

**PSCI 3801 A**  
**Environmental Politics**

This course will be held remotely online

**Instructor: Kimberly Bittermann**

**Online Office Hours:** On BBB Friday 3:30 – 5:30 p.m. or by appointment (please e-mail)

**Email:** [kimberlybittermann@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:kimberlybittermann@cunet.carleton.ca)

**Course description**

This course introduces students to the history, development, and current form of environmental issues, focusing on the Canadian context. It examines how environmental issues are framed and what some of the implications of those framings are. The aim of the course is to provide an overview of significant environmental actors, writers, events, and processes and an understanding of key concepts and debates in environmental politics.

**Class Structure**

This course is asynchronous and will be structured by weekly modules that can be completed at any point through the week. Each module will include a combination of lectures, videos and readings. Students will also be required to submit weekly reading summaries and participate in online discussions. Please refer to the CU Learn page for the most up-to-date requirements for each week.

**Learning objectives**

- Become familiar with the development of environmental issues and debates, particularly in Canada
- Build the skills of critical environmental policy analysis
- Apply critical analysis to current events

**Texts**

All reading materials are available through cuLearn.

**Evaluation**

Participation	30%
Essay Outline (due Oct. 1 <sup>st</sup> )	10%
Essay (due Nov. 19 <sup>th</sup> )	25%
Final Exam	35%

**Participation (30%)**

**Reading Summaries (15%)**

Reading summaries critically engage with the week's assigned materials (chapters, articles, videos). Details on how to do this will be posted on CuLearn. The reading summaries will not be graded but will be used to help me determine the class participation mark. Students are welcome to email me or schedule a meeting for a review of how they are doing in the course. You are encouraged to use these summaries in preparation for the final exam.

### **Online Discussion Groups (15%)**

You will be assigned to a small discussion group at the start of the semester. Students will be required to participate in a discussion about the course materials. Details on how to do this will be posted on CuLearn.

### **Essay Outline (10%)— 500- 700 words**

This assignment is to develop an outline for your final paper. You will need to identify the article you will be using, state your tentative thesis, and provide the topic sentences for 5-6 paragraphs that will sustain your thesis. Your final essay project is to critically analyze how a news article has been framed. Your outline should clearly identify the logical steps that you will take to do this. **The essay outline is due on Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>**

### **Essay (30%) – 1500-2000 words**

For this assignment, your task is to take a current environmental news article and analyze it drawing from the insights you have gained from the study of environmental issues this term. You will need to find an appropriate news story in the *Weekly Guardian* or *Yale Environment 360* that has been published since 1 January 2020. If you wish to use another source, you will need to clear it with me first. Your paper should provide a critique of how the article was framed and an analysis of the potential consequences of that framing. **The essay is due Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>**

Marking: Your paper will be marked on the basis of content, organization, argumentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar. Papers that fail to state and develop a thesis will not receive a passing grade.

**Final Exam (30%)** Three final exam questions will be posted on the course CuLearn page on the first day of class. Only **one** of these questions will be on the final exam. Students are encouraged to plan early for this exam.

## **Course Schedule**

### **PART 1 (weeks 1-2): Analytical Tools**

#### Week 1 (Sept. 10th)

##### **Course overview**

##### **Required reading:**

This syllabus

#### Week 2 (Sept. 14 - 18)

##### **Framing and narratives in environmental politics**

Films:

- Jennifer Baichwal and Nicholas de Pencier, *Anthropocene: The Human Epoch*, Directed by Edward Burtynsky, Jennifer Baichwal, and Nicholas de Pencier, Mongrel Media Inc., 2018.

##### **Required reading:**

- Donald Worster, “The Ends of the Earth: Perspectives on Modern Environmental History,” (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 3-20.
- Ed Struzik, “Fire-Induced Storms: A New Danger from the Rise in Wildfires,” *Yale Environment 360*, (24 January 2019).

### **PART 2 (weeks 3-6): Environmental Issues in a Canadian and World Context**

Week 3 (Sept. 21-25)

**The politics of forestry**

Films:

- Robert Anderson and Fernand M  nard, "Serial Attack on Spruce Budworm," in *Eyewitness* Series no. 67, National Film Board of Canada, 1954. (10 minutes)
- Neal Livingston, *Herbicide Trials*, DVD, National Film Board of Canada, 1984.

**Required reading:**

- James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998): 1-52.

Week 4 (Sept. 28 – Oct. 2)

**The politics of fisheries**

Film:

- Nigel Markham, *Taking Stock*, DVD, National Film Board of Canada, 1994.

**Required reading:**

- Rosemary Ommer, "One Hundred Years of Fisheries Crises in Newfoundland," *Acadiensis* 23:2 (Spring 1994): 5-20.
- Charles Clover, *The End of the Line: How Overfishing is Changing the World and What We Eat*, (New York: The New Press, 2006): 1-23 and 41-53.

