



## GEOG 1990: Facing Environmental Futures

UVM Summer Academy 2024  
In-person/Online

### Instructor

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### Course Description:

As we move deeper into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, one thing seems certain: the state of the world is *uncertain*. Whether it be climate change, biodiversity loss, forest fires, food insecurity, etc., it is clear society faces 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 biodiversity loss. In particular, we ask questions about how these crises 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 disciplines of geography and environmental studies. Course materials reflect a range of concerns related to climate change and biodiversity as well as diverse approaches to understanding them. Instruction 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 environmental studies.
- Offer insights into the social, political and economic aspects of climate change and biodiversity loss.
- 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

#### Required Course Materials:

1. All required readings will be posted on Brightspace

#### Course Website (Brightspace):

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

During the last two weeks of summer term, instruction will be predominantly asynchronous, with the exception of 1-2 hour-long virtual meetings each week.

## **Attendance Policy and Classroom Environment Expectations:**

Attendance: This course will be taught both in-person and online. During in-person instruction, students will be expected to attend each class period, except in the case of illness. During online synchronous instruction, students are expected attend a virtual session via Teams or another online communication platform. During 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 Participation 50 pts. (20%)

You are expected to complete all readings and assignments *before* the start of class, and to participate in both in-person and virtual class discussions. You will lose credit if you do not attend each class, or if you do not regularly participate in class discussions.

Reflection Essays (2) 100 pts (50 pts each) (40%)

There will be 2 short (2-3 page) essays assigned to encourage connections among reading, writing, and thinking (see schedule below 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 50 points each.

Journal Entries (3) 30 pts (10 pts each) (12%)

Over the course of the summer academy I'd like you to keep a regular journal to compose and collect thoughts and ideas from our readings and discussions. Journal will be due on Wednesdays for the first 3 weeks.

Group Final Project Prospectus 10 pts. (4%)

In week 3, assigned groups of 5 will begin to establish momentum on their final projects. The purpose for this short assignment is for each group to decide on a final project topic and format.

Group Final Project: Facing Environmental Futures 60 pts. (24%)

The final project will involve small groups developing visual, textual, and/or audio representations 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: 250**

**Reflection Essays (2): 100**

**Final Project: 60**

**Participation: 50**

**Journals (3): 30**

**FP Prospectus: 10**

**Grade Matrix:**

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

### **GEOG 1990 Course Schedule Summer 2024**

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

*Req = Required reading; Rec = Recommended Reading*

*\* The window of opportunity to earn points for discussion forum participation runs from Sunday to Saturday for each week.*

| <b>THEME 1: THE CHALLENGE (IN-PERSON)</b> |            |             |  |                           |   |
|---|------------|-------------|--|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Week</b>                               | <b>Day</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Topic</b>                           | <b>Assignment</b>         | <b>Readings</b>   |
| <b>1</b>                                  | Mon        | 7/1         | Introductions, Thinking Geographically |                           | Req: Syllabus; Lopez (2022)<br><br>Rec: Cresswell (2009)  |
|   | Tues       | 7/2         | Climate Change and Crisis              |                           | Req: Barbaro (2021); Wallace-Wells (2019)<br><br>Rec: IPCC (2021); Lewis and Maslin (2015)              |
|   | Weds       | 7/3         | Biodiversity & Extinction              | <b>Journal Entry 1</b>    | Req: Ceballos et. al (2020); Rose (2017)<br><br>Rec: Heise (2016); Kolbert (2015); Symons et. al (2020) |
|   | Thurs      | 7/4         | <i>No class meeting</i>                |                           |   |
|   | Fri        | 7/5         | Anxiety, Grief, and the Future         | <b>Reflection Essay 1</b> | Req: Bradley (2019); Macy & Johnstone (2012); Panu (2020)   |

|  |  |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |  | Rec: Albrecht (2017);<br>Featherstone (2021);<br>Ray (2020) |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|

| THEME 2: UNCERTAINTY (IN-PERSON) |       |      |                                       |                        |   |
|----------------------------------|-------|------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| 2                                | Mon   | 7/8  | Rethinking Self & Environment         |                        | Req: Kimmerer (2020); Powers (2021)                               |
|                                  | Tues  | 7/9  | Embodiment: Walking, Tracking, Seeing |                        | Req: Instone (2015);<br>Rezendes (1999)<br><br>Rec: Ingold (2004) |
|                                  | Weds  | 7/10 | The Power of Presence                 | <b>Journal Entry 2</b> | Req: Hempton (2020)<br><br>Rec: Rose (2015)                       |
|                                  | Thurs | 7/11 | Communicating Connection              |                        | Req: Le Guin (1996)   |
|                                  | Fri   | 7/12 | No class meeting                      |                        |   |

| THEME 3: TOWARD CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM (ONLINE) |       |      |  |                                 |   |
|--|-------|------|--|---------------------------------|---|
| 3  | Mon   | 7/15 | Stepping into the Future: Organizing for better worlds | <b>Reflection Essay 2</b>       | Req: Pigott (2021)  |
|  | Tues  | 7/16 | Intergenerational Justice                              |                                 | Req: Sikka (2019)<br><br>Rec: Hickel (2022);<br>Taiwo & Bigger (2022) |
|  | Weds  | 7/17 | Environmental Advocacy                                 | <b>Journal Entry 3</b>          | Req: Gasch &<br>Reticker-Flynn (2019)<br>[Excerpts]                   |
|  | Thurs | 7/18 | --   |                                 | --  |
|  | Fri   | 7/19 | Communicating Urgency: What's effective?               | <b>Final Project Prospectus</b> | Reading(s) TBD  |

| THEME 4: BUILDING THE FUTURE (ONLINE) |       |      |  |                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|-------|------|--|-----------------------|---|
| 4                                     | Mon   | 7/25 | Climate Stories & Environmental Communication                        |                       | Req: Corner et al. (2018)                           |
|                                       | Tues  | 7/26 |  |                       | Rec: Cameron (2012);<br>Morehouse & Cigliano (2020) |
|                                       | Weds  | 7/27 | Virtual Group Work Consultations                                     |                       | --  |
|                                       | Thurs | 7/28 |  | <b>Final Projects</b> | --  |
|                                       | Fri   | 7/29 | Virtual Presentations & Discussion: Next steps for Facing the Future |                       | --  |

#### Course Bibliography

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