Introduction and Course Overview:

“Environmental governance,” according to geographers Bridge and Perrault (2009: 486) refers to “institutional re/alignments of state, capital, and civil society actors in relation to the management of environments and resources, and the implications of these configurations for social and environmental outcomes”. The purpose of this course is to develop an advanced understanding of the contemporary dynamics of environmental governance and management, focusing on the social, political and economic contexts in which governance takes place, and the shifting configurations of state and non-state actors and interests that shape it.

This course promotes critical and theoretically informed geographical engagements with contemporary practices and processes of environmental management and governance; an engagement which considers the logics and practices of environmental governance alongside those of state power, capitalist political-economy, settler colonialism, and modern liberal rule. We thus begin from the premise that geographies of environmental governance, similar to other manifestations of environment-society relations, are political; embroiled in power relations and processes operating at a number of spatial scales and serving particular interests. In the first few weeks we engage with core geographical debates about ‘production of nature,’ ‘capitalist nature’, and the politics of knowledge in order to set the stage for exploring topical and thematic concerns in contemporary environmental governance such as the dynamics of neoliberal environmental governance and role of the state, the ways in which settler colonialism and indigeneity inflect governance, and the significance of financializing environmental governance through schemes like carbon trading and wetland banking. Where possible, thematic focus is on the Global North and Canada.

Objectives:

1) To develop a critical understanding of the institutional configurations that shape governance practices and socio-ecological outcomes
2) To develop a critical understanding of the actors and interests (including the ways in which these align and realign and the significance of particular alignments) that shape governance practices and socio-ecological outcomes.

3) To be able to identify and explain the significance of political and economic formations (including those of neoliberal capitalism, settler-colonialism, and state power) and discuss their contribution to shaping governance practices and outcomes.

4) To develop familiarity with critical theoretical entry-points for understanding environmental governance and management.

5) To develop and improve reading and analytical skills—in particular to develop and refine the ability to read closely and critically, to concisely synthesize and deconstruct arguments, to participate and lead in-class discussion, and to learn through informed and respectful discussion with classmates.

6) To read widely and gain familiarity with relevant literatures about environmental governance and management.

Course Format:
This course is conceived of as a forum for facilitating critical enquiry into the dynamics of contemporary environmental governance, with a geographical focus on Canada and the Global North. We meet once a week for three hours, with a short break provided approximately half way through. We will proceed through close reading and seminar style discussion of important texts. The purpose of our meetings will be to discuss, share, and develop our understandings of the readings, as well as to distil, and together build on the arguments and insights they contain. Each meeting you will be expected to attend class prepared to discuss the readings with your peers.

Class meetings will generally proceed as seminar style discussion. With the exception of weeks two, three and four when we will read and discuss material connected to geographical and governance debates around “production of nature”, “capitalist natures” and politics of environmental knowledge, students will be assigned (see below) to introduce each week’s readings and to lead the seminar discussion. Weekly readings have been chosen and grouped together because of what they might add to each other’s arguments or shed light on a particular course theme or problematic. The task is not simply to critique and analyse the readings, but to think the readings through together and see where this synthesis of understanding may take us. Our task as a class will be to work on developing a shared understanding and analysis of course concepts and processes and to build, stretch and deepen each other’s understanding of the problematics of environmental governance.
Assignments:

Weekly reading response: due midnight Tuesday on Courselink (40%)
Discussion leadership: due weeks 5 onward (10%)
Class participation: throughout (10%)
Annotated bibliography: TBA (40%)

Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University’s policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Graduate Calendar:
https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/2016-2017/genreg/sec_d0e2709.shtml

If you are confused about how to attribute sources (or have any other questions related to referencing or plagiarism), please feel free to see me for assistance. For tips and resources on referencing and writing, see:
http://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/get-assistance/writing/citations

Standard Course/Department Policies

E-mail Communication
As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students. *Please also check Courselink regularly, as this will be used to distribute course materials.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement
When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the instructor in writing (by email) as soon as possible. See the graduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration:
https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/2016-2017/genreg/sec_d0e2232.shtml
Drop Date
The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty, is **November (TBA)**. Refer to the Graduate Calendar for the schedule of dates:

Copies of out-of-class assignments
Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Accessibility
The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

For more information, contact SAS at 519-824-4120 ext. 56208 or email accessibility@uoguelph.ca or see the website: [https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/accessibility/](https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/accessibility/)

Recording of Materials
Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded in any electronic media without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer.

Resources
The Graduate Calendar is the source of information about the University of Guelph’s procedures, policies and regulations which apply to graduate programs:
[http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/](http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/)

Most importantly, if you have any questions or concerns, please let the instructor know!