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**EAS 494: Environment & Health**

Winter, 2011



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<b>Instructor:</b>	Theresa Garvin	<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:Theresa.Garvin@ualberta.ca">Theresa.Garvin@ualberta.ca</a>
<b>Office:</b>	Tory 3-98	<b>Office Hours:</b>	Wednesday mornings, or by appointment
<b>Phone:</b>	492-4593	<b>Class Website:</b>	<a href="http://courses.eas.ualberta.ca/eas494/">http://courses.eas.ualberta.ca/eas494/</a>
<b>Class Location:</b>	ESB 2-36	<b>Class Times:</b>	Mondays 1-4 pm

**CALENDAR DESCRIPTION**

An examination of relations between human health and environmental issues, particularly those related to the natural, built, and social environments. Prerequisite: EAS 395. [Faculty of Arts] (Note: waiver of pre-requisite is possible with consent of instructor)

**COURSE SUMMARY**

This seminar course examines the relationships between environmental issues and health outcomes through the competing approaches of scientists, policymakers and the general public. Throughout the course students will use case studies, academic and scientific literatures, and popular reports (including internet resources) to evaluate criteria by which various groups determine risk and make policy decisions in light of unclear and uncertain evidence in contentious environmental health problems.

**IMPORTANT:** This is an Arts course and does not count as a science credit.

*Please Note:* This seminar course is designed for upper-level students in human geography, environmental studies, arts and social science programs. It requires a commitment to class preparation and discussion, as well as independent library research.

**REQUIRED READINGS**

All required readings will be available on-line via a password-protected website and linked to the university library. Please see the course instructor for website permissions.

**GRADING SCHEME**

Weekly Discussion Papers (7 @ 5% ea)	35%
Take Home Midterm Paper (8-12 pages)	30% (due Mar 7/11)
Case Study Presentation	20% (due Apr 11/11)
Class Preparation and Participation	15%

**NOTE: THIS COURSE HAS NO FINAL EXAM**

***PRELIMINARY OUTLINE/OVERVIEW OF TOPICS – Subject to revision<sup>1</sup>***

Date	Wk#	Room	Topic (** indicates class held with RSoc & CHPS)
Jan 10	1	ESB 2-36	Introduction to the course Environment & Health; Social Construction
Jan 17	2	ESB 2-36	The social context of health & the environment Case Study: Black Lung <b>Discussion Paper #1 Due</b>
Jan 24	3	ESB 2-36	Science, Certainty & Public Understandings of Science Case Study: Genetically Modified Organisms <b>Discussion Paper #2 Due</b>
Jan 31	4	ESB 2-36	Evaluating Evidence and Cause-Effect / Case Study: Food Safety <b>Discussion Paper #3 Due</b>
Feb 07	5	ESB 2-36	News, Media & Controversy / Case Study: Water Guest Lecture: Dr. Michelle Driedger, University of Manitoba <b>Discussion Paper #4 Due</b>
Feb 14	6	ESB 2-36	<b>Take-Home Midterm Assigned</b>
Feb 21	--		No class – Family Day & Reading Week
Feb 28	--		Class cancelled
Mar 07	7	ESB 2-36	<b>Take Home Midterm Due</b>
Mar 14	8	GSB 5- 11	Risk Communication & Policy / Case Study: BSE** Guest Lecture: Shirley McLellan (tentative) <b>Discussion Paper #5 Due</b>
Mar 21	9	TBA	Policymaking & Media / Case Study: Influenza (H1N1)** Guest Lecture: Dr. Franziska Boerner <b>Discussion Paper #6 Due</b>
Mar 28	10	ESB 2-36	Public Participation / Case Study: Sour Gas** <b>Discussion Paper #7 Due</b>
Apr 04	11	TBA	In-Class Project Communications** (EAS 594, RSOC 551, HPS 506)
Apr 11	12	<b>TBA</b>	<b>EAS 494 Student Presentations**</b> Course Wrap-up; Course Evaluations

<sup>1</sup> Due dates of assignments will NOT be revised

## ***COMPONENTS OF THE FINAL GRADE***

### **Weekly Discussion Papers (7 @ 5% each = 35%)**

You are expected to prepare for class each week by writing a short (2-3 page d/s) discussion paper identifying what you think are the key ideas or themes that link together the weekly readings. Discussion papers will be marked according to the following scale:

- 5/5 Excellent – paper is well-written and insightful. Student clearly understands the course material and is able to apply it in an innovative manner. . Ideas and concepts are drawn from other sources and woven seamlessly into a coherent discussion. Few, if any, errors (spelling and grammar).
- 4/5 Good – paper is above average in terms of writing and content. Student understands course material and is able to apply it to other concepts in a manner that shows a clear grasp of the course concepts. Few, if any, errors (spelling and grammar).
- 3/5 Acceptable – this paper shows an adequate grasp of course content and ability to engage with the material. This work might represent a paper written in haste, or evidence that one or more of the readings has not been included in the discussion. There are sometimes spelling and/or grammatical errors in work at this level.
- 2/5 Less than acceptable – this paper is poorly-written and shows little, if any, application of course concepts. This represents work that is poor at the level of a 4<sup>th</sup> year seminar course. With some additional care, this work could, however, be brought up to an acceptable level.
- 1/5 Unacceptable – This represents work that, while submitted, is completely unacceptable.
- 0/5 Discussion paper not submitted or submitted late.

