

GEOG 4670/ENVR 4000 Winnipeg's Urban Nature



Wednesdays 2:30-5:15 @ 221 Wallace

Office Hours: Wed 1:30-2:30 or by appointment

Instructor: Jonathan Peyton (Sinnott 305)

Ph# and Email: 204.474.9089 jonathan.peyton@umanitoba.ca

Course Outline - Environmental Historian Douglas Weiner has suggested that “every environmental story is a story about power.” This course explores the many dimensions of human-environment relations by examining the stories we tell about the natural world and analysing how those stories reflect, challenge and reproduce environmental inequalities and uneven development. The course will be primarily based in political ecology and allied approaches to resource and environmental conflict. We will use nature in the city of Winnipeg to test academic, archival, cultural and mixed-media interventions. Students will be asked to reflect upon the stories that other academics, artists, journalists, politicians and policymakers tell about nature in Winnipeg and environs and to consider how these approaches to narrative, analysis and explanation of human-environment relationships might impact their own research plans.

Course Objectives

- To engage with multiple theories, methods and modes of analysis at the intersection of human society and the environment.
- To develop the research and writing skills needed to engage directly in environmental scholarship through the analysis of primary materials, government documents, grey literatures and archival data.
- To test how stories about nature are stories about power (who has it/doesn't have it? How is it exercised? How does it produce conflict and inequality?).
- To understand the dynamics of human-environment relations in Winnipeg. How is nature made by social forces? How is society shaped by the environment?

Learning Outcomes

- Learn research skills and writing strategies for analyzing complex environmental conflicts, problems and opportunities in your city.
- Learn analytical tools for disaggregating and thinking critically about the cause and effects of environmental problems.

- Learn how to become an effective and engaged environmental citizen.

Course Etiquette

What to expect from your professor: provocative, challenging and informative seminars; wrapping up lectures/discussions on time; a willingness to listen to and learn from you; prompt and fair grading of your assignments; timely responses to your questions and comments.

What I expect from you: being prepared for class, arriving on time, and not engaging in disruptive behavior; completing the readings and preparing questions and comments for class discussions; a willingness to listen and learn from your instructors *and* your classmates.

Textbooks, Readings, Materials

There is no textbook for the course. Any additional materials listed below will be handed out in class or made available through UMLearn.

Lecture and Readings Schedule

January 10 – Introducing Winnipeg’s Urban Nature

January 17 – The foundations of urban/environmental research

- Andrew E.G. Jonas, Eugene McCann and Mary Thomas “Chp 10: Nature and Environment in the City” in *Urban Geography: A Critical Introduction*, eds. (Wiley: London, 2015), 206-228.
- Workshop: Researching Winnipeg’s Urban Nature - Water

January 24 – Urban Nature in Winnipeg 1

- Adele Perry, “Starting with Water: Canada, Colonialism, and History At 2019” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 30.1(2019): 6-31.
<https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/jcha/2019-v30-n1-jcha05408/1070629ar/>
- Brittany Luby, “The Day After: Water” *NiCHE-Canada* Sept 25, 2020
<https://niche-canada.org/2020/09/25/canadian-dimension-cross-posting-the-day-after-water/>
- Dale Barbour, “Muddied Water and Monkey Trails” *NiCHE-Canada* July 15, 2020 <https://niche-canada.org/2020/07/15/muddied-waters-and-monkey-trails/>
- Workshop: Finding our topics (bring a “piece” of WPGs Urban/Nature to class)

January 31 – Urban Nature in Winnipeg 2

- Sean Kheraj, “Animals and Urban Environments: Managing Domestic Animals in Nineteenth-Century Winnipeg” in *Eco-Cultural Networks and the British Empire: New Views on Environmental History*. Eds. James Beattie, Edward Melillo, and Emily O’Gorman (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 263-288.
- Optional: Hallman, Bonnie and Mary Benbow. “Canadian Human Landscape Examples: Naturally cultural: the zoo as cultural landscape” *Canadian Geographer* 50.2 (2006): 256-264.
- Workshop: The nuts and bolts of Urban/Nature Research with Grace O’Hanlon

February 7 – Doing Urban/Nature Research

- Seminar: Building arguments in Urban/Nature Research (details to follow)
- Workshop: The nuts and bolts of Urban/Nature Archival Research with Nicole (Dafoe Library Archivist)

February 14 – Urban Nature in Winnipeg 3

- Trevor Wideman, “Property, Waste, and the “unnecessary hardship” of land-use planning in Winnipeg, Canada” *Urban Geography* 41.6 (2020): 865-892.
- Browse <https://www.urbanecologywinnipeg.ca>
- Workshop: Finding and using “grey literature”

February 21 – READING WEEK!!

February 28 – Class cancelled

March 6 – Doing Urban/Nature Research 2

- Toby Davine et al., “Place-making at a national scale: Framing tar sands extraction as “Canadian” in The Globe and Mail” *The Canadian Geographer* 61.3 (2017): 428-439.
- Workshop: Finding and using newspapers and periodicals.

