**GEO 103: Environment and Society**

Pre-college 2023

Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs, Friday; 9:00am-1:00pm

**Course Instructor:** Sohrob Aslamy

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Office hours: Tuesday 1:00-3:00pm

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Office Hours: Thursday 1:00pm-3:00pm

**Course Overview**

Examining the relationship between society and the natural environment is foundational to understanding why our world looks the way it does today and building a vision for how we would like it to look in the future. In this course, will begin by unpacking the meaning behind core concepts that characterize this relationship. This includes the term ‘nature’ itself, as well as resources and commodities, environmental justice, and environmental politics. We will then turn to an examination of climate change, moving beyond its effects into an exploration of different pathways of responding to this global challenge. The last portion of the course focuses on the dynamics of everyday engagement with the natural world by looking at society’s relationship to energy, water, and agriculture.

**Learning Outcomes**

This course will challenge you to revisit and nuance your understanding of the political, social, economic, and ecological ramifications of how we define, engage with, and impact the natural world. We will use lectures, class discussion, readings/podcasts and writing assignments as a part of this process – deepening your environmental literacy and ability to communicate thoughtfully and effectively about environmental issues. By the end of this course, you should be able to better understand: 1) the importance of how we frame the natural world; 2) the challenges posed by climate change across space and populations; and 2) the social, economic and political aspects of natural resource use.

**Readings**

Short readings, podcasts, or films are assigned for each class sessions under the heading “Building knowledge.” These readings are intended to be completed after class as a way of reinforcing and building on concepts learned. Each reading has an accompanying “reading guide” that must be submitted online before class the next day. All readings and podcasts will be posted under the “Course materials” tab on Blackboard. Please email me if you have any trouble accessing material on Blackboard.

**Evaluation**

Attendance and participation

Attendance and active participation in class is essential to your success in this course. Active participation means that you are present and ready to take notes, engage in individual and group work, and contribute respectfully to discussions in ways that deepen your own and your peers’ learning. It should go without saying that you must be present for the full class period to get points for attendance and participation. On most days there will be in-class assignments that will count towards your participation score.

During discussion there may be perspectives expressed that you do not accept. Agree to disagree in your exchange of ideas and opinions. Keep your interactions friendly and professional. Jokes or sarcasm may be harder to interpret, so please think about how your statements may be understood. A culture of mutual respect is essential to productive intellectual exchange, and it is my expectation that we will maintain this culture throughout the semester.

Because of the nature of the topics covered in this class, the course readings or class discussions may generate intellectual and emotional discomfort. These responses are natural parts of intellectual growth. If, however, your emotional response becomes acute psychological distress, please communicate with me. I invite you to contact me if you have concerns in this regard.

Reading Guides

You will submit nine online readings guides to Blackboard that ask you to reflect on material assigned each day. Your answer to each of the questions in the reading guide should be thoughtful and thorough. You must write in complete sentences. You will be able to submit your reading guides under the “Submission links” tab on Blackboard. All reading guides are due by 8:59am (before class) the next day.

Final Essay

You will have one short essay due in this class. It is worth almost 50% of your grade, so it is essential that you start early on this assignment and let me know if you have any questions or concerns as you go through the writing process. You will have two shorter assignments to complete in preparation for your essay, the grades for which will contribute to the total essay score. On the last day of class I will ask you to prepare a short presentation of your essay topic to share with the class, which will count towards your participation for that day. All essays will be due at 11:59pm on Sunday, July 30th. Please see the course schedule for all deadlines.

I will not read drafts of essays over email. If you would like to discuss your essay, I encourage you to set up a meeting time over zoom.

**Grading**

There are a total of 450 points available to receive in this class. These points come from attendance and participation, bi-weekly reflections, and the short essay. The breakdown is as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Item* | *Points* |
| Attendance | 75 |
| Participation | 75 |
| Reading Guides | 100 |
| Final essay | 200 |
| **Class Total** | **450** |

This course takes place over an accelerated timeline. You must plan your time accordingly to get assignments in on the day they are due. As this is an online course, all assignments will be handed in electronically.