*IMPORTANT: The weekly discussion papers must be e-mailed to Dr. Garvin ([Theresa.Garvin@ualberta.ca](mailto:Theresa.Garvin@ualberta.ca)) by 9am Monday morning on the day it is due. Late papers will not be accepted, but early submissions are welcome.*

### **Take Home Midterm (30%)**

Using materials provided, write an 8-12 page paper analyzing an evolving environment and health issue. You will be provided with materials and asked to analyze the issue using key themes and ideas discussed in class. This assignment should take 15-20 hours and you will be given three weeks to complete it. Because of the way that the schedule falls this year, you will have additional time over Reading Week for this midterm.

### **Case Study Communication (20%)**

Present a short overview (amount of time is yet to be determined) of your case study to the rest of the class. Your communication will be marked out of 20 points and can take any of a number of forms. In the past, students have communicated via oral presentation, role-playing exercises, games, debates, or websites. Communications will be graded by both the instructor and your fellow students. See the course website for the evaluation page and talk with your instructor for suggestions on effective communication methods.

Attendance on this day is critical to your participation grade as you will be asked to provide tentative grading and feedback to your classmates. A communications schedule will be compiled in class prior to Reading Week.

### **Class Preparation and Participation (15%)**

As a small seminar course, the success of the learning environment is based upon students' willingness to prepare for class and engage in discussion with classmates. Therefore, a portion of the final grade for the course is based on your participation in class; be reminded that you cannot participate if you do not attend. Students are expected to fully prepare, attend class, and take part in class activity in order to attain the full participation grade.

### **CASE STUDY TOPICS**

*The following is a list of possible research topics for the Case Study Communication. **Case study topics must be approved by the instructor.***

Health impacts of climate change  
(pick a specific location or disease)

Lyme Disease

Legionnaire's Disease

Radon

Second hand cigarette smoke

Toxic Mould (or mold)

Autism Spectrum Disorders

Water Quality

Fibromyalgia

Epidemics (Norwalk?)

Asthma

Obesity & the environment

Coalbed Methane

Sound Pollution & Hearing

Immunizations

Housing and Health

Transgenomics (environmental-  
genomic interactions)

Lead

Cellphones & Cancer

Heat Stroke

Homelessness

Parkinson's Disease

Multiple Sclerosis (MS)

Obesity

Coronary Heart Disease (CHD)

Trans-fats

Vitamins/Food Supplement

Immunization

Drug-resistant diseases

Repetitive Strain Injury

For this course it is crucial that you know how to use citations correctly. I recommend that you adopt the APA in-line citation style. Information and guidelines on how to use these styles can be found at the following useful websites:

<http://www.library.ualberta.ca/guides/apa/index.cfm> (APA reference guidelines)

<http://www.library.ualberta.ca/guides/criticalevaluation/index.cfm> (criteria for evaluating websites)

<http://www.library.ualberta.ca/guides/citation/index.cfm> (citation styles for internet and electronic sources)

## **DOING THE READINGS AND PREPARING FOR CLASS DISCUSSIONS**

The purpose of this course is to provide a broad overview of complex and (sometimes) highly technical topics. Many of the readings are dense, detailed, and span several different specialized fields. You may find them difficult to read but please remember that these readings are considered departure points for discussion in class. While you are expected to read the articles before class, do not get bogged down in technical details or feel that you have to “memorize” specific information. Rather, try to evaluate the general ideas in each paper, compare the papers in a set of readings, and reference the learning objectives and discussion questions provided for each week’s readings.

In EAS 494 class preparation means more than simply reading the articles. Please set aside 30-60 minutes each week after you have completed the readings to consider what you have read and about an hour to write your discussion paper. Find a comfortable place to relax, grab a cup of coffee (or your beverage of choice) and think about what the articles have to say. Try to answer the discussion questions and ask yourself the following questions:

- What are the 3 main points in each article?
- Why was I asked to read these articles?
- How do these readings relate to previous readings in the course?
- What can I take from these readings and apply to my term project?

Note that each week’s outline provides a list of additional resources for you to access for those topics that interest you. Feel free to look at these sources or search out your own to bring to class additional ideas and perspectives.

