

JGE331H1S – Resource and Environmental Theory Course Syllabus

Wednesdays 2-4pm
Wilson Hall New College
Room 1017
(40 Willcocks Street)

Instructor: James Nugent

Office Hours: 1-2pm, 4-5pm Wednesdays

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Teaching Assistants: Killian McCormack

Overview

What is the relationship between the environment and the economy?

It may seem apparent that our current economic system is implicated in causing environmental problems such as deforestation, the collapse of fisheries, air and water pollution, biodiversity loss, and climate change. However, scholars, policy-makers, and activists disagree about the relationship between the environment and the economy, and the extent to which the current economic system can be reformed to address these socio-ecological problems.

In exploring the relationship between “the environment” and “the economy,” this course addresses some central questions: Can the current environmental crisis be solved within a capitalist system or is a radical restructuring of the political-economy necessary? Are there limits to economic growth? Can eco-technologies (driven by capitalist entrepreneurship and competition) find new substitutions and efficiencies that can offset or actually reduce environmental degradations? Should the state have a stronger role in managing natural resources and regulating economic processes in order to address environmental problems? Or is the problem rather that private property and free market institutions have not yet been extended far enough into the realm of the environment? Perhaps environmental problems such as resource scarcities and land degradation are not caused by our (or any) particular economic system, but simply by overpopulation? Is there an inherent trade-off between jobs and the environment?

These questions are framed by major schools of economic and political-economic thinking, namely: neoclassical and environmental economics; eco-socialism/eco-Marxism; ecological economics; ecological modernization; green economics; free market environmentalism and neo-Malthusianism. I do not expect you to become experts in each of these paradigms. But you will learn to identify which paradigm is being used when you read an academic article or engage in mainstream discourse. You will also learn to compare and contrast the underlying moral, epistemological and ontological assumptions of these paradigms.

Paradigms for understanding the environment-economy problem are not neutral; they are based on certain values and worldviews and have political consequences such as the distribution of

environmental goods and bads (i.e. environmental justice). My goal is that you will consider questions of power and justice as we evaluate the strengths and weakness of different paradigms.

Mark Breakdown:

Assignment	Due Date	
In-class Participation (Various activities + Attendance)	10 Classes Throughout Term [No marks for first class. You can miss one class without penalty]	10% (1% per class)
Book Club & Review (1200 words) OR Strategy Board Game & Review (1200)	Book Club or Strategy Board Game group meeting: Before Sunday February 15 th , 11:59pm Final Individual Review: Sunday February 22 nd , 11:59pm	6% 24%
Final Essay (2000 words)	Fireside Chat - Draft Outline: February 23 rd -27 th *Students will meet with the Instructor in groups of 2-3 for 15mins to go over the outline of their essay and chat about the course (worth 5% pass/fail). Essay Draft: Due On-line March 18 th , 2pm Peer Reviews (x2): Due by March 25 th , 2pm Final Essay: Due April 1 st , 11:59pm	5% 5% 5% (2.5% each) 20%
Final Exam	TBA (April 8th-30th)	25%

Other important dates:

Jan 18th Last day to add and change meeting sections in courses with S section codes

Feb 17-20th Reading Week

March 8th Last day to drop courses with S section codes from academic record and GPA. After this deadline a mark is recorded for each course, whether course work is completed or not (a 0/zero is assigned for incomplete work), and calculated into the GPA. Note that some courses cannot be cancelled using the SWS and students must contact their College or Department to do so; refer to the Registration Instructions. Last day to add or remove a CR/NCR option for S section code courses.

April 2nd Classes end in S and Y section code courses; deadline to request Late Withdrawal (LWD) from S and Y section code courses at College Registrar's Office

April 30th Last day to file a petition regarding term work for 2014-2015 fall-winter session S and Y section code courses

May 7th Last day to file a petition regarding a final examination for 2014-2015 fall-winter session S and Y section code courses

