



GEOG 095: Facing Environmental Futures

UVM Summer Academy 2020 — M-F 7/5 to 7/31,
Online

Instructor

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Course Description:

As we move deeper into the 21st century, one thing seems certain: the state of the world is *uncertain*. Whether it be climate change, biodiversity loss, forest fires, food insecurity, or pandemic, it is clear societies face numerous challenges that threaten to undermine human health and well-being. In this course we examine the roots of these challenges, focusing primarily on climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, we ask questions about how these two emergencies came to be, how they are connected, and how we might respond to them in just, equitable, and courageous ways.

This course offers an introduction to key concepts in the discipline of geography. Course materials reflect a range of concerns related to climate change and pandemic as well as diverse approaches to understanding them. Instruction is entirely online but will be interactive, discussion-based, and will draw on environmental data and creative concepts to strategize how to face forward and build better futures.

This course aims to:

- Introduce students to foundational concepts in geography and political ecology.
- Offer insights into the social, political and economic aspects of climate change and pandemic.
- Provide a global comparative framework for understanding social and environmental risk.
- Improve student writing and communication skills.

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Have an informed conversation about the multiple dimensions of social and environmental change.
- Recognize and assess how these changes impact their lives.
- Explain *how* and *why* social, political and/or environmental crises unevenly affect different populations.
- Analyze existing and proposed environmental policy and legislation.
- Advocate for social and/or environmental policy choices using the skills and knowledge gained in this course.

Essential Information

Blackboard site: <https://bb.uvm.edu>

Required Course Materials:

1. *Required book purchase currently under review.*
2. Additional required readings will be posted on Blackboard

Course Website (Blackboard):

This course's website will be run through Blackboard, which you can access here: <https://bb.uvm.edu>. Blackboard will be primarily used for the following: Course announcements, basic course information including the syllabus, readings, grades, assignments, and discussion forums.

Attendance Policy and Classroom Environment Expectations:

Attendance: This course will be taught both synchronously and asynchronously. During synchronous instruction, students are expected attend a virtual session via Zoom or another online communication platform. Most of the instruction, however, will be asynchronous and you will be given individual and virtual group tasks to work on in accordance with your own schedule. If you are ill or have an emergency situation that forces you to miss any class, please contact me at once. Should you miss a class, it is your responsibility to ask for notes from a classmate and to make up any missed reading or work.

Fostering a Critical and Responsible Learning Environment: Throughout the course, please feel free to express your ideas and enter into dialogue with your fellow students. Although I encourage you to express your views, I expect that you will be courteous to others, respect different views, and refrain from personal attacks. In this class we do not debate, we discuss. Failure to abide by these expectations will result in a reduced class engagement grade or disenrollment.

Recording and Transmission of Course Materials: Consistent with the University's policy on intellectual property rights, teaching and curricular materials (including but not limited to classroom lectures, class notes, exams, handouts, and presentations) are the property of the instructor. Therefore, electronic recording and/or transmission of classes or class notes is prohibited without the express written permission or request of the instructor. Such permission is to be considered unique to the needs of an individual student (e.g. ADA compliance), and not a license for permanent retention or electronic dissemination to others.

Assessments:

Class Attendance & Participation 25 pts. (~20%)

You are expected to attend each real-time discussion, to complete all readings and assignments *before* the start of class, and to participate in class discussions, activities and assignments. Attendance will be noted at each class meeting. You will lose credit if you do not attend each class, or if you do not regularly participate in class.

Exploratory Writing Essays (2) 50 pts. (~38%)

There will be 2 short (2-3 page) essays assigned to encourage connections among reading, writing, and thinking (see syllabus for due dates). The format of these essays will be exploratory and/or situational and will range from formal to informal. More detail will be included on our course website. Essays are worth up to 25 points each.

Journal Entries (3) 15 pts (5 pts/week) (~ 12%)

Over the course of the summer academy I'd like you to keep a regular journal—at least 3 entries per week— to compose and collect thoughts and ideas from our readings and discussions. I will check in at the end of each week to grant credit for journal activity.

Group Final Project: Facing Environmental Futures 40 pts. (~30%)

The final project will involve small groups developing visual, textual, and/or audio representation of issues related to social-environmental change. The aim for this project is to draw on course content as well as various modes of representing information. Taken together each group's project will contribute to a class-wide interactive guide on how to face the future in an era of uncertainty.

Grading Criteria/Policies:

Late work: All assignments are due on the day listed in the course schedule. In cases where students are working with Summer Academy representatives to coordinate documented illness or other serious matters requiring deadline leniency, please contact Prof. Morehouse as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity: All submitted work must be your own, except in the specific instances when an assignment calls for collaboration. You must distinguish your own words and ideas from those of others by utilizing proper citations and references. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism. Detailed style guides are in our course 'Learning Resources and Guides' folder. Please

also refer to [UVM's Code of Academic Integrity](#) and the [Academic Integrity Program in The Center for Student Ethics and Standards](#) for further clarification.

Total Points Possible: 130

Exploratory Writing Essays (2): 50

Final Project: 40

Attendance/Participation: 25

Journals (3): 15

Grade Matrix:

A+ 98-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F – below 60
A 94-97	B 84-86	C 74-76	D 64-66	
A- 90-93	B- 80-83	C- 70-73	D- 60-63	

GEOG095 Course Schedule Summer 2020

Note: This syllabus is subject to change due to scheduling logistics and solicited student input.

Week	Day	Date	Topic	Assignment	Readings
1	Mon	7/6	Virtual Personal Introductions An introduction to Geography and Political Ecology		Syllabus

THEME 1: THE CHALLENGE					
1	Tues	7/7	The state of the Planet I (Climate)		Hopkins (2019); NOAA (2020)
	Weds	7/8	The state of the Planet II (Extinction)		Bradley (2019), Drake (2015); Kolbert (2009)
	Thurs	7/9	The state of the Planet III (Pandemic)		Readings TBD
	Fri	7/10	How are these all connected?	Exploratory Essay 1 Due	Keil et. al. (2020); Meehan (2020); Wallace et. al. (2020); Wyns (2020)
	Sat	7/11		Week 1 Journal Due	

THEME 2: UNCERTAINTY					
2	Mon	7/13	Grief & Mourning		Alyan (2020), Heglar (2020); Rose (2013)
	Tues	7/14	Navigating Pessimism		Macy (2012 & 1014); Ray (2020)
	Weds	7/15			
	Thurs	7/16	The Power of Presence	Exploratory Essay 2 Due	Abram (2020); Albrecht et. al. (2007); Instone (2015)

	Fri	7/17			Hempton (2020)
	Sat	7/18		Week 2 Journal Due	

THEME 3: TOWARD CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM

3	Mon	7/20	What is Political Ecology and how does it help us understand and intervene?		Robbins (2012)
	Tues	7/21	"There's no such thing as a Natural Disaster"		Brown (2020), Smith (2006)
	Weds	7/22	What do we owe the Future? Intergenerational Equity and Fighting for the World		Sikka (2019)
	Thurs	7/23	From Protest to Policy		brown (2019)
	Fri	7/24			brown (2019); Gardiner (2020); Hockenos (2020)
	Sat	7/25		Week 3 Journal Due	

THEME 4: BUILDING THE FUTURE

4	Mon	7/27	Organizing Ideas and Assembling a Cohesive Narrative		Gasch & Reticker-Flynn (2019)
	Tues	7/28	Virtual Group Work Consultations		--
	Weds	7/29			--
	Thurs	7/30	Virtual Presentations	Final Projects Due	--
	Fri	7/31	Virtual Discussion: Next steps for Facing the Future		--

Course Bibliography

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