

SUSTAINABLE FUTURES: ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

ENST 2001 A

Fall 2026

Department of Geography & Environmental Studies, Carleton University

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Office hours: By appointment

Teaching Assistant: to be confirmed

Brightspace:

<https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/449721>

1. 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.

Course Format

The course meets in person on Tuesdays, 14:35-17:25 and consists of lectures, class discussions 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; the discussion board is monitored regularly by the teaching team.

The course includes one mandatory field trip (October 13 — Akikodjiwan/Chaudière Falls and Zibi Development site).

2. Prerequisites

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

3. Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Engage critically with academic, technical and policy-based conceptualizations of sustainability;
- Demonstrate a deeper knowledge and understanding of Indigenous land and environmental justice struggles;
- Apply critical thinking, research and advocacy skills through class discussions and assignments;

- Develop or further refine a personal environmental ethic; and
- Identify ways to apply knowledge and engage directly in building sustainable futures.

4. Texts & Course Materials

There is one required book for 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.

Electronic copies are accessible through MacOdrum library. A hard copy has been placed on reserve for this course.

Students who wish to purchase their own copies may do so at: <https://www.versobooks.com/en-ca/products/600-our-history-is-the-future>

- Ebook: \$13.99
- Hardback: \$35.95

****Course content may be modified at the instructor's discretion; students should monitor email and Brightspace for updates.***

5. Course Calendar — Fall 2026

Date	Theme / Activities	Course Material
Sept 15	Introduction and overview <i>Community Agreement</i>	The Gift We Give One Another: A Community Agreement Resource from the BCcampus Anti-Racism Anti-Hate Working Group. https://bccampus.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/AR-AH-Community-Agreement-MAR-17-letterhead-3.pdf
Sept 22	Indigenous Environmental Justice <i>*Learning journey due at the beginning of class.</i>	REQUIRED McGregor, D. (2018). Mino-Mnaamodzawin: Achieving Indigenous Environmental Justice in Canada. <i>Environment and Society: Advances in Research</i>, Vol 9, pp. 7–24. Kimmerer, R. W. (2015). "The Gift of Strawberries." In <i>Braiding Sweetgrass</i>. Milkweed Editions. https://indigenous.abbyschools.ca/sites/default/files/3.%20%20The%20Gift%20of%20Strawberries%20Excerpt_0_0.pdf SUPPLEMENTARY Vásquez-Fernández, A.M.; Ahenakew pii tai poo taa, C. (2020). Resurgence of relationality: reflections on decolonizing and indigenizing 'sustainable development.' <i>Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability</i>, Vol. 43, pp. 65–70. Case studies: Black, K. (2021). These First Nations are Taking Safe Drinking Water into their own Hands. Broadview. https://broadview.org/water-boil-advisory-first-nations/ Tiny House Warriors — http://www.tinyhousewarriors.com

Sept 29	Unsettling Sustainability Part 1 <i>*Final project proposals discussed in class.</i>	Readings provided in assignment guide on Brightspace.
Oct 6	Unsettling Sustainability Part 2 <i>*Mandatory field trip to Akikodjiwan (Chaudière Falls) and Zibi Development</i>	Readings provided in assignment guide on Brightspace.
Oct 13	<i>Our History is The Future Part 1</i> <i>*Unsettling sustainability assignment due before class.</i>	Read: Estes, N. (2019). Our History is the Future: Standing Rock versus the Dakota Access Pipeline and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance. Verso Books. Chapters 1, 2 & 3
Oct 20	<i>Our History is The Future Part 2</i>	REQUIRED Estes, N. (2019). Our History is the Future: Standing Rock versus the Dakota Access Pipeline and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance. Verso Books. Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7.
Oct 26–30	Fall Break — no classes	
Nov 3	Degrowth <i>*Our History is the Future Assignment due.</i> <i>*The second half of this class will be use to create small groups and plan for final projects.</i>	REQUIRED Demaria, F., Kallis G., & Bakker, K. (2019). Geographies of degrowth: Nowtopias, resurgences and the decolonization imaginaries and places. Nature and Space, pp. 431–450. Nirmal, P., and Rocheleau, D. "Decolonizing Degrowth in the Post-Development Convergence: Questions, Experiences, and Proposals from Two Indigenous Territories." Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space, Vol. 2, No. 3, 2019, pp. 465–92. https://doi.org/10.1177/2514848618819478 SUPPLEMENTARY https://greattransition.org/publication/the-degrowth-alternative

Nov 10	The Commons and radical action from below <i>Guest lecture: Marcela Olivera, Blue Planet Project, Bolivia</i>	REQUIRED Dwinell, A. and Olivera, M. (2014). The water is ours damn it! Water Commoning in Bolivia. Community Development Journal, Vol. 49, Issue suppl_1, pp. i44–i52. Brily, A. (June 25, 2020). Zapatistas: Lessons in community self-organization in Mexico. Open Democracy. SUPPLEMENTARY Martinez-Torres, M.E. and Rossett, P.M. (2014). Latin America: Horizontal dialogue, Agroecology and CLOC/Via Campesina. In Rethinking Latin American Social Movements: Radical Action from Below. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Blue Communities in Latin America, Solidarity and Self-determination: https://www.blueplanetproject.net/index.php/blue-communities-in-latin-america-solidarity-and-self-determination/
Nov 17	Final project proposals	No readings. We will use this class to present and receive feedback on final project proposals.
Nov 24	Social Ecology and Eco-feminism in Rojava	REQUIRED Finley, E. (2025). Practicing Social Ecology: From Bookchin to Rojava and Beyond. Pluto Press. Chapters 1–3, pp. 22–68. SUPPLEMENTARY David, A. (2025). "Seeding ecofeminism in Rojava." The Ecologist. https://theecologist.org/2025/jul/28/seeding-ecofeminism-rojava See agroecology map for case studies: https://www.foei.org/what-we-do/food-sovereignty/agroecology-map/
Dec 1	Student-led Content TBD	
Dec 8	Final Project Presentations <i>Last day of classes for this course.</i>	