Course Topics Schedule
Environment and the Economy

Important Date	Topic
1. January 7th	Course Overview
2. January 14th	Ongoing debates over the environment-economy relationship <i>Jobs vs. the Environment?</i> <i>Poverty & the Environment</i> <i>Population vs. Environment? (Neo-malthusianism 'overpopulation')</i> <i>Limits to Growth</i> <i>Tragedy of the Commons? ('Freedom in a commons brings ruin to all')</i> <i>State regulation vs. The market vs. Common pool resource management</i>
3. January 21 st	Neo-classical & Free-market Economics <i>Scarcity, prices, substitution, externalities, discounting</i> <i>Free-market environmentalism</i>
4. January 28 th	Natural Resource Economics <i>Guest Lecture: Xiao Han, Department of Forestry</i>
5. February 4th	Environmental Economics I <i>Contingent valuation, cost-benefit analysis, discounting, payment schemes and market-based mechanisms, ecological modernization</i>
6. February 11th	Environmental Economics II <i>Critiques of market-based mechanisms: Deliberative democracy</i> <i>Critiques of ecological modernization</i>
February 15 th	Last day to have met with book club or board game group to receive 6%.
NO CLASS (Feb.18th)	READING WEEK
February 22 nd	Individual Book/Game Review Due (24%)
February 23-27 th	Fireside Chat with Instructor (5%) Bring Essay Outline
7. February 25 th	Ecological Economics

	<i>Second law of thermodynamics, closed vs. open systems, natural capital</i>
8. March 4 th	Governing the Commons <i>Climate change case study</i>
March 8th	DROP DATE
9. March 11 th	Eco-Marxism I: Is Capitalism Sustainable? <i>Second contradiction of capitalism, metabolic rift, environmental justice</i>
10. March 18 th	Eco-Marxism II Essay Draft Due (Blackboard & Turnitin.com) by 2pm (5%)
11. March 25 th	Eco-Feminist Economics Two Peer Reviews must be completed by 2pm (2.5%x2=5%)
12. April 1 st	Final Exam Review Final Essay Due 2pm (20%)

Required text for this course is:

Molly Scott Cato. 2011. *Environment and Economy*. Routledge: New York.
[Available at the UofT Bookstore, or used at www.bookfinder.com ISBN-10: 0415477417]

And choose ONE of the following for your book review unless you are reviewing two strategy board games in which case see separate email with list of approved board games for review.

You can read descriptions of each on the web links provided. Both books look at eco-marxist/eco-socialist theory. I have chosen these because we will not cover eco-marxism until the end of the course, but you may want to use eco-marxism as one of the paradigms for your final essay. Please note that the second book will be more fulfilling for those of you wanting a more nuanced understanding of eco-marxist theory:

Fred Magdoff and John Bellamy Foster. 2011. *What Every Environmentalist Needs to Know About Capitalism: A Citizen's Guide to Capitalism and the Environment*. Monthly Review Press: New York. pp.187.

You can purchase this book from the UofT Bookstore (faster) or directly from the publisher on this website: for \$13.95: <http://monthlyreview.org/press/books/pb2419/>

OR

Joel Kovel. 2007. The enemy of nature: the end of capitalism or the end of the world? 2nd Edition. London: Zed Books.

You can purchase this book directly from the UofT Bookstore (faster) or directly from the publisher on this website for \$36.45: <http://brunswickbooks.ca/Enemy-of-Nature-Second-Edition-Joel-Kovel/>

A free electronic version of the First Edition of this book is available through the UofT library system: <http://go.utlib.ca/cat/7236964>

You may also find cheaper used versions of these books or electronic versions on other websites. E.g. www.bookfinder.com. I have also requested these books be placed on course reserves for short-term loan.

Assignments

There are two assignments for this course on top of the reading reflections. More instructions will be given to you in the second or third week of the course.

Assignment #1 (30%):

The first assignment is a book review OR a review of two strategy board games that address the economy-environment relationship. There are two steps to this assignment. First you will need to meet in a group (3-5) to discuss the book (or learn and play two rounds of two approved board games). This is worth 6%. You will then write and submit your individual review based on the group discussion and your own ideas/reflections. The final review is worth 24%. You can find a guide for writing a book review here:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/book-review>. I will give you a separate assignment sheet with more information.

Note: The board game option may sound easier, but the games I have selected are not party games like Monopoly. These are strategy/educational games that take at least one hour to learn and 2-3 hours to play. You will be asked to identify concepts from the course that are present in the game, and to make specific suggestions about how to change the game to incorporate other concepts from the course.

Assignment #2 (35%): The second assignment is an essay on a topic that you will choose from a list. You will engage with two or more of the paradigms covered in this course in explaining the causes of the environmental problem and/or to propose a solution. This is not meant to be a research essay but rather a chance to engage deeper with a number of the readings in the course and apply this to an environmental issue that interests you. While you will need to do some background research on the environmental problem or policy that you choose, but focus your paper on how to apply the paradigms covered in this course to your issue. Draw from across the readings in this course to create a dialogue between authors in relation to your issue. This will also be good preparation for your final exam. Assignment 2 has three stages:

i. Fireside Chat (5%)

As part of assignment 2 you will schedule a group “fireside chat” with the Instructor to discuss the outline of your essay during the first week back from Reading Week (worth 5% of your final grade, pass/fail).

