

COURSE OUTLINE: GEOG 4431 – Conservation Geography Fall Term 2013

- Text:** Sodhi N.H., and P. R. Erlich. 2011. Conservation Biology for All. Oxford University Press. 178 pp.
- Instructor:** Dr. Mitchell Taylor, Department of Geography
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Home Office: (807) 964-2678
- Office Hours:** Office location: RC 2006H Thunder Bay Campus. I am in T-Th from 8:30 to 5:30, and occasionally M-W-F. My teaching schedule is posted on the door. Office hours are informal, just come when I am there.
- Communication:** Please use the email address above for all digital communications. I will not monitor the D2L communication option just because there is no need for two independent addresses. Please consult the reference materials before emailing me with a question. The Course Outline may be updated periodically, so please check it periodically. Questions are welcome, but please be patient. I will reply as soon as I can.
- Introduction:** My BS and MSc are from the Department of Biology at Kansas State University. My PhD. is from the Department of Ecology at University of Minnesota. I did post-doctoral work and lectured at the Faculty of Forestry at University of British Columbia. Then I taught in the Fisheries and Wildlife Department of Michigan State, and eventually took a position as polar bear biologist for the Northwest Territories Department of Renewable Resources. That position transferred to Nunavut when the Territories divided. I was Manager of the Wildlife Research Section for my last few years in the north and moved to the Thunder Bay area in 2008. I am an adjunct professor with Geography and teaching this course as contract lecturer for Dr. Martha Dowsley who has assumed the Graduate Coordinator duties for the next couple of years.

Conservation geography is a multidisciplinary field of study. Conservation is a human-caused problem and most often, conservation initiatives have more to do with influencing human behavior than modifying nature. The foundation of economies and of civilizations is natural resource and ecosystem service use. Human populations have increased, and the quality of life of most individuals is also increasing. This is both the rationale for conservation and a constraint. We live from nature, and reducing our use of natural resources or using them in a better way can mean reducing/limiting what is available. There are trade-offs that are necessary and governance of natural resources is a political as well as scientific endeavor. What is necessary is sometimes not practical,

and what is deemed to be an acceptable practice sometimes has unacceptable consequences. Conservation is not development, or preservation or environmentalism; rather it is finding a middle way that buys time for individuals, populations, species, ecosystems, and ultimately human-kind to reconcile the drive to increase with the realities of a finite world. Conservation is not a goal or an ideal, it is an activity. It is like driving a car; once you take your hand off the wheel it goes wrong very rapidly. It is also true that few people manage to have a lasting impact on conservation, so those that have “made a difference” past their time are worth learning about.

As with most fields, conservation has its own vocabulary, basic principles, and a knowledge base that must be learned before conservation as an activity can be understood and practiced. This course will provide a geographical perspective on basics of conservation, and require a case-history practicum that considers a conservation issue in more depth. Instructor reserves the right to modify the course outline as required to meet course objectives.

The scheduled times for completion of quizzes, exams, and assignments are firm, and will be modified only in accordance with Lakehead policy (documented illness and family emergencies). Please contact me if you have any special circumstances or questions. Good luck with the course.

Conservation Case History Practicum: The case history practicum will consist of three components that will be evaluated: Outline, Power-Point Presentation, and Final Paper. The topic will be the student’s choice of a current conservation issue. The practicum will involve researching/documenting the issue, examining/evaluating current conservation approaches to the issue, discussing the root causes of the issue, the constraints to mitigating or resolving the issue, and providing a **practical** action plan that discloses both the costs and benefits of whatever you suggest.

The format should be “decision paper”. Examples of some different types of decision papers are described in the Administration directory on the course D2L site, and I will provide an example in class. Citations should follow the conventions for scientific writing (also see guides in the Administration directory). For greater clarity, an alternative format or unstructured paper is not acceptable, an essay format is not acceptable, a scientific format is unacceptable, footnotes or other numbered reference styles are not acceptable. You must use the decision paper format and the scientific writing and citation styles.

Topics should be selected by the end of the second week of class. An outline must be submitted by the end of the third week of class to confirm an approach that will be successful. The outline should capture the format for decision papers. A description of what constitutes an outline is contained in the Administration directory, and that style is required. The most common error in choosing a topic is to identify something that is too general. Please reduce the scope of your paper to something that is manageable for our time frame (one semester) and our page limit (10-12 pages maximum).

A critical part of the assignment is to learn outlines, scientific writing style and citation conventions, and the decision paper format. I will cover this material in class as well as provide guides on D2L. Questions are welcome. I know this will be the first time many of you have used these formats, so don't be shy about asking if anything is unclear. The due dates for the outline and paper are indicated in the course calendar below.

