

GGR349 Managing Urban Natures

Instructor: Prof. Sue Ruddick
Office Hours: Friday 11 am – 1 pm or by appointment Sidney Smith Hall 5059
Course Time & Place: Tuesday 12 pm – 2 pm Room RW 140
Contact Information: sue.ruddick@utoronto.ca or via QUERCUS

Course Description

Recent calls to action by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the World Wildlife Fund indicate we are at a crossroads in responding to accelerating global warming and biodiversity loss. Cities are often at the forefront of these transformations, both in feeling their effects but also initiating responses. How might we reimagine our cities in a way that promotes thriving and equitable ecosystems? What tools exist in the policy landscape to initiate needed changes? What innovative responses are emerging to confront the challenges of increased flooding, rising temperatures, habitat fragmentation, and food insecurity? How might we reimagine an urban commons? With a primary focus on Canadian cities, in this course we explore the ways divergent conceptualizations of urban-nature have informed policies and practices drawing largely from critical, political ecology, and Indigenous perspectives; the policy landscape that informs current urban planning; and new and innovative approaches that help us to reshape and reimagine our relationships to urban nature, including initiatives led by municipalities, non-government organizations and citizens groups.

Course material will include a mixture of scholarly articles and planning tools and initiatives.

Course Goals

1. To introduce you to a range of different ways of thinking about urban nature, the ways we understand the relationship between the “urban” and the “natural” and the political and policy implications of different approaches.
2. To enable you to identify how different philosophies have shaped particular planning approaches in the past and visions of the city in the future.
3. To inspire you to envision strategies that promote biodiverse and equitable cities in the near and long term.
4. To provide you with the tools to develop your analytical skills in evaluating different initiatives
5. To provide you with tools to frame arguments for both scholarly and policy audiences and the general public.

Assignments

Paper Proposal - Feb 11	10%
Research Paper -- Last class	30%
Op ed (includes presentation)	10%
Short reflection	10%
Mid-term	30%
Participation in class (includes quizzes)	10%

Email:

Communication will be through QUERCUS. You should check your utoronto email regularly for communications through QUERCUS and allow for notifications from QUERCUS when I send out general announcements. Please do not expect an immediate reply to your email, but I will make every effort will to get back to you within 48 hours (weekends not included).

Office hours:

I will have standing office hours from 11am – 1 pm on Fridays (unless otherwise indicated). If you have a prior scheduling conflict and need to meet with me, please get in touch and we can set up an alternative time.

Readings:

All of your assigned readings (as well as podcasts, video clips and other material for each class) will be available through QUERCUS. At the moment the readings are available in the "module" form on QUERCUS. As I expect you to review the materials for each week before class I will include a "pages" section to help guide you through the readings, the rationale for choosing them and on occasion to list further readings related that weeks topic if you want to pursue the issue in greater depth. The full roster of materials will be available January 28th. I strongly suggest you look through the all topics we cover, to help you think about what you might do for your final paper and help you develop your paper proposal.

Classroom Format:

We will explore the course material through lectures as well as in-class discussions and in-class exercises which build on the assigned readings, case material and current issues. Participation is a critical part of your learning experience -- and I hope the in-class experience will be thought provoking and fun! I expect you to come to class having done the readings. We will on occasion have in-class exercises that will help scaffold your learning experience to assist in you in best preparation for your individual assignments.

In Class Etiquette:

I generally discourage the use of electronics to record lectures for the purpose of note-taking. You may take written notes. The reasons for this are pedagogical: Studies by Cornell University show that students retain fully 70%-80% of the lecture material when they have to take notes by hand. Writing calls on you to listen and condense the key aspects of the argument. If you type the lecture verbatim retain only around 20% of what has been talked about. I will be recording the lectures on my phone and will post summaries of key points and any powerpoint presentations by the end of the week following each lecture.

Cell Phones:

I will request that cell phones be turned off and put away during class time except when we are doing inclass quizzes (using Polleverywhere). These quizzes will not be graded – they are intended to help you check your understanding of an issue, but participation in the quizzes will form part of your participation grade.