A note on attendance and participation: There are a total of 10 class sessions scheduled within this Pre-college course. You must attend all sessions to get full attendance and participation points.

**Course Policies**

Academic Integrity

Syracuse University’s Academic Integrity Policy reflects the high value that we, as a university community, place on honesty in academic work. The policy defines our expectations for academic honesty and holds students accountable for the integrity of all work they submit. It is your responsibility to have read and understood this policy prior to starting the semester. Plagiarism, or the use of someone else’s words or ideas without proper citation, found in essays or weekly reflections is unacceptable. You must give credit, through proper citation, to other’s work that you used in your writing.

Turnitin

This class will use the plagiarism detection and prevention system Turnitin. My use of this is not meant as a sign of distrust, rather because of the online format it will simply be easier for to manage your assignments and grades via this system. Please double check that all sources used in your paper are properly acknowledged prior to submission. You can always reach out to me via email with questions on if and how to properly cite a source. The Turnitin system compares submitted documents against documents on the Internet and against student papers submitted to Turnitin at Syracuse University and at other colleges and universities. I will take your knowledge of the subject matter of this course and your writing level and style into account in interpreting the originality report. Keep in mind that all papers you submit for this class will become part of the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers.

Use of Class Materials and Recordings

Original class materials (handouts, assignments, tests, etc.) and recordings of class sessions are the intellectual property of the course instructor. You may download course materials from the Blackboard site for your use in this class. However, you may not provide these materials to other parties (e.g., web sites, social media, other students) without permission. Doing so is a violation of intellectual property law and of the student code of conduct.

Disability-related accommodations

If you would like to discuss disability-accommodations or register with CDR, please visit [Center for Disability Resources](https://disabilityservices.syr.edu/). Please call (315) 443-4498 or email [disabilityresources@syr.edu](mailto:disabilityresources@syr.edu) for more detailed information. The CDR is responsible for coordinating disability-related academic accommodations and will work with the student to develop an access plan. Since academic accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact CDR as soon as possible to begin this process.

Syracuse University values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation.  There may aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion and full participation in this course.  I invite any student to contact me to discuss strategies and/or accommodations (academic adjustments) that may be essential to your success and to collaborate with the Center for Disability Resources (CDR) in this process. As your instructor, I aim to create a learning environment that is inclusive and welcoming.

Discrimination or Harassment

Federal and state law, and University policy prohibit discrimination and harassment based on sex or gender (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, and retaliation). If a student has been harassed or assaulted, they can obtain confidential counseling support, 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, from the [Sexual and Relationship Violence Response Team](https://ese.syr.edu/bewell/sexual-and-relationship-violence/) at the Counseling Center (315-443-8000, Barnes Center at The Arch, 150 Sims Drive, Syracuse, New York 13244). Incidents of sexual violence or harassment can be reported non-confidentially to the University’s Title IX Officer (Sheila Johnson Willis, 315-443-0211, [titleix@syr.edu](mailto:titleix@syr.edu), 005 Steele Hall). Reports to law enforcement can be made to the University’s Department of Public Safety (315-443-2224, 005 Sims Hall), the Syracuse Police Department (511 South State Street, Syracuse, New York, 911 in case of emergency or 315-435-3016 to speak with the Abused Persons Unit), or the State Police (844-845-7269). I will seek to keep information you share with me private to the greatest extent possible, but as a professor I have mandatory reporting responsibilities to share information regarding sexual misconduct, harassment, and crimes I learn about with the University’s Title IX Officer to help make our campus a safer place for all.

Religious Observances

Students must notify instructors by the end of the second week of classes if, and when, they will

be observing their religious holiday(s). You may fill this out online via MySlice. When you logon

to MySlice, you (should) see a link for religious observances. Click on that and fill-out the

requested material.