Students who are unfamiliar with the seminar format or who need assistance with writing, study skills in reading journal articles, writing term papers, and time management, are encouraged to talk to me and/or to contact University of Alberta’s Academic Support Centre for students:

<http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/academicsupport/>

## **COURSE POLICIES**

Attendance is required for this course and will impact the participation mark that students receive in the class.

Discussion papers must be submitted by e-mail in either MS Word (.doc or .docx) or PDF (.pdf) formats and must be received by Dr. Garvin by 9 am on the day of class.

Extensions will not be granted for the take-home midterm exam or the presentations.

All assignments, including discussion papers must be in typed format. I will not accept any handwritten assignments. All written work must be in your own words (i.e. language composed uniquely by you), with the exception of quoted material which must be denoted by quotation marks (“ ”) or by being offset from other text by being inset from the text on both the right and left margins of the paper. Directly quoted material must be accompanied by page numbers for the source.

If you have an issue or question regarding the grading of an assignment, please provide me with the concern/complaint in writing with the assignment. I will review the grading of the question/assignment and return it to the student.

## **REQUIRED COURSE OUTLINE COMPONENTS**

### **Access to Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material**

Students will have access to past and representative evaluative course material via the password-protected section of the course website.

### **Explanatory Notes on Assignments**

Detailed instructions for assignments, midterm and presentation will be distributed in class and made available on the coursed website.

### **Attendance, Absences and Missed Grade Components**

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections 23.4.2 and 23.4.3 of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” components of the course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed in or completed as a result.

### **Policy for Late Assignments**

Late assignments will not be accepted.

### **Grading**

Evaluation will be completed and expressed in raw marks throughout the course. Grades (A, B, C, D) will be assigned only to the final distribution of marks for the course. Such assignment will be based on a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in this class and remains unofficial until approved by Faculty Council or its designate.

### **Required Notes:**

“Policy about course outlines can be found in section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar.” (GFC 29 SEP 2003).

### **Academic Integrity**

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the *Code of Student Behaviour* (online at [www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm](http://www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm)) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.” (GFC 29 SEP 2003)

### **Learning and working environment**

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not

tolerate behavior that undermines that environment. The department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behavior is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the student ombudservice: ([http://www.su.ualberta.ca/wervices\\_and\\_businesses/service/ombudservice](http://www.su.ualberta.ca/wervices_and_businesses/service/ombudservice)). Information about University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures can be found in the GFC Policy Manual, section 44 available at <http://www.ualberta.ca/~unisechr>.

### **Plagiarism and Cheating:**

All students should consult the “Truth in Education” handbook or Website (<http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/>) regarding the definitions of **plagiarism** and its consequences when detected. An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly produce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. Before unpleasantness occurs, consult <http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/>; also discuss this matter with your instructor.

### **Recording of Lectures:**

Recording of lectures and class discussion is NOT permitted in this class unless part of an approved accommodation plan.

### **Cell Phones & Communication devices:**

All communication devices are to be turned off during lectures, labs and seminars.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

Students who require accommodation in this course due to a disability are advised to discuss their needs with Specialized Support & Disability Services (2-800 Students’ Union Building).

### **Academic Support Centre:**

Students who require additional help in developing strategies for better time management, study skills or examination skills should contact the Academic Support Centre. Students requiring writing assistance are encouraged to access the Writing Centre.

## **GRADING**

The University’s grading scheme will be applied in the following way:

- A+ A *Excellent*. Student performance well exceeds expectations. Student attends class, participates actively and excels at all levels of evaluation. Student displays innovation in the application of all course concepts.
- A- B+ *Very Good*. Student performs above the expected level. This includes attending class, participating actively and performing well in graded materials. Student shows a thorough understanding of course concepts and is able to apply most in an innovative manner.
- B B- *Good*. Student meets course expectations in some areas and exceeds them in others but shows inconsistency in participation or materials submitted for grading and evaluation.

Student shows a thorough understanding of course concepts and is able to apply them in an innovative manner.

C+ C *Average*. Student meets course expectations by attending most classes, taking part in class discussions and submitting all required work for evaluation. Student shows a basic understanding of course material.

C- D+ *Pass*. Student has met most course expectations but has some major weakness in attendance, participation or graded materials. Student shows basic understanding of some material but fails to show clear understanding of one or more course concepts.

D *Minimal Pass*. Student has met minimal course requirements but has major weakness(es) in one or more of: attendance, participation, graded materials. Student shows basic understanding of some course concepts and little or no understanding of others.

F= Fail *Unacceptable*. Student has not met minimal course requirements and shows major weakness(es) in one or more of: attendance, participation, graded materials, and conceptual understanding.



*"I'm a social scientist, Michael. That means I can't explain electricity or anything like that, but if you ever want to know about people I'm your man."*

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**Disclaimer:** Any typographical errors in this Course Outline are subject to change and will be announced in class

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