In class discussion:

Discussion is a critical part of your learning experience. Given the size of the class I will tend to organize you in groups and present the views of the group to the class. We may also have debates where you will be asked to defend a particular position. I recognize that not everyone is comfortable speaking in public – but I assure you this can be overcome with just a little practice! I am happy to meet with you during office hours or give you tips and strategies if this is one of your challenges.

In Class Quizzes

We may begin the class with a brief quiz to help you assess your understanding of the material. These will not be graded for accuracy but taking the quiz will be part of your participation grade. Please make every effort to come to class on time.

Research Paper Proposal:

The proposal should identify a topic relevant to the course and engage at least two competing philosophies of urban nature, their related approaches in management and their strengths and limitations. A selection of possible essay topics will be provided early in the course, but you are encouraged to select your own topic as long as it engages with the themes of the course. All students must prepare a written essay proposal to be submitted in class on Tuesday, Feb 11, 2020. The proposal must set out the general topic to be addressed; a tentative thesis statement; a brief statement regarding how the essay will relate to the course materials – roughly one full page single spaced. In addition you should include a preliminary annotated bibliography (you may include the abstracts of articles as your annotation) between 10 – 15 articles, book chapters or reports.

Final paper:

A final research paper of 2000 words (about eight pages without bibliography) is due on the last day of class. The research essay is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your ability to critically reflect on the course materials and engage a current issue relevant to planning policy and practice. The paper can take the form of an academic paper or a policy report (briefing notes).

Op-Ed:

You may decide to continue in your studies or to work in private or public practice. In either case, the translation of complex ideas and arguments into an accessible format for a general public is a critical part of your training. If you continue as a scholar, it helps you to sharpen and clarify your focus, if you decide to go into policy work or some other public or private practice, it is a useful tool to inform and inspire a general public about a matter of concern. We will go through the basics of designing an op-ed early on in the course. I will ask you as part of your individual assignments (final paper or report) to produce the same material in the form of an op-ed.

Short Reflection Piece:

The course is oriented towards thinking about urban futures, learning from past and current practices to imagine what an equitable biodiverse city might look like and how we might plan for them. The arts are an important component of moving public opinion and policy. As part of this visioning exercise over the course of the term, and paired with the lectures, we will look at imagined representations and artists renderings of cities in the future. The class will also be invited to participate in the virtual reality experience of Biidaaban: First Light, which was designed by artist Lisa Jackson. The VR experience will be hosted in the MADLab in the Gerstein Science Information Center (dates and times to be announced). We will have set viewing times over the year and you will be asked to sign up for one.

Assignments:

All written assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day specified.

Please note: There is a penalty of 5% per day (including weekends) for late assignments and essays.

Assignments submitted on the due date, but not at the beginning of the lecture period, will be penalized

by 2%. Late assignments will not be accepted after one week without a valid medical certificate. Late assignments should be submitted and date-stamped in the main Geography and Planning office on the fifth floor of Sid Smith. Neither the course instructor nor the teaching assistant will be held responsible for any late course assignments or essays that go missing. Be sure to retain a copy of your paper and keep all your notes and drafts. Written assignments should be submitted at the beginning of class in paper format and in electronic format via TURNITIN.COM.

Submission of assignments via TURNITIN.COM

TURNITIN allows a comparison of textual assignments in order to detect possible plagiarism. You will be required to submit their essays via TURNITIN.COM. A University of Toronto repository will be set up for the submission and storage of your essay. The details for uploading your document will be provided with the description of the research paper proposal. If you have any objections to the use of TURNITIN please discuss them with me – an alternative arrangement will be made, but it will require the submission of extensive notes and drafts of your proposal and final paper.

Academic Integrity:

The assignments that you submit must be your own work.

Plagiarism: Using information directly from sources such as books, articles, videos, the Internet or work of fellow students without proper citation is considered plagiarism. Whenever you use someone else's words, quotation marks must be used, and the quote must be properly sourced. This also applies to paraphrasing information from other sources.

