GEOG*3600: Geography of a Selected Region
Course Outline

Department of Geography, Environment and Geomatics | University of Guelph
Winter 2019

Instructor:
Dr. Faisal Moola, PhD
Office: Hutt Building, Rm. 350
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Teaching Assistants: (*email for appointment*): TBD

Lectures: Mondays 7:00 – 9:50 pm (MCKN 225)

About the Instructor:

Dr. Faisal Moola is an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography, Environment and Geomatics at the University of Guelph. Prior to joining Guelph University, he worked for the David Suzuki Foundation for over 15 years, where he was the organization’s Director General for Ontario and Northern Canada. Faisal has a PhD in biology from Dalhousie University and has published widely in scientific journals on topics of ecology, conservation biology, and environmental policy. Faisal has contributed to a number of significant conservation and sustainability policy outcomes in Canada, including the protection of over 2 million hectares of temperate rainforest in British Columbia, the establishment of the Endangered Species Act in Ontario and the creation of Canada’s first Urban National Park in the Rouge. Faisal has also worked closely with a number of First Nations communities in defence of their lands and Treaty and Indigenous Rights, including the Dunne _za and Cree Treaty 8 First Nations in British Columbia, and Grassly Narrows First Nation in Ontario. Faisal is a regular contributor to the Toronto Star, Vancouver Sun, Globe and Mail, CBC and other media outlets as an opinion writer and political analyst on conservation, Indigenous Rights and other environmental and social issues.

Course Description and Objectives

Canada’s boreal forests contain significant habitat for imperiled wildlife, such as woodland caribou (Rangifer tarandus caribou) and provide globally significant ecosystem services, such as carbon storage and the provision of freshwater. While historically ignored as a conservation priority owing to their relatively low species richness compared to tropical and sub-tropical regions of the planet, the boreal forest is currently in the conservation spotlight. Over 1,500 scientists have signed an open letter to policy-makers calling for the protection of half of the
Canadian boreal forest in a system of formally designated parks and protected areas (PPAs)\(^1\) and governments have enacted legislation and initiated land use planning processes to conserve large swaths of boreal wilderness, such as in Ontario’s Far North. Indeed, the Canadian boreal zone is among the few places on the planet where proactive land use planning to protect biodiversity can still occur in advance of large-scale development decisions, given that much of the region remains intact and relatively undisturbed by industrial activity. For example, while more than 75% of the Earth's ice-free surface shows evidence of alteration as a result of human residence and land use, a recent inventory of remaining Intact Forest Landscapes (containing large contiguous patches of forested and/or naturally occurring treeless ecosystems) has found that approximately a quarter of remaining global Intact Forest Landscapes (IFLs) are found within the northern boreal zone of North America; and mostly in Canada.

While recognizing the significant and timely opportunity for large-scale conservation in the Canadian boreal, we should not lose sight of the fact that Indigenous rights, traditional ecological knowledge and governance systems are critical to the success of conservation and sustainable management in the boreal. As such, this course will provide an overview on the unique ecology of the region, it’s irreplaceable biodiversity and role of state and Indigenous-led systems of conservation governance.

**Objectives**

The course objectives are:

1. To investigate the ecology, conservation and management of the Canadian Boreal Forest region, including the role of fire and other natural disturbances, ecological succession, biodiversity, conservation planning, and forest silviculture.
2. To consider institutional and non-institutional approaches to boreal forest conservation, with a particular focus on Indigenous systems of governance.
3. To develop an appreciation for approaches to boreal forest management that are both biophysically and socially responsive; and
4. To critically examine a number of case studies relevant to boreal forest conservation and management, such as the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement, forest certification and Tribal Parks.

**Outline**

The course is organized into weekly seminar sessions where we will discuss assigned readings on the boreal forest region. Seminars will be accompanied by video and audio followed by a series of questions and a discussion concerning the topic of the published paper.

Students are expected to participate in group discussions as part of weekly seminars, led by the Instructor and complimented by assigned readings.

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\(^1\) [Scientists’ Letter](#)
At the end of the course, students should:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the ecology and policy regimes governing the management of the Canadian boreal forest.
- Be able to critique past and current policy for the management of the boreal forest.
- Effectively communicate arguments and ideas related to boreal forest ecology and management in both oral and written form, individually and as a member of a group.

The course is designed to encourage and promote student participation; its success will depend on students engaging with the course material and one another and coming to class prepared.

**Course Readings**

All required readings (selected journal articles and book chapters) will be available through Courselink or through the library (e-reserves and/or E-journal access). Please refer to the course schedule for detailed information on when the readings should be completed.

**Evaluation**

30% Written Assignment.

30% Group presentation on assigned topic (Due on date assigned to group, during your seminar section, Weeks 8 to 12; details to be distributed separately)

40% Final exam.

**Seminar Guidelines**

You are expected to:

1. Read the assigned article.
2. **Come to weekly seminars with 3 questions and/or critical comments** related to the reading. Your comments/questions should explicitly engage with particular aspects of the reading and be substantial.
3. Participate in the discussion, by drawing on your prepared notes/comments and responding to other ideas presented in the seminar.
Social Media

**Twitter:** I will be tweeting about many of the issues we will be covering in the term. You can follow me at: @Faisal_Moola. Popular hashtags that I’ll be posting to include #onpoli, #cdnpoli #fnpoli and #bcpoli

Course Policies

**Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to pursue their academic work with honesty and integrity and to understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. Refer to the Academic Calendar for university policies. It is strongly recommended that you complete the tutorial and review materials at: Academic Integrity Website

**Communication:** Please check your university email account and Courselink regularly. Important information will be communicated by these means. I will do my best to respond to emails sent on weekdays within 24 hours; emails sent after 4pm Friday will be responded to on Monday. **Please include the course name (GEOG*4220) in the subject line.**

**Late Assignments:** Assignments must be submitted on time. Seminar discussions and group presentations must be completed on the date assigned. Late penalties for the analytical report will be detailed on a separate assignment handout. Note that the final take-home exam is still an exam; as such, no late submissions can be accepted. Any students who encounter problems for a valid medical or personal reason should speak to the instructor as soon as possible, and definitely on or before the due date for the assignment. A note may be required.

**E-mail Communication**
As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <mail.uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

**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 course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the undergraduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration.

**Drop Date**
The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty, is Friday, March 10. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Undergraduate Calendar.
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 the Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

For more information, contact SAS at 519-824-4120 ext. 56208 or email csd@uoguelph.ca or see the website: http://www.uoguelph.ca/csd/

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.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Recording of Materials
Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources
The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph’s procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.