The final portion of this assignment is to provide a 10 minute presentation (power-point) on your conservation issue. Depending on time available, you may also be asked to lead a brief question and answer session on your conservation issue. Presentations are scheduled for the last 2 course periods, but can be given anytime during the term by prior arrangement. Information included in student presentations may be included in quizzes or the final exam. Students will provide digital copy of their presentations.

Quizzes:

Frequently, there will be short (T/F, multiple choice, and short answer) quizzes given near the end of class. These quizzes will focus on material that was presented recently, but the quizzes are also comprehensive. You should attend every class and should bring a soft lead pencil (#2 is best) and a good quality eraser (white gum erasers work well) to every class in case there is a quiz.

Grading Protocol:

Quiz Scores	25%
Decision Paper (outline 3%, paper 20%, and presentation 7%)	30%
Exercises	15%
Final Quiz	30%
Total	100%

I will throw out the lowest quiz score (one quiz) and determine the average quiz percentage based on the remaining quiz scores. There is no midterm or final exam.

Deferred Examinations and Assignments:

Please regard class as a series of appointments that have been arranged to facilitate teaching and evaluation for Conservation Geography. I do not take roll or penalize individuals who do not attend, but you must take all quizzes and do all exercises during our regularly scheduled class time. Assignments are accepted on or before the day that they are due. Missed quizzes, missed exercises, and late assignments will be counted as zero credit unless prior approval is provided (email message or hard copy) or appropriate documentation for University approved absence is provided. Approved absence includes illness (medical practitioner certificate), varsity sports (letter or email message from coach), or personal/family emergency (documentation of circumstance). Scheduling conflicts with other courses are not considered an approved absence. Absence due to participation in scientific meetings or field trips associated with other courses will be considered on a case by case basis.

The course outline is an expression of an intention and can be modified by the instructor as required to meet course objectives, accommodate contingencies, and correct any errors.

Special Circumstances or Disabilities:

Students with special circumstances or disabilities are encouraged to contact the Learning Assistance Center right away so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged. It is not necessary to get my permission or support. The Learning Assistance Center will notify me of any accommodations that are required, and this information will be kept confidential.

Academic Honesty:

The Guidelines for Academic Conduct from Lakehead University (Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures) may be found at:

><http://vpacademic.lakeheadu.ca/?display=page&pageid=46><

Honesty and integrity are expected in class participation, examinations, assignments, and other academic work. Expectations include:

- Perform your own work unless specifically instructed otherwise;
- Use your own work to complete assignments and exams;
- Cite the source when quoting or paraphrasing someone else's work;
- Follow examination rules;
- Be truthful on all university forms;
- Discuss with your professor if you are using the same material for assignments in two different courses;
- Discuss with your professor if you have any questions about whether sources require citation;
- Use the same standard of honesty with fellow students, lab instructors, teaching assistants, sessional instructors and administrative staff as you do with faculty.

Course Schedule: Class meets T-TH 5:30-7:00 in RC 2003. Any assigned readings (TBA) may be found on WebCT.

Date	Topic	Chapter
September 10	Introduction to Conservation Geography	Introduction
	Biological Basis of Conservation and Biodiversity	
September 12	Nature Begins - Conservation Comes Later	1
	Landforms: the physical matrix (D2L Slides)	
September 17	Biogeographical Framework	2
September 19	Biological Landscapes 1-Types	3
September 24	Biological Landscapes 2- Physical Limits	4
September 26	Biological Landscapes 3- Interactions Disturbance	5
September 26	Outline Due on 26 September	
October 1	Multispecies Interactions and Biomes (outline due)	7
October 3	Marine and Fresh Water Systems (CEDL Slides)	6
October 8	Biodiversity	11
October 10	Genetic Diversity	
October 15	Climate Change and Conservation	8
	Threats to Biodiversity	
October 22	Extinction as a Natural Process	9
October 29	Population Dynamics	
October 29	Decision Paper Due on 29 October	
November 05	Population Viability	10
November 07	Habitat Fragmentation and Degradation	13
	Maintaining Biodiversity	
November 12	Survey Methods and Considerations	16
November 14	Protecting/Managing Ecosystems and Populations	14
November 19	Canadian Conservation Governance	12
	Human Factors	
November 21	Economics, and Sustainable Development	15
November 26	Comprehensive Quiz	
	Decision Paper Presentations	
November 28	Decision Paper Presentations (first day)	
November 27	Decision Paper presentations (final day)	
	Other Case Studies	
as time allows	Ontario Endangered Species (Peregrine Falcon)	
as time allows	Polar Bears and Climate Change	