*Sign-up with your group (or add yourself to a single person to form a group) here:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1PScpY42b6_qsJ1NH9YoR1QUWFgn3TNoM_WYjZVaJVAAQ/edit?usp=sharing

ii. Submit Draft Essay (5%)

Please submit your draft essay on-line through Blackboard and Turnitin.com.

iii. Peer Review (2 x 2.5% = 5%)

As part of your essay assignment, you are required to review two draft essays

iv. Revise and submit final essay (20%)

Submit your final essay on-line through Blackboard and Turnitin.com showing track changes (or edits highlighted with different font colour).

Late Assignments

Assignments submitted late will be deducted 3% per day (including each weekend day) off from the assignment’s final mark.

Circumstances always arise which cause some people to legitimately miss deadlines. If you do become ill (or otherwise incapacitated) you must provide me with appropriate documentation. Contact me as soon as possible – and no later than one-week after the original due date. For medical exemptions, only the official U of T “Verification of Student Illness or Injury” form will be accepted (see: <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>). For non-medical emergencies, please submit a letter from your college registrar. Be aware that submitting a note that has been altered or obtained under false pretences is considered a very serious offence by the University.

Final Exam & Reading Guide Questions

Each lecture I will give you a set of questions to help guide your reading for the following week’s readings. At the end of the course, I will choose from amongst these questions to make-up the essay portion of the final exam. For the exam, I will expect very high quality answers that draw extensively on the readings and other overall themes in the course. It will not be sufficient to simply draw on one or two weeks of readings when answering the final exam questions. There may also be some multiple choice questions on the final exam covering the entire course and drawn especially from my lectures.

Expectations:

I expect that you will come to class prepared to discuss the readings. I prefer a back-and-forth, participatory learning environment. I know that this can be terrifying for more introverted students, or people who prefer taking time to reflect over a question before answering. But I hope that as the course progresses, everyone will feel comfortable contributing to classroom discussion. I try to reduce the anxiety of speaking in class by having you work in pairs or groups before presenting to the class. The onus is on the entire class to create a space where everyone can feel comfortable voicing their ideas. I will also be giving you questions to help guide your readings. If you find talking in public terrifying, the best thing you can do is come to class with any comments or questions that arose from the readings. Remember, that I am not evaluating your language skills or oratory showmanship in class; rather, I am most concerned with the substance of your ideas and arguments. Similarly, if you really enjoy talking in class, keep in mind how much space you're taking up so that others can have a chance to contribute.

My goal in this course is that you actually *learn*. This may seem obvious, but it is amazing how easy it is to go through school, even doing well on exams, without actually learning. It will not be enough to simply memorize lecture slides, since learning is a process of *critical engagement* with the course material, other learners, and society more broadly. We will discuss more in class what I mean by 'critical engagement.' In brief, this course will require that you learn specific 'facts' such as concepts and models that tie these concepts together. But most importantly, I want you to also be able to identify the assumptions underlying these concepts and models, understand how they were produced, and how they are applied to contemporary problems and debates. As you begin to feel more comfortable with the often-competing schools of thought covered in this course, you should develop your own personal opinions in answering the central questions identified above.

Please note that we will not be grading you on what your opinion is, but rather how well your support your opinion with arguments and evidence.

Since my goal is for you to learn a process of critical thinking and writing, you will find that we use an iterative learning process. You will engage at least four times with the readings. First, you will read the readings before lecture, identifying key concepts and questions. Then you will attend a lecture that will be informed by the readings. Third, you use the readings in your final essay. And finally, the final exam will draw directly on the questions I give you each week in class to help guide you through the readings. It should therefore become obvious to you that doing the readings will really help you to learn and do well in this course!

Blackboard

It is your responsibility to check Blackboard frequently (one or twice a week). You MUST have a your.name@mail.utoronto.ca (or @utoronto.ca) email address indicated on ROSI to properly receive messages from the instructors through Blackboard. You can access the Blackboard site here:

<https://portal.utoronto.ca/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>

Please note that all assignment will be submitted onto Blackboard AND Turnitin.com, with the exception of the final essay proposal-outline which you will be bringing to the Fireside Chat

meeting with the Instructor. It is your responsibility to ensure that your assignment is uploaded properly. Please submit your assignment in two ways: cut and paste the text of your assignment into the text box for the assignment, as well as upload the formatted file to Blackboard as an attachment. We will be marking the attachment so don't worry if your formatting is wrong or not visible for the cut and paste version.

