GEOG*2030: Environment and Development
Fall 2015 Course Outline
Department of Geography, University of Guelph
TENTATIVE OUTLINE, SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Course Instructor:  Dr. Robin Roth
Hutt 131; e-mail: robin.roth@uoguelph.ca
Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:00-1:30

Teaching Assistants:

Your Last Name:  Your TA:
Last names starting in A-K  TBA
Last names starting in L-Z  TBA

Lectures:  Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10:30-11:50
ALEX 100

Course Description and Objectives

Environmental problems in the developing world are numerous and complex. People influence, and are influenced by, environmental changes such as deforestation, desertification, agricultural intensification, climate change, and biodiversity loss. What causes these problems? How are people affected by these problems? Why is solving these problems so difficult? This course takes a geographical perspective (based on the subfield of ‘political ecology’) to try to answer these questions. A focus is placed on power relations, scale, the politics of knowledge, and political economy in order to examine environmental issues in the developing world from a critical perspective. Topics include: history of sustainable development; livelihoods; population; poverty and environment; politics of environmental knowledge; gender and human-environment interactions; the politics of conservation and ideas about nature; and fair trade and certification. Note that the focus of the course will be primarily on rural areas in developing countries.

At the end of the course you should be able to:

- Identify and explain concepts from the course, as presented both in lecture and through readings and films;
- Critically apply these concepts in order to interpret current environmental changes and conflicts;
- Evaluate the utility of these concepts for understanding human-environment relations in the developing world; and
- Write a convincing argument using these concepts.

Tips for doing well in this course:
- Do the readings before each lecture; attend lecture and take your own notes;
- Meet with TA or professor to clarify any questions throughout the semester;
- Leave enough time to reflect on, write and edit assignments; and
- Study for midterms and the final exam well in advance of the exam dates.
Required Readings

Selected readings from various books, journals, and websites. All readings are available through D2L (Courselink). Click on “Content”, then on “Course Readings”, then on “Course reserves on ARES”. Readings are listed alphabetically by journal/book title (not by author). See course schedule below for further details. You will be required to use TopHat, which requires a semester or yearly subscription. (Still cheaper than a textbook!). Should you not have the use of a device (laptop, smartphone, tablet or cell phone), please let me know within the first week of classes.

Evaluation

10% In-class questions via TopHat
05% In-class activities (2 activities x 2.5%)
25% First Exam
35% Written Assignment – Part 1: 10%; Part 2: 25%
25% Second Exam

In-class activities (15%)
Students must participate in two in-class activities (worth 2.5% each). Instructions for each activity will be provided in-class; no preparation is necessary other than being up to date with course material including readings for that day. Dates for in-class activities are listed in the detailed course schedule below. Students should be sure to attend class on these dates, as the activities must be completed during the lecture period.

First Exam (in class, 25%)
The objective of the mid-term is to ensure that you review and critically engage with the material introduced in lectures, films, and readings. The mid-term exam will be a mix of multiple-choice and short-essay questions. It will cover material from the lectures and readings of weeks 1-6.

Writing Assignment (35%)
Details for this assignment will be distributed before the beginning of term but will consist of Part 1, covering analysis and outline worth 10% and Part 2 the completed essay worth 25%.

Second Exam – (December 12th 11:30-1:30 25%)
The final exam will cover material from the whole term, although it will be heavily focused on material from weeks 7-12 (after the mid-term), and will be a combination of multiple-choice, short-essay and long-essay questions.

Note that all lecture material, including films, and all readings may be covered on exams.