GEOG*3210: Management of the Biophysical Environment  
Fall 2016 Course Outline  
Department of Geography, University of Guelph  
TENTATIVE OUTLINE, SUBJECT TO REVISION

Course Instructor:  Dr. Robin Roth  
Hutt 131; e-mail: robin.roth@uoguelph.ca (put 3210 in subject)  
Office Hours: Thursdays 12:30 -1:30 or by appointment

Teaching Assistants:  
For help with online writing assignments: TBA  
For help with course content and exams: TBA

Lectures:  Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:30-3:20, ALEX 100; Friday Online Component

Course Description and Objectives

This course will examine the concepts and methods used by the state to manage the natural environment. Through an investigation into contemporary environmental issues in Canada (with occasional reference to other areas of the world) we will develop an understanding of the particular rationales for and evolution of state management. Important trends and issues will be treated with particular attention including Aboriginal rights, private sector involvement and climate change.

At the end of the course you should be able to:  
- Identify and explain the rationales for state-led resource management: conflict, uncertainty, resource collapse, common property, externalities;  
- Identify and explain resource management strategies: environmental impact assessment, public participation, ecosystem approach, adaptive management  
- Critically apply these concepts in order to interpret current environmental changes and conflicts;  
- Discuss contemporary challenges to state-led resource management in Canada

Skill Acquisition

In addition to learning the content, this course is designed to improve your abilities in:  
- Effective peer-to-peer commentary and cross-cultural communication skills  
- The use of advanced concepts in the analysis of popular media  
- Effective and concise writing

Course Expectations

The course will introduce you to the course material through a combination of lecture, discussion, guest lectures, film and debate. My expectation is that you gain insight into the benefits and challenges of state resource management. I hope that you will be motivated to explore these issues and topics further in academic, professional, community and/or personal pursuits. I do not expect you to agree with me or with each other or to adopt a fixed approach or
to merely absorb a fixed package of "facts". I do expect an intensive engagement with the subject matter and with the process of learning in the class. I will encourage respectful debate, discussion and dialogue as we explore issues that I believe to be critical to how we live in the world.

**Course Format**

Though the course is scheduled for M, W and F from 11:30-12:20, we will rarely be meeting on Fridays. Regular lectures will be held on Monday and Wednesdays with Friday activities being online. This is what is referred to as a 'blended' format. The online component is required and is crucial in meeting some of the learning objectives in this class. See the weekly schedule for more details.

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**Required Readings**


Additional readings will be assigned as required and available on Courselink

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**Evaluation**

25% Mid-term Exam  
35% Short written Assignments and Commentaries  
40% Final Exam (Take home; due December 7th)

**Mid-Term Exam (October, 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 short answer and essay questions. It will cover material from the lectures and readings of weeks 1-6.

**Short Written Assignments and Commentaries (35%)**

A key component of this class is to connect what we’re doing in lecture and in the readings with what is happening right now in the world beyond our classroom. To that effect, you will find news articles/items and submit an assignment discussing the content of the news article with reference to course material. For this exercise, we are collaborating with one group of students in Quebec and another in Japan, who will be doing a similar exercise. Through the use of newsactivist, an online scholarly blogging site located at [www.newsactivist.com](http://www.newsactivist.com), we will be able to see each other's writing and comment on it. You will have to submit four commentaries throughout the semester. Detailed assignment worksheet to be handed out on the first day of class.

**Final Exam – (Take home, December 7, 40%)**

The final exam will cover material from the whole term, although it will be more heavily focused on material from after the mid-term. The exam will be distributed in-class on November 30th and due December 7th @ 21:00. The format will be short answer and essay questions.

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