here is to get our conversations rolling! (2 x 2.5% = 5% total)
Midterm	20%	Short answer questions, written in class (via Brightspace). Laptop or similar device required.
A1 – Knowledge Web 1	5%	A visual representation of your observations on the course material thus far.
A2 – Knowledge Web 2	15%	An updated visual representation of your observations on the course material.
A3 – Epistemic Object Presentation and Report	35%	Component 1: An in-class presentation (25%)
		Component 2: An in-class peer response (5%)
		Component 3: A Written Report (5%)

Additional Information

- Late assignments will be penalized by 3% per calendar day (to a maximum of 25% total); no assignments will be accepted after two weeks beyond the original deadline (unless an alternative arrangement has been made)
- All assignments must follow the style guidelines outlined in the Chicago Manual of Style (16th edition or later); citations can be formatted in either the "notes and bibliography" or "author-date" style, so long as one of these options is used consistently throughout the document; there is a quick Chicago-style citation guide available here: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html
- All assignments will be assessed on the overall quality of presentation, including citation formatting, spelling, grammar, coherence of argument, etc.

- 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.
- In case of illness or extraordinary circumstances, students can request an assignment extension of up to 7 days by completing the form at the following link and submit it to their tutorial leader prior to the assignment due date. https://carleton.ca/registrar/wp-content/uploads/self-declaration.pdf
- The teaching team will do their best to return all assignments within two weeks of submission. All grades will be posted on the course Brightspace page.
- Extensions for longer than 7 days will normally not be granted. In those extraordinary cases where extensions lasting longer than 7 days are granted, the student will be required to provide additional information to justify the longer extension.

Tests and Examinations

- Please note that tests and examinations in this course will use 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 listed on the SES website (https://carleton.ca/ses/online-exams/e-proctoring/e-proctoring-course-outline-template)."

Final Grade Appeal

- 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.

6. Generative Artificial Intelligence and Plagiarism/Academic Integrity

AI Use in ENST 4000

AI use in this course. Students may use AI tools for basic word processing and formatting functions, including:

- Grammar and spell checking (e.g. Grammarly, Microsoft Word Editor)

Please note that is not permissible to use AI tools to generate **ANY AMOUNT** of text for your assignments, nor comprehensively edit your work (beyond the basic functions listed above).

This policy ensures that student voices and ideas are prioritized and authentically represented, maintaining the integrity of the work produced by students while allowing basic support to enhance clarity, correctness, layout, and flow of ideas. The goal of adopting a limited use of AI is to help students develop foundational skills in writing and critical thinking by practicing substantive content creation without the support of AI

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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:

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

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty follows a rigorous process for academic integrity allegations, including reviewing documents and interviewing the student, when an instructor suspects a violation has been committed. Penalties for violations may include a final grade of "F" for the course.

Please note that it is **NOT PERMISSIBLE** to employ any **generative artificial intelligence tools (e.g. ChatGPT)** in the completion of any aspect of course work in ENST 4000, with the lone exception of the basic grammar and spell checking functions listed above.

Please also note that it is **NOT PERMISSIBLE** to submit assignments that are *substantially the same* as work that was submitted elsewhere (e.g. in other courses/assignments) for academic credit. Assignments will be considered "substantially the same" if they include the repetition of text that has been submitted elsewhere. The lone exception to this rule in ENST 4000, will be assignment 2 (A2) which act as an updated/edited version of assignment 1 (A1).

There are no group assignments in ENST 4000, so students must prepare all assignments independently.

7. Student Mental Health

As a 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/

Emergency Resources (on and off campus)

- Crisis/Urgent Counselling Support: 613-520-6674 (Mon-Fri, 8:30-4:30)
- Suicide Crisis Helpline: call or text 9-8-8, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- For immediate danger or urgent medical support: call 9-1-1

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: call 613-238-3311, text 343-306-5550, or connect online at https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/
- Mental Health Crisis Service: call 613-722-6914 or toll-free 1-866-996-0991, or connect online at http://www.crisisline.ca/
- Good2Talk: call 1-866-925-5454 or connect online at https://good2talk.ca/
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: for online or on-site service https://walkincounselling.com

8. Requests for Academic Accommodations

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).