**Course Schedule**

**Week 1: Core Concepts**

Monday, July 17: Thinking through nature: social construction, ethics and everyday encounters

* Building knowledge:
  + Read: Stinson, J. (2017). “Welcome to wilderness 2.0: From (Dis)connection to (Re)creation.” Wildlife Australia, 54(4), 15-17.
* Take-home work:
  + Reading guide (due Tuesday, July 18)
  + Final essay prep I (due Thursday, July 20)

Tuesday, July 18: Nature and economics: resources, commodities and alternative relationships

* Building knowledge:
  + Read: Robbins, P., Hintz, J., & Moore, S. A. (2014). Environment and society: A critical introduction (Second ed.). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
    - Pages: 98-107, 43-45
* Take-home work:
  + Reading guide (due Wednesday, July 19)
  + Final essay prep I (due Thursday, July 20)

Wednesday, July 19: Environmental Movements and Policies

* Building knowledge:
  + Read (skim): Rinfret, S. and Pautz, M. (2014). “Chapter 9: Understanding environmental policy from the ground up” in *US Environmental Policy in Action: Practices and Implementation*
  + Listen: [“The Challenge of Diversity in the Environmental Movement, with Dorceta Taylor](https://www.resources.org/resources-radio/challenge-diversity-environmental-movement-dorceta-taylor-rebroadcast/)” (2020) podcast on *Radio Resources*.
  + Read (skim): Jones, R. (2020). “[The environmental movement is very white. These leaders want to change that”](https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/environmental-movement-very-white-these-leaders-want-change-that) in *National Geographic*
* Take-home work:
  + Reading guide (due Thursday, July 20)
  + Final essay prep I (due Thursday, July 20)

Thursday, July 20: Environmental Justice

* Building knowledge:
  + [Watch: Mossville: When Great Trees Fall](https://www.pbs.org/video/mossville-when-great-trees-fall-se2q8k/) (2020)
* Take-home work:
  + Reading guide (due Thursday, July 21)
  + Final essay prep I (due Thursday, July 20)

Friday, July 21: The Anthropocene: life and limits in a new geologic era?

* Building knowledge:
  + Read: Steffen, W., Crutzen, P. J., & McNeill, J. R. (2007). “The anthropocene: Are humans now overwhelming the great forces of nature.” Ambio, 36(8), 614-621.
* Take-home work:
  + Reading guide 5 (due Monday, July 24)
  + Final essay prep II (due Monday, July 24)

**Week 2: Resources and Climate**

Monday, July 24: Climate change I: consequences

* Building knowledge:
  + Read: Sultana, F. (2014). "Gendering Climate Change: Geographical Insights." The Professional Geographer 66 (3): 372-381.
* Take-home work
  + Reading guide 6 (due Tuesday, July 25)
  + Final paper presentation (due Friday, July 28)

Tuesday, July 25: Climate change II: response

* Building knowledge:
  + Read: Ortiz, Mark. (2022). [Climate Influencers and the Politics of Attention.](https://edgeeffects.net/youth-climate-activists/) *Edge Effects.*
* Take-home work:
  + Reading guide 7 (due Wednesday, July 26)
  + Final paper (due Sunday, July 30)
  + Final paper presentation (due Friday, July 28)

Wednesday, July 26: Resources I: Energy and society

* Building knowledge:
  + Listen: “[Changing Woman: One Navajo’s Fight for a Just Transition](https://a-matter-of-degrees.simplecast.com/episodes/changing-woman-one-navajos-fight-for-a-just-transition-VDcI8YxU)” on *A Matter of Degrees* podcast
* Take-home work:
  + Reading guide 8 (due Thursday, July 27))
  + Short paper presentation (due Friday, July 28)
  + Final paper (due Sunday, July 30)

Thursday, July 27: Resources II: Water, food production, and society

* Building knowledge:
  + Patel, Raj. (2008). “Introduction.” In *Stuffed and Starved: The Hidden Battle for the World Food System.* Melville House Publishing.
* Take-home work:
  + Reading guide 9 (due Friday, July 28)
  + Short paper presentation (due Friday, July 28)
  + Final paper (due Sunday, July 30)

Friday, July 28: COVID-19, future environments, and course-wrap ups

* Take-home work:
  + Final paper (due Sunday, July 30)

Final Essay due: Sunday, July 30 by 11:59pm Eastern Time