

Syllabus: JGE 1425 Livelihoods, Poverty and Environment in the Global South

(Tuesday, 11am–1pm)

SS 5017A

(First two weeks will be online via Zoom)

Instructor

Christian Abizaid – christian.abizaid@utoronto.ca

Student Hours: Tuesdays, 1:15pm–3:15pm (Virtual)

Course Description

The livelihoods of the rural poor in the Global South are closely connected to the environment. Hundreds of millions of people, including many indigenous and folk peoples, rely directly upon natural resources, at least in part, for their subsistence and often for market income. For many of them, access to natural resources is a matter of survival – of life or death, a way of life, or the hope for a better future for them or their children. Although the livelihoods of these peoples are sometimes regarded as having a negative impact on the environment, more recently, traditional peoples are being heralded as models for biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource use. A better understanding of how the rural poor make a living — their livelihoods — is considered key to securing their rights, to address issues of poverty and sustainability, and also for environmental change mitigation and adaptation. This course seeks to develop an understanding of livelihoods among the poor in developing countries, with a focus on how assets, social relations, and institutions shape livelihood opportunities in the present and into the future. More broadly, attention will be paid to the ways in which livelihoods are connected to the environment, but also to economic and political processes, in order to gain insight on their potential for poverty alleviation, sustainable resource use, and environmental change mitigation/adaptation. The course will also explore emerging areas of inquiry in livelihoods research.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will develop a general understanding of various concepts and approaches used in livelihood analysis. Students will explore a selection of relevant themes in the livelihoods literature to better understand livelihoods under changing social, economic, political and environmental conditions. Students will gain experience synthesizing and critically assessing articles in the literature and will have the opportunity to further advance their writing and presentational skills.

Course Organization

Access to Course Materials & Readings

A list of required readings will be posted on *Quercus*. Actual readings will be available to you electronically via links to the U of T library system, or through the course's *Quercus*. Alternative arrangements will be made for readings not available in electronic format.

Submissions

Mode of submission varies across assignments. Please refer to each assignment description below for details.

Assignments and Evaluation

Key Dates

Assignment	Weight	Due date
1. Participation in Class	15%	Ongoing
2. Reading Responses (4 x 5% each)	20%	Open
3. Critical Article Review	10%	October 19, 2021
4. Seminar Presentation	5%	Once during the term
5. Term Paper Idea & Proposal	10%	
a. Idea		October 12, 2021
b. Proposal		November 16, 2021
6. Research Proposal Peer Review	5%	November 23, 2021
7. Term Paper	35%	December 14, 2021

Assignment Details

Assignment 1 – Participation

Ongoing, 15%

As a graduate seminar, students are expected to do the assigned readings in advance and be prepared to actively participate in class discussions throughout the term. Participation will be graded based upon the quality of contribution to discussions and on the extent to which students demonstrate that they prepared the assigned readings and engaged with the materials and issues discussed in class.

Assignment 2 – Reading Responses

Four times during the term, 20%

In addition to completing the readings in preparation for our weekly seminar, you will be asked to write a short commentary (250-500 words) on the readings for four of the weeks during the term — you can select which weeks. Commentaries should reflect upon and evaluate the ideas and arguments in the readings, and comment on their relevance or implications, new insights you have gained, or questions that they raise for you. These responses should discuss the readings for a given week in an integrative way (i.e., make connections between the readings of the week, or with others read earlier in the course). Students must submit the responses electronically via email with text embedded in your email (no attachments please) no later than 10:00 AM on the day before the seminar (i.e., Monday). Issues raised in the responses will be incorporated into the discussions of the week and thus, I need some time to read them in order to prepare. As a result, late submissions will not be graded. For weeks in which you are not preparing a response, you are expected to submit two questions pertaining to the readings for discussion (also due by 10:00 AM, Monday). Once received, responses and questions will be anonymized and posted on the course's *Quercus*. Students are expected to read the compendium in advance of the seminar.

Assignment 3 – Critical Article Review

Due October 19, 10%

Students will select a research paper from a list provided by the instructor and prepare a written critical review; the review will be briefly presented in class on October 19. Written reviews should be no longer than 4 pages (double spaced) submitted in hard copy and are due at the beginning of class on October 19. Format for presentations will be discussed later in the term. No reading response is required that week.