Please consult "How not to plagiarize" (online at <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize/>) before undertaking your assignments. This site has some very helpful distinctions around what kinds of knowledge must be cited as well as advice more generally on writing (planning, researching, revising, time management et cetera). If you are not sure I am happy to chat with you on this point during office hours. You cannot submit an academic work which has received credit in other courses (or which is currently under submission for credit to other courses). Cheating and plagiarism are not tolerated. These are serious academic offenses and they carry severe sanctions.

The university's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters is set out in <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppjun011995.pdf>

SYLLABUS

1. Introduction What is Urban Nature?

Section One: The Challenge of Neo-liberalizing Urban Nature

2. January 14 Disaster Capitalism

K. A. Gould & T. L. Lewis (2018) Green Gentrification and Disaster Capitalism in Barbuda, NACLA Report on the Americas, 50:2, 148-153

S. Safransky (2014) Greening the urban frontier: Race, property, and resettlement in Detroit Geoforum 56, 237–248

Short Video: Land Grab Hanz Farms Detroit

Detailed description of requirements for your paper proposal will be available Jan 20.

In-class quiz (not graded)

3. January 21 Greenwashing and Gentrification

J. Wolch, J. Bryne, J.P. Newell (2014) Urban green space, public health, and environmental justice. Landscape and Urban Planning 125 234=244.

F. Caprotti (2014) Eco-urbanism and the Eco-city, or, Denying the Right to the City? Antipode Vol. 46 1285–1303

In class exercise – writing an op-ed

Section Two: Contesting Neo-liberal natures – Competing Philosophies

4. January 28 Ecosystem services – market approaches and their limits

H. Verge, F. Jensen, B. Thorsen (2010) Demonstrating the importance of intangible ecosystem services from peri-urban landscapes Ecological Complexity 7 338–348

N. Singh (2015) Payments for ecosystem services and the gift paradigm: Sharing the burden and joy of environmental care Ecological Economics 117 53–61

5. Feb 4 Biophilic Cities

T. Beatley, P. Newman (2013) Biophilic Cities Are Sustainable, Resilient Cities Sustainability 5, 3328-3345

J. Wolch Green (2007) Urban Worlds Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 97(2), 373–384

6. Feb 11 Decolonizing Urban Environments

D. Houston et al., (2018) Make kin, not cities! Multispecies entanglements and 'becoming-world' in planning theory Planning Theory 17(2) 190 –212

E.G. Murdock, (2018) Unsettling Reconciliation: Decolonial Methods for Transforming Social-Ecological Systems Environmental Values 27 513–533.

Paper Proposal due in class today

7. FEB 18 READING WEEK NO CLASS

8. Feb 25

MID TERM EXAM IN CLASS (1st hour)
followed by in class discussion of Biidaaban

Section Three: Competing Visions, Practices, Possible Futures

9. March 3 Decolonizing Environmental Planning – current practices

M. Simpson, J. Bagelman (2018) Decolonizing Urban PoliticalEcologies: The Production of Nature in Settler Colonial Cities, *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 108:2, 558-568
J. Donaldson, (2013) The Unnatural History of Stanely Park, *The Tye* (short article)
Stanely Park on "The Doc Project" podcast CBC (1/2hour)

Short reflection due in class

10. March 10 Reconciliation Ecology – Limits and Possibilities

R. Francis, J. Lorimer (2011) Urban reconciliation ecology: The potential of living roofs and walls
Journal of Environmental Management 92, 6 1429-1437
Green Roofs – possibilities and perils Report to Toronto Wildlife Center

11. March 17 Expanding Habitat

J. Foster Toronto's Leslie Street Spit: Aesthetics and the Ecology of Marginal Land *Environmental Philosophy* 4 (1&2) 117 133
Namrata Shrestha (2015) Road Ecology in Practice Toronto region and Conservation Authority (video presentation)

12. March 25 Competing Futures? Promethean Projects

M. Kaika (2004) *City of Flows* Ch 3 (available online)
Karvonen (2011) *The Politics of Urban Runoff* Ch 1 (available online)
Mississippi River Basin "American's last top model" (podcast 20 minutes)