Interactions of Environment and Culture

ENST 5311 FA 2025
Friday 11:30 – 2:30
Location: AT 2021
Dr. Martha Dowsley
mdowsley@lakeheadu.ca

Introductory Information

I am a full professor cross-appointed in Anthropology and Geography and the Environment. My research looks at interactions between different cultures and the environment. I work mostly with indigenous peoples to examine how their environmental views can be better balanced against those of the dominant culture.

MES program information

I also serve as the graduate coordinator for the MES program. Please feel free to contact me regarding the program (supervision, timelines, processes etc.) I will try to include program information in the class as well.

Jennifer McKee is the program secretary. Please email her if you have issues with paperwork (registration, forms etc.) jlmckee@lakeheadu.ca

Students are expected to review potential funding sources and provide draft applications to the professor to support their application. You can find some here for domestic (Canadian) students:

https://www.lakeheadu.ca/programs/graduate/graduate-funding/internal-scholarships-bursaries-and-awards

ENST 5311

Classes are held Friday 11:30 to 2:30 in ATAC 2021. There will be a course web site on MyCourseLink to allow us to share readings and presentations. You should use the course website to post the readings you are assigning to the class by Tuesday at midnight. Put them under the discussions tab.

*Please note that late penalties are 10% per day, including weekends and holidays. Written theme paper submissions are due by midnight on Tuesdays, via email to mdowsley@lakeheadu.ca (do NOT post to the class site).

Course Concept

Environmental studies deal with complex challenges involving humans and the environment. There is rarely a 'correct' answer to environmental issues because they tend to be a balancing act between different values and needs. As such, rather than learning facts about the environment, it is more useful to you to learn about how to deal with these complex issues and weigh different factors in decision making. With this in mind, the course is designed as a student-led seminar, where students will explain an environmental issue and then explore different solutions in discussion with the class.

Course Goals

- To transition from undergraduate to Master's students, from receiving and interpreting information to creating knowledge, developing understanding and evaluating disparate information to make decisions
- To develop professional skills in literature review, research design, oral presentations, and written communication of research
- To familiarize students with the mechanics of graduate school, including scholarships, supervision, and structure

Learning Outcomes

- Strengthen and expand existing literature review skills in finding, comprehending, and synthesizing peer-reviewed literature in the context of broader questions, issues and research directions
- Develop verbal and visual presentation skills, including practice with presentation software, and encourage exploration of different presentation tools
- Improve writing skills to prepare for your thesis and peer-reviewed publications, as well as further professional writing
- To strengthen communication, collaboration and discussion skills

Course Materials

We will use the course Mycourselink site to post readings and engage with the homework assignments, submit assignments etc.

You need to access this e-book yourself (for free through the library):
Dammed: The Politics of Loss and Survival in Anishinaabe Territory. By Brittany Luby
https://books-scholarsportal-info.ezproxy.lakeheadu.ca/en/read?id=/ebooks/ebooks6/upress6/2021-01-07/1/9780887558740#page=16

Evaluation

Seminar Leadership	(3 seminars @ 10% each)	30%
Participation		20%
	Includes submission of comments on seminar readings	
	And participation in class	
Written Assignments	(2 theme papers @ 20% each, final paper 10%)	50%

Seminar leadership 30%

Students will present seminars individually on a topic within the theme assigned. They should coordinate with their peers to minimize overlap and ensure different readings. Readings shall regularly be assigned by the seminar leader 5 days before the seminar. Students may assign 2-4 papers for their peers to read and discuss, but **the presentation should include more than these papers**. These are to serve as background to prepare participants for the seminar. Other materials that might be included are other academic research, youtube videos (of less than 10 min duration), personal experiences, debate questions etc. These added elements are necessary to build on the assigned readings, generate discussion and build a deeper understanding of your topic.

Class Participation 20%

Students must attend class, unless an explanation is sent to the professor ahead of time, or an unavoidable situation arises. Students are expected to complete the readings assigned and participate in each seminar.

For each week, students must post a reflection on the readings on the web site chat. This should be a sizeable paragraph commenting on several of the readings and reflecting on personal experiences, other course work etc. Students may be called upon in class to expand on their reflection as part of our discussions on seminars or other readings.

Students will also be asked to read an environmental history of an area near Thunder Bay. This is available free through the library.

Written Assignments 50%

For each of the three themes, students must submit an academic summary paper of ~1500 words in length, properly referenced on their seminar topic. This paper should be in the form of a background section for a grant application. Therefore, it should be a concise summary of the topic and highlight the important current research questions. The last section of the paper MUST provide a clear direction for future research, as guided by the preceding summary. (See examples on the course website)

Only the top 2 marks for three written assignments will be used as evaluations for the course. If the student is satisfied with the grades for Themes 1 and 2, a submission of Themes 3 is not necessary. The value is 20% each for a total of 40%.

Your other written assignment (10%) is to select the academic book we read in class, or another on a human-environment topic. You will read and write a discussion of the book, linking it to other course material. You should reference other course material and use the book to tie together different ideas from the readings. 1500 words plus 7-10 references.

Schedule and Seminar Leadership

Week	Date	Info
Week 1	September 5th	Introduction to the course, discussion of seminar topics Example Seminar by Dr. Dowsley
Theme 1: Environment – Human Interactions (Past or Present)		
Week 2	September 12th	Seminar 1 Presentation: Nilanika, Michael
Week 3	September 19th	Martha Away
Week 4	September 26th	Seminar 1 Presentation: Sarah, Rachel
Week 5	October 3rd	Martha Away
Week 6	October 10th	Seminar 1 Presentation : Sophie, John
Reading Week Oct 13th-17th		
Theme 2: Indigenous Environmental Issues (Canadian or International)		
Week 7	October 24th	**Theme 1 Paper Due** Seminar 2 Presentation: Sarah, Sophie
Week 8	October 31st	Seminar 2 Presentation: John, Michael
Week 9	November 7th	Seminar 2 Presentation: Rachel, Nilanika Luby foreword, Intro, Ch 1
Theme 3: Environmental Restoration		
Week 10	November 14th	Seminar 3 Presentation: Sophie, John **Theme 2 Paper Due** Homework: Luby Ch 2,3
Week 11	November 21st	Seminar 3 Presentation: Sarah, Nilanika Homework Luby Ch 4, 5
Week 12	November 28th	Seminar 3 Presentation: Michael, Rachel Homework: Luby 6, Conclusion **Theme 3 Paper Due** **Book Discussion Paper due by Dec 10th**

Hints for Presentations:

- Do not read from the slide, the text should be a summary and include terms, definitions etc. to enhance the audience's understanding of what you say
- Include relevant pictures and design
- Don't be afraid to ask the audience some questions or ask them to vote or brainstorm etc. - participation keeps the audience focused!
- Rule of 3-30-3 for presentations can be applied – 3 seconds for the audience to be captured by your title/opening image and interested enough to continue paying attention. 30 seconds to give the overall point of the presentation – main question or intriguing information – why is this interesting? 3 minutes max. per idea – do not exceed this length of time for a single slide or your audience will lose interest.
- Seminars are a conversation between the presenter and the audience so engage your audience with discussion questions, ask for their opinions, their experiences, ideas, etc.

Referencing

- For any referencing for the course, please use Chicago Style or similar. No footnotes or superscript numbering please. Authors should be cited with the year of publication in the text; for example (Wright, 2012) or for three or more authors (Smith et al., 2017). Reference list should include only those sources referenced in the text and must be arranged alphabetically by last name. Examples can be found here: https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html