March 13 – Doing Urban/Nature Research 3

- Free Day! (Sort of...). We’ll use this day to refine out topics, our arguments, and our research approaches.
- Optional Workshop: Using maps, photos, art, video as source material

March 20 – Doing Urban/Nature Research 4

- Browse Winnipeg Draft Plan 2050: <https://20to50.ca>
- Workshop: Building a bibliography for argument and supporting evidence

March 27 – Doing Urban/Nature Research 5

- Heather Dorries, David Hugill and Julie Tomiak, “Racial Capitalism and the Production of Settler Colonial Cities” *Geoforum* 132 (2022): 263-270.
- Julie Tomiak, “Contested Entitlement: The Kapyong Barracks, Treaty Rights, and Settler Colonialism in Winnipeg” in *Settler City Limits: Indigenous Resurgence and Colonial Violence in the Urban Prairie West* eds. Heather Dorries et al., (UMPress, 2019).
- Workshop: Thinking about power in Urban/Nature Research

April 3 – Doing (SO SO SO Much) Urban/Nature Research

- Free Day 2! Your research will be mostly completed at this stage. We’ll meet to begin structuring your writing and narrative.

April 10 – Project presentations for our final class

Written Assignments

“Argument” Assignment (15%) Due **February 14**: This is designed to help students find, synthesize and analyse the arguments contained in academic essays.

Annotated Bibliography (15%) Due **March 13**: Students are also responsible for an annotated bibliography of 4-5 additional readings that help in the argument of the final assignment or work as supporting evidence. This annotated bibliography should concisely summarize the chosen sources, with an emphasis on describing, evaluating, and situating the work in relation to broader themes. The idea here is to help you to identify and annotate additional sources that help situate your projects both on the ground in WPG and within a broader intellectual context. Students are encouraged to discuss their ideas for the annotated bibliography with the instructor beforehand. I can provide ideas on additional sources and help refine your plans.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENT (50%) Due **April 10 (or during the exam period)**: You have a choice between four final assignment formats: a term paper, a policy brief, a creative or public piece of writing (i.e., a magazine article), or the ‘freelance’ option. You may choose to develop the ‘non-academic’ options available; but remember, your major assignment must contain references to academic sources and be 2500-3000 words (or roughly 12-15 pages).

- **OPTION A: Term papers** can explore any issue discussed in class; you may also propose to explore something related to class materials that we have not discussed directly in class (though you should clear this in person or in writing with the professor). A good term paper will identify and articulate a strong argument throughout the paper, engage with key sources in the academic literature, and be framed in relation to academic issues and debates. Don’t be afraid to take a normative stance in your term paper – but be sure to back up your stance with research, a coherent analytical approach and empirical data taken from your academic sources (and beyond).
- **OPTION B: Policy briefing papers** will develop a practical, solutions-based approach to a problem or conflict discussed in class. Your policy brief should be addressed to a real or imagined leader (an MP or MLA, local government representative, CEO of a corporation, Band Chief, head of an ENGO, etc.) who has hired you to brief them on the policy and other political dimensions of a particular extraction/development/resource conflict case. You are a dispassionate/objective observer of the circumstances surrounding the case you have been asked to analyse. Your brief should (a) identify the recipient’s interest in the issue, (b) pressing events or emerging issues, and (c) suggested courses of action.
- **OPTION C**: This is for those of you who wish to reach a wider audience. **Creative or public writing pieces** should be written in the style of imagined venue (if you are writing a piece for Orion magazine, adopt the idiom of this magazine; if you are writing for the Literary Review of Canada, ditto; if you are writing for BuzzFeed, consider choosing another option). The exception here is

- around referencing and citations - even if the venue does not typically provide academic and other references, please ensure you provide these (you might use footnotes or endnotes, which are less distracting to the reader than in-text referencing). You might also consider how a visual component (photos, tables, graphs, illustrations, etc.) can add to your creative piece.
- **OPTION D:** This is the ‘**choose your own adventure**’ option. Students with a desire to forge their own major project path will be allowed to propose an alternative project. This could take any form (research paper, journalistic opinion or research, short video, web-based, other visual media, syllabus development, interpretive dance (!), planning (though obviously not executing) a field trip, etc.) as long as it is broadly related to the course content – either to the larger course topics or to the interpretive frameworks that we have developed in class. This is your chance to either write directly, in your desired format, about something you care about or to explore your creativity in a research context. Students choosing this option should *confirm the topic and discuss with me* before beginning.
 - **NOTE:** You can submit a major assignment proposal in consultation with the instructor. This will be for 10% of the final assignment grade (meaning the final assignment is worth 40% of your grade). Notes and instructions on a proposal will be circulated.

Participation Colleague Points (20%) - Participation is an essential component of a graduate and upper-level undergrad education. This includes coming to class having read all of the assigned readings carefully and critically. You should be prepared to offer your comments and questions to your colleagues for discussion. Please be mindful of balanced participation (ie. sometimes holding back if you tend to talk a lot, or finding other ways to contribute if you find it difficult to speak in the group). We will do our utmost to establish and maintain a respectful and generous tone in our seminar room.