6. Evaluation

a. List of Evaluation Elements

Element	Description	Weight
Contributions to the learning community	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.	15%

Learning journey	Share the story of your journey as a learner in 500 words. See details on the assignment description sheet on Brightspace. Due date: September 22 (or before your second class, for those who join the course late).	5%
Unsettling sustainability assignment	Students are required to attend a mandatory field trip on October 13 as part of this assignment. Details on Brightspace. Due date: October 20.	15%
Assignment on Our History is the Future	Assignment on Our History is the Future by Nick Estes. Details to follow. Due date: November 3.	20%
Fishbowl	We will use the "fishbowl" method to begin each seminar with a lively, informal student-led discussion on the readings (both supplementary and required readings). Sign up for one fishbowl no later than September 22 (sign-up sheet linked on Brightspace).	15%
Final group project	Dates: • Mandatory planning session Nov 3 • Proposals presented in class on November 17 — 5% • Final assignments due and presented in class on December 8 — 25%	30%

Submission of Written Assignments and Late Penalties

Assignments must be submitted via Brightspace on the due date. Assignments submitted by email will not be accepted. Late assignments are subject to a reduction of the overall mark at the rate of 5% per calendar day past the due date. Students facing extenuating circumstances must make an appointment to meet with the instructor to discuss alternative arrangements (see Section 10, Requests for Academic Accommodations, below).

b. Assignments, Tests and Examinations

This course has no midterm or final examination. Evaluation is based on assignments and activities detailed above (section 6).

c. 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.

Grades

In accordance with the Carleton University Calendar, letter grades in this course 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.

7. Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Unless otherwise stated for a specific assignment, students may not use generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT) to generate content that is submitted as one's own original work. Copying or paraphrasing AI-generated content without disclosure and citation is considered a violation of academic integrity, as is any use of AI on the Learning Journey, Fish Bowl, or class activities which are intended to reflect the student's own voice and direct experience.

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.

8. Statement on 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 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 (see section 7);
- 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;
- failing to acknowledge sources through proper citations;

Re-use of prior work: Students may not submit substantially the same piece of work submitted elsewhere for academic credit for evaluation in this course.

Collaborative work: The final group project involves collaborative work; expectations for group participation and individual accountability will be clarified on Brightspace. Unless an assignment explicitly permits collaboration, all other work (including the Learning Journey and the Unsettling Sustainability and Our History is the Future assignments) must be completed individually.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course 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.

9. Statement on 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 a.m.–4:30 p.m.)
- 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://wellness.carleton.ca/>
- 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 or toll-free 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

10. 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: <https://students.carleton.ca/services/accommodation/>.

Short-term extenuating circumstances (normally 5 days or less): You may be asked to complete the University's Self-Declaration Form (Academic Consideration for Coursework Form). Medical documentation is not required to support these requests.

Disability: Students requiring academic accommodation on the basis of disability must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) and request a Letter of Accommodation be sent to the instructor as early as possible each term.

Religious obligations: Students requiring accommodation on the basis of religious observance must submit a formal written request to the instructor, normally within the first two weeks of the term (and in no case later than the second-last week of classes), including suggested alternate dates or means of satisfying the requirement.

Pregnancy and family status: Students requiring accommodation on the basis of pregnancy or family status should contact the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate academic accommodation.

11. Policy on Classroom Recording

Classroom teaching and learning activities, including lectures, discussions, and presentations (by both instructors and students), are protected by copyright and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s). Students may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use only. Audio or video recording of class sessions by students is not permitted without the prior written consent of the instructor and, where applicable, of any students being recorded. Students approved for accommodated note-taking should contact the instructor to discuss arrangements.

Additional Course Policies

Communications

To avoid answering the same question multiple times, students are encouraged to post questions about 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. The teaching team may not respond to emails over the weekend. Email is appropriate for simple inquiries; if your question cannot be answered in a sentence or two, please schedule a meeting.

Drop Date

Please consult the Carleton University Calendar for the last day in the term to withdraw from a course with full fee adjustment: <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. See <https://carleton.ca/online/online-learning-resources/netiquette/>. Questions or concerns about online conduct may be directed to the Manager of Student Conduct and Harm Reduction, Dillon Brady, at DillonBrady@cunet.carleton.ca.

Services for Indigenous Students

The Centre for Indigenous Support and Community Engagement (CISCE) supports First Nations (status and non-status), Inuit, and Métis students, staff, and faculty by providing culturally safe spaces for dialogue and learning, and develops resources and training to educate the Carleton community about Indigenous histories, worldviews, and perspectives. Learn more at <https://carleton.ca/indigenous/cisce/students/> or email Indigenous@carleton.ca.