

SOC*3850: Seminar in Sociology (of Water)

Fall 2021

Instructor: Dr. J. Varghese

E-mail: varghese@uoguelph.ca

Course Description and Approach:

Calendar Description: “*This course will be offered as a structured seminar on various topics depending upon the interests of the faculty member teaching the course. Topics will be announced, and course outlines will be available at course selection. Prerequisite(s): 10.00 credits including (1 of SOAN*2112, SOC*2080, SOC*2700), SOAN*2120*”

Course Overview: This seminar-based course is designed to provide students with an opportunity to explore the sociology of water through both Indigenous and Western social science lenses. In this course, we will focus on the complexity of anthropogenic aspects of water issues, drawing on the role of social sciences and Indigenous worldviews in understanding and addressing water issues. We will cover concepts such as knowledge systems, sense of place, Indigenous water justice, water governance, conservation, water-food-energy nexus, ecological democracy, and ecosystem protection by drawing on both Canadian and international examples.

The seminar approach¹ is intended to facilitate the development of critical thinking skills and active engagement in learning. As such, students are expected to read assigned readings in preparation for each class, attend, and actively engage in class discussions. The format of seminars will include opportunities for both small and large group discussions and draw on both Western and Indigenous pedagogies. Specific topics for selected weekly seminar & circle discussions will be determined based on student interests prior to the second week of class.

Course Learning Outcomes:

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Analyse key issues within the hydro-social cycle locally, nationally, and internationally drawing on sociological theories and concepts
2. Braid Indigenous and Western science knowledge systems, including the sociology of emotions in understanding and addressing contemporary water issues.
3. Develop and refine oral communication and facilitation skills through seminar & circle leads.
4. Creatively mobilize multiple ways of knowing within seminar & circle leads.
5. Demonstrate effective critical reading, note taking, time management, and collaborative skills.

Course Readings:

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 (for a head-start on Seminar & Circle Leads).

Assessments²:

Course Elements	Percentage Weight
1. Seminar Preparation and Participation	30
2. “Ideas” Seminar Lead	20
3. “Connections/Extensions” Circle Lead	20
4. Cumulative Take-Home Assessment	30
	<hr/>
	Total 100

¹ Please note that the seminar will be offered weekly via face-to-face delivery with some asynchronous material and activities available through CourseLink throughout the semester. Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via CourseLink. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website and circulated by email.

² Assessment breakdown and elements may change prior to the release of the official syllabus in September 2021.