Turnitin.com

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

Prerequisites:

[GGR100H1/GGR107H1/ENV221H1/ENV222H1/GGR222H1/GGR223H1](#)

Exclusion: GGR331H1

If you do not meet these prerequisites, please see me after the first or second class, or come to my office hours in the first or second week.

*Note: No prior courses in economics is necessary to take this course and students who have taken economics will still benefit from taking this course. There will be significant overlap with courses in environmental economics, although this course takes a critical view of environmental economics as a sub-discipline.

Writing and Plagiarism

The University of Toronto is committed to the principles of academic integrity. Please review the University's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters.

There are many tools to help you improve your writing. Please make an appointment with your college's writing centre and check out the following website:

www.utoronto.ca/writing . **Plagiarism is a extremely serious academic offence and we will be taking measures to identify plagiarized assignments. It is your responsibility to understand what plagiarism is, and how to avoid it. Please see:**

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

Accessibility Needs

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible:

disability.services@utoronto.ca or <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>

Grading

For grading regulations and other rights and responsibilities, consult the course calender: <http://www.artsandscience.utoronto.ca/ofr/calendar/rules.htm>

Reading Schedule

Week 1. January 7th Course Overview

No readings. Please sign-up for Turnitin.com and ensure your institutional email is working with Blackboard.

Week 2. January 14th Ongoing debates over the environment-economy relationship

Canadian Labour Congress. 2001. Green Jobs Creation Project: Background Paper. Available online at: <http://www.canadianlabour.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/Green-Jobs-Creation-Project-2003-En.pdf>

Week 3. January 21st Neo-classical & Free Market Economics

Molly Scott Cato. 2011. *Environment and Economy*. Routledge: New York. Chapters 1 & 3.

Jones, Laura. 2001. A Different Kind of Environmentalist. Fraser Forum. [The Fraser Institute]. April. Pp.4-6. http://oldfraser.lexi.net/publications/forum/2001/04/section_02.html

Smith, Fred. 1993. "The Market and Nature." In *Ecology, Liberty and Property: A Free Market Environmental Reader*. June 5th, 2000. <http://cei.org/op-eds-and-articles/market-and-nature>

Week 4. January 28th Natural Resource Economics

Cato, Chapters 10 & 11.1 (pp.167-169).

Week 5. February 4th Environmental Economics I: Market-based Mechanisms

Cato, Chapter 4.

Mikael Skou Andersen & Ilmo Massa (2000) Ecological modernization — origins, dilemmas and future directions, *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 2:4, 337-345, DOI: 10.1080/714852820 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/714852820>

OR

Arthur Mol, Gert Spaargaren, David Sonnenfeld. 2013. "Ecological Modernization Theory: Taking stock, moving forward." In *Routledge International Handbook of Social and Environmental Change* by Stewart Lockie, David A. Sonnenfeld, Dana R. Fisher (eds).

Week 6. February 11th Environmental Economics II: Putting a Price on Nature

Chapter 8 & 11.2-11.5

Costanza, R., R. D'Arge, et al. (1997). "The value of the world's ecosystem services and natural capital." *Nature* 387(6630): 253-260.

February 18th - NO CLASS *READING WEEK*

Week 7. February 25th *Ecological Economics*

Cato, Chapter 5 & 9

Week 8. March 4th *Governing the Commons: Case Study Climate Change*

Cato, Chapter 14 & 13

Week 9. March 11th *Eco-Marxism I: Is Capitalism Sustainable?*

Cato, Chapter 7

Foster, John Bellamy. 1999. "Marx's Theory of Metabolic Rift: Classical Foundations for Environmental Sociology." *American Journal of Sociology* 105, no. 2: 366-405.

- You only need to Read pg. 373-390

Week 10. March 18th *Eco-Marxism II*

*O'Connor, James. 1998. Chapter 8: "The Second Contradiction of Capitalism." *Natural Causes: Essays in Ecological Marxism*. p.158-177.

*O'Connor, Martin. (1993). "On the misadventures of capitalist nature." *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*. 4(3):7-40.

*Available on Blackboard

11. March 25th *Eco-Feminist Economics*

Patricia E. Perkins. 2007. Feminist Ecological Economics and Sustainability. *Journal of Bioeconomics*. 9:227-244. DOI 10.1007/s10818-007-9028-z

Week 12. April 1st *Final Exam Review*

Cato, Chapter 15

Last updated: January 6th, 2014