SOC*2280: Society, Knowledge Systems & Environment   Fall 2023

Instructor: Dr. J. Varghese   *E-mail:* varghese@uoguelph.ca

Course Description and Approach:

Calendar Description: "*This course provides students with an introduction to the nature and dimensions of the environmental crisis by examining knowledge systems and their relationships with the environment. These foundations are intended to enable respective, respectful, reciprocal, and meaningful engagement between Indigenous and science-based knowledge systems in cross-cultural environmental stewardship/governance. Issues to be examined may include climate change and variability, nuclear energy, environmental toxins, species extinction, and population growth pressures. Prerequisite(s): 1 of ANTH*1150, GEOG*1220, IDEV*1000, INDG*1000, SOC*1100 - must be completed prior to taking this course.*

Course Overview: This course will give students an opportunity to better understand knowledge systems, in general, and their importance in environmental governance, enabling a critical analysis of the interactions between society and the environment from a socio-ecological perspective. Using a conceptual framework for defining elements of knowledge systems, students will learn to appreciate similarities and differences across different knowledge systems. By considering the structure and function of their own knowledge system, they will be prepared to articulate their own knowledge system to someone embedded within another knowledge system. These foundations are intended to enable respective, respectful, reciprocal, and meaningful engagement between Indigenous and science-based knowledge systems in cross-cultural environmental governance. Socio-ecological themes may include ecological democracy, environmental (in)justice, socio-cultural construction of environmental issues, sociology of risk, science and technology, and environmental movements. A central focus of the course will be on traditional ecological knowledge/Indigenous knowledge systems and Indigenous pedagogies. Students will have an opportunity to participate in a Community Focused or Community Engaged Learning Project in collaborative teams.

Pedagogical Approach[1]: The learning outcomes for the course noted below will be achieved through interactive lectures (including multimedia clips and in-class activities/discussions), and opportunities to engage with Indigenous pedagogies (including circles and land-based pedagogies) and assessments. In order to meet the learning outcomes, students are expected to attend all classes, critical engage with course materials before class and be able to discuss them as required, participate actively and thoughtfully in class, and treat all with respect.

Course Learning Outcomes:

At the end of the course, students should be able to:
1. Reflexively explore Indigenous and decolonial approaches to own relationship to Land
2. Apply knowledge systems to concrete resource management and environmental issues;
3. Examine how conflicts between knowledge systems impact environmental governance;
4. Evaluate current environmental and environmental governance issues from multiple knowledge systems;
5. Develop a strategy to communicate across different knowledge systems;
6. Demonstrate effective critical reading, note taking, time management, collaborative skills.
7. Demonstrate personal responsibility and initiative for current and on-going learning.

Course Materials:

Course materials will be accessible on Perusall accessible via CourseLink a week in advance (for Prep Assignment) and will be available via ARES Course Reserves System through the library website.

Assessments[2]:

Course Assessment Elements	Course Learning Outcome	Percentage Weight
1. Lecture Preparation and Engagement	2-7	20
2. Land and Knowledge System Reflections & Meta Reflection	1,5,6,7	25
3. Collaborative CEL/CFL Project	2,5-7	20
4. Cumulative Final Assessment	2-4,6,7	35
		100 %

---

[1] Interactive lectures will be offered via face-to-face delivery with some asynchronous material and activities available through CourseLink throughout the semester.

[2] Assessment breakdown and elements may change prior to the release of the official syllabus in September 2023