Assignment 4 – Seminar Presentation

Once during the term, 5%

Each student will be asked to introduce at least one of the weekly seminars during the term -- tentative dates are marked in the proposed schedule below. You will work in pairs to create a 15 minute presentation that provides general background on the topic for the week, situating the readings within the literature. Please note that this implies some additional research. In addition to the presentation, you will need to prepare 4-5 questions to be considered for discussion. A sign-up sheet will be circulated before September 21; dates will be assigned on a first-come first-serve basis. Details will be discussed in class.

Assignment 5A – Term Paper Idea

Due October 12, 10% (together with Term Paper Proposal)

A one-paragraph description of your proposed topic for the paper. This brief paragraph will serve as a way to introduce your idea, as well as to get early feedback before you start doing the work. Hard-copy or electronic submissions via email are welcome.

Assignment 5B – Term Paper Proposal

Due November 16

This is a 1-2 page submission that outlines the topic/issue to be addressed, why it is important, how you are going to address it, and its expected outcomes. Proposals are due electronically via email. Students will be asked to read 1-2 proposals from their peers and provide feedback.

Assignment 6 – Research Proposal Peer Review

Due November 23, 5%

Each student is also required to read and provide feedback on a peer's proposal. Peer reviews should be ~1 page double-spaced, and must be a thoughtful and constructive review of the proposed work, addressing the research question(s)/objective(s) and theoretical/methodological approach, and where possible make suggestions. Peer reviews will be marked based on the quality of the feedback provided. Arrangements to get peer reviews to other students will be discussed in class, but peer reviews must also be submitted to the instructor electronically via email.

Assignment 7 – Term Paper

Due December 14, 35%

A term paper on a topic/issue of your choice, but related to this course. Students are encouraged to work on a topic that is relevant for the course but also to incorporate their own research interests. This will make for stronger and more engaged (and engaging) papers, from which you will benefit more fully. These papers may be useful for you in the preparation of your research proposal, thesis, or a manuscript for publication. A term paper can take two forms: a research paper or a review paper, and should be 20-25 pages (double-spaced, plus bibliography). Papers are due electronically via email.

Late Policies

Work submitted late will be accepted with a 5% daily penalty (including Saturdays and Sundays), up to seven days after the due date. In the case of an outstanding valid situation, you must contact me, preferably in advance. I cannot consider a situation unless I know about it, so do not wait until the end of the term to communicate with me if something did come up. No extensions will be granted unless you have communicated with the instructor.

Required Readings

A list of required readings will be posted on *Quercus*. Actual readings will be available to you electronically via links to the library, or through the course's *Quercus*. Alternative arrangements will be made for readings not available in electronic format.

Course Expectations

Communication

I have designated a block of time for “virtual” student hours during which I am available to discuss with you course-related matters (for the hours, see the first page of the syllabus). It is time set aside for you-- take advantage of it! Students are welcome to drop-in virtually at any time for the first hour, or to make an appointment during at any time in the two-hour block. Appointments may also be set for students who cannot attend during these scheduled hours. For urgent matters or simple questions, you may also contact me via email, but the rule of thumb is that email should not be a substitute for these “live” sessions. Depending on the situation/issue, I may ask that we set up a virtual meeting.

Tentative Course Schedule*

* Students will be notified of any changes should they occur

[Weeks with student-led seminar presentations are marked with [***]]

Week 1 (September 14): Introduction

No Readings

Week 2 (September 21): Conceptualizing the livelihoods of the poor

PRESENTATION SIGN-UP

Readings

- Scoones, I. (2009). [Livelihoods perspectives and rural development](#). *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 36(1), 171-196.
- Bebbington, A. (1999). [Capitals and capabilities: A framework for analyzing peasant viability, rural livelihoods and poverty](#). *World Development*, 27(12), 2021-2044.
- Carr, E.R. (2014). [From description to explanation: Using the Livelihoods as Intimate Government \(LIG\) approach](#). *Applied Geography*, 52:110-122.