Week 5 (Oct. 5 - 9)

**Environmental activism in Canada**

Film:

- Michael Maclear and Shelley Saywell, *The Greenpeace Years*, DVD, National Film Board of Canada, 1991.

**Required reading:**

- Andrea Olive, *The Canadian Environment in Political Context*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016): 77-98.
- Rex Weyler, *Greenpeace: An Insider's Account* (London: Rodale, 2004): 55-90.

Week 6 (Oct. 13 - 16)

**The rise of a global environmentalism**

Film:

- Terre Nash, *Marilyn Warring on the Environment*, DVD, National Film Board of Canada, 1996. (26 min)

**Required reading:**

- James Meadowcroft and James Forino, eds., *Conceptual Innovation in Environmental Policy*, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2017): 53-76.
- James Meadowcroft, "Reaching the limits? Developed country engagement with sustainable development in a challenging conjuncture"

## **PART 3 (weeks 7-12): Contemporary Environmental Issues**

Week 7 (Oct. 19 - 23)

### **Toxins in the environment and environmental racism**

Film:

- Patrick McGuire and Rafael Katigbak, *Canada's Toxic Chemical Valley*, Vice Media Inc., 2013.
- Ellen Page, Ian Daniel, Ingrid Waldron, and Julia Sanderson, *There's Something in the Water*, Directed by Ellen Page and Ian Daniel, 2 Weeks Notice, 2019.

### **Required reading:**

- Dayna Nadine Scott, "Gender-benders': Sex and Law in the Constitution of Polluted Bodies," *Feminist Legal Studies* 17:3 (2009): 241–265.
- Marla Cone, *Silent Snow: The Slow Poisoning of the Arctic* (New York: Grove Press, 2005): 144-159.

### **Fall Break – October 26 - 30**

Week 8 (Nov. 2 - 6)

### **Climate change on (and off) the political agenda**

Film:

- Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, *Merchants of Doubt*, DVD, Directed by Robert Kenner, Mongrel Media Inc., 2014.

### **Required reading:**

- Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, "The Denial of Global Warming," in *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming*, (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2010): 169-215.

Week 9 (Nov. 9 - 13)

### **Business politics and environmental change**

Film:

- Mark Achbar, Bart Simpson, *The Corporation*, DVD, Directed by Mark Achbar, Jennifer Abbott, Big Picture Media Corporation, 2003.

### **Required reading:**

- Jonathan Watts and John Vidal, "Environmental defenders being killed in record numbers globally, new research reveals." *The Guardian*, (13 July 2017).
- John Vidal, "As water scarcity deepens across Latin America, political instability grows," *The Guardian*, (1 March 2017).

Week 10 (Nov. 16 - 20)

### **Part 1: Agricultural in crisis – soil health, biodiversity, and climate change**

Film:

- Robert Kenner, Elise Pearlstein, and Kim Roberts, *Food Inc.*, DVD, Directed by Robert Kenner, Magnolia Pictures, 2007.

### **Required reading:**

- John Vidal, “Farming mega-mergers threaten food security, say campaigners,” *The Guardian*, 26 March 2016.
- Jennifer Clapp, Peter Newell, and Zoe Brent, “The Global Political Economy of Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Systems” *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 45:1 (2017): 80-88.

Week 11 (Nov. 23 - 27)

**Part 2: Agricultural in crisis – soil health, biodiversity, and climate change**

Film:

- TBA

**Required reading:**

- George Monbiot, “We’re treating soil like dirt. It’s a fatal mistake, as our lives depend on it,” *The Guardian*, (25 March 2015).
- David Montgomery, *Growing a Revolution: Bringing Our Soil Back to Life* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2017): 1-40.
- TBA

Week 12 (Nov. 30 – Dec. 4)

**Back to local – small places can make big changes**

**Required reading:**

- Shawn William Miller, *An Environmental History of Latin America*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 167-192
- TBA

Week 13 (Dec. 7 - 11)

**Review**

### Accommodations during COVID

Due to COVID, instructors will not request or require a doctor's note when students seek accommodation for missed term work or exams due to illness. Instead, students will be asked to complete the self-declaration form available here: [https://carleton.ca/registrar/wp-content/uploads/COVID-19\\_Self-declaration.pdf](https://carleton.ca/registrar/wp-content/uploads/COVID-19_Self-declaration.pdf)

### **Academic Accommodations**

#### Pregnancy

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, visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](http://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf)

#### Religious obligation

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, visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](http://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf)

#### Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.

#### 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 is 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](http://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support)

#### 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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: [students.carleton.ca/course-outline](http://students.carleton.ca/course-outline)

#### Plagiarism

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional 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 which cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct 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 may include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.

More information on the University's Academic Integrity Policy can be found at:

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

#### Intellectual property

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

---