Week 3 (September 28): 'It is about what the poor have' – Assets and livelihood diversification [*]**

Week 4 (October 5): Access – Entitlements, institutions and livelihoods [*]**

Week 5 (October 12): Markets and livelihoods [*]**
TERM-PAPER IDEA DUE

Week 6 (October 19): Gender and livelihoods
CRITICAL ARTICLE REVIEW DUE; NO READING RESPONSE

Week 7 (October 26): Migration and rural livelihoods – breaking the urban-rural divide and the viability of rural livelihoods [*]**

Week 8 (November 2): Livelihoods and social networks [*]**

(November 9): Fall Reading week – NO CLASSES

Week 9 (November 16): Livelihoods, vulnerability and resilience [*]**
TERM-PAPER PROPOSAL DUE

Week 10 (November 23): Rural Livelihoods in the context of COVID-19 [*]**
PROPOSAL PEER REVIEW DUE

Week 11 (November 30): Livelihoods and conservation [*]**

Week 12 (December 7): Course wrap-up
TERM PAPER DUE DECEMBER 14

Policies

The department's full [Graduate Course Policies](#) apply to all courses offered.

Accessibility Services

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

Where there is an accommodation recommended by [Accessibility Services](#), the department and/or instructors will be provided with an accommodation letter.

Academic Integrity

Academic misconduct by graduate students is taken very seriously. The University's policy on academic misconduct is found in the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#) (the Code). Students in graduate studies are expected to commit to the highest standards of integrity and to understand the importance of protecting and acknowledging intellectual property. For example, it is assumed that they bring to their graduate studies a clear understanding of how to cite references appropriately, thereby avoiding plagiarism.

Regarding plagiarism, the Code includes the following statements:

B.i.1. It shall be an offence for a student knowingly:

(d) to represent as one's own idea or expression of an idea or work of another in any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work, i.e., to commit plagiarism.

Wherever in the Code an offence is described as depending on "knowing," the offence shall likewise be deemed to have been committed if the person ought reasonably to have known.

Other academic offences include the possession and/or use of unauthorized aids in examinations, submitting the same paper for different courses without the knowledge of the instructors, forgery (whether of academic records or other documents), concocting facts or references to sources, personating someone, and other forms of cheating and academic dishonesty. Please refer to sections B.i.1. and B.i.3. in the Code for detailed descriptions of offences applicable to students.

The [SGS Academic Integrity Resources webpage](#) outlines the policy on academic misconduct and the process for handling an allegation of academic misconduct.

Religious Accommodations

Students must alert instructors in a timely fashion to any upcoming religious observances and anticipated absences. Instructors will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, exams or other compulsory activities at these times. In the case of an unavoidable conflict with a compulsory activity, every reasonable effort is made to give students the opportunity to make up missed work.

Copyright in Instructional Settings

If a student wishes to record (tape, video, photograph, etc.) any lecture presentations or other similar materials provided by the instructor; the instructor's written consent must be obtained beforehand. Otherwise, all such reproduction is infringement of copyright and prohibited. In the case of private use by students with disabilities, the instructor's consent shall not be unreasonably withheld.

Extension Requests

The authority to grant an extension to submit coursework beyond the sessional grade deadline is with the department and not the instructor of the course. To request a formal extension beyond a grade deadline, students must submit a Coursework Extension Form, completed by both the student and course instructor, to the relevant graduate department prior to the final grade deadline.

In order to ensure fairness in granting extensions, the department must be reasonably certain that:

- The reasons for delay are serious and substantiated.
- The student is not granted unfair advantage over other students in the course.
- The student has a reasonable chance of completing the outstanding work within the time allotted.
- The normal and satisfactory completion of any new coursework is not in jeopardy.

Extension requests for medical reasons (e.g. short-term illness) must be accompanied by a medical note. Extension requests for students with accommodations due to disability must be supported by documentation from Accessibility Services. Extension requests for other reasons must be detailed in the form or a note to the department.

Mental Health Statement

As a student at U of T, you may experience circumstances and challenges that can affect your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate fully in daily activities. An important part of the University experience is learning how and when to ask for help. There is no wrong time to reach out, which is why there are resources available for every situation and every level of stress.

Please take the time to inform yourself of available resources, including:

- [Geography & Planning Mental Health Support Website](#)
- [Graduate Wellness Services](#)
- [Student Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Emergency support if you're feeling distressed](#)

An important part of the University experience is learning how and when to ask for help. Please take the time to inform yourself of available resources.

Other Student Services and Support Resources

- [Links to Additional Student Services and Support Resources](#) (general services and support for students, international student support, Health & Wellness, financial aid and professional development)