We’re calling “participation” colleague points instead. The idea here is to bring the classroom into conversation with your daily lives, to test how elements from our class might appear in our everyday environments. But also to help each other in our efforts to get through the semester. When you are producing these short submissions, you should consider how this class and conversations with class colleagues can help you to engage, understand, and analyse the human-environment interactions that produce the world around us. Half of your “participation” grades will be allocated based on class contributions to discussions (questions, comments, reading analyses, examples, etc).

The other 10 marks will be allocated based on your submission of a few short reflections on class materials. These can take many forms (described below). You can submit these “participation” options at any time. You should complete 5 of these throughout the term for a total of 10 points (2 marks per submission). When you are producing these short submissions, you should consider how this class and conversations with class colleagues can help you to engage, understand, and analyse the human-environment interactions that produce the world around us. I’ll select some of these to share with the class (with your permission, of course) – that way, we’ll all get a chance to “participate” in a common discussion about the everyday aspects of the Winnipeg’s Urban Nature. Here are the

options (we can add more as a class):

- Assess how a central concept from class or the readings helps us understand the city or environment around you (short note to JP)
- How does an idea or concept from class help us to understand a film or TV show that you have watched?
- Share a photo of something in your local environment and discuss how an idea or concept from class can help us to analyse its significance.
- Share a photo of Urban Nature in action in Winnipeg and tell us how this reflects themes and analyses from class.
- Bring a piece of “media” to class and discuss briefly. This can be a discussion or a prompting question to your fellow classmates.
- Write a short email to a political figure about an Urban Nature issue important to you! Or – write an email to a university figure to discuss a “nature” issue on campus.
- Write an email to an author you have read that explains who you are and how their work has impacted you or changed your thinking.
- Help a colleague in class with proofreading their assignment, or with another dimension of class.
- Write a letter to future students: on the last day we’ll write letters to students taking this class in future years – tips and tricks for navigating the class, notes on the prof and grading style, things they wish they had known at the outset of class.
- I’ll be adding more as we go along, and some of these we’ll do in class. I’ll create a larger document and post do UMLearn.

Important Dates and Mark Structure

- Argument Assignment – February 14
- Annotated Bib Assignment – March 13
- Participation – Throughout the term
- Major Assignment – April 10 (last day of class, or during the exam period)

The **Grading Standard** for this course is as follows:

A+	(90-100%) is Exceptional
A	(80-89%) is Excellent
B+	(75-79%) is Very Good
B	(70-74%) is Good
C+	(65-69%) is Satisfactory
C	(60-64%) is Adequate
D	(50-59%) is Marginal
F	(0-49%) is Failure

Late Assignments

Students will not be permitted to write make-up tests, except for documented medical or compassionate reasons. Students may hand in assignments late but will be assessed a late penalty if they do so (- 2 marks per day including weekends).

Feedback

Evaluative feedback will be provided several times before the Voluntary Withdrawal date of March 20.

Academic Dishonesty

Students should acquaint themselves with the University's policy on plagiarism and cheating and examination impersonation (see University of Manitoba General Calendar). Please submit your own unique work – I take plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty very seriously. Consult the U of M Calendar “academic regulations” for more information on plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. I will talk about proper citation methods when we get closer to assignment due dates. Please see me if you have any questions about sources, citations or academic/research ethics.

Student Accessibility Services

If you are a student with a disability, please contact SAS for academic accommodation supports and services such as note-taking, interpreting, assistive technology and exam accommodations. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability (e.g. mental illness, learning, medical, hearing, injury-related, visual) are invited to contact SAS to arrange a confidential consultation.

Student Accessibility Services <http://umanitoba.ca/student/saa/accessibility/>

520 University Centre

204-474-7423

Student_accessibility@umanitoba.ca

A Note on Email: I will happily answer email queries that you might have about course administration or other housekeeping duties – but I will only be checking email during regular office hours (ie. not on evenings and weekends). I will aim to answer you're emails within 48 hours. If your questions are more substantive (requiring a longer answer or explanation) I will ask you bring them to me before/after class or during office hours. Feel free to stop me in the halls or to make an appointment if you're not able to make it to the regularly scheduled office hours. In general, personal face-to-face communication is much preferred over email.

Here is the U of M blurb about class communication:

The University requires all students to activate an official University email account. For full details of the Electronic Communication with Students please visit:

http://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/media/Electronic_Communication_with_Students_Policy_-_2014_06_05.pdf

Please note that all communication between myself and you as a student must comply with the electronic communication with student policy

(http://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/governing_documents/community/electronic_communication_with_students_policy.html). You are required to obtain and use your U of M email account for all communication between yourself and the university.

A Note on Technology: Many students prefer to take notes on laptops. This is fine as long as you use the computer only for this purpose (ie. not for reading blogs or Tumblr, using Facebook, writing emails, playing games, etc.). This is disruptive for your classmates.

Cell phones should be turned off at the beginning of class... and texting is a big-time breach of classroom etiquette. Please do not text during class.

Unless a specific dispensation has been made, students should not record lectures. Posting of class materials or recordings to the Internet is prohibited.

A Note on Lectures: I'll be using powerpoint and links during the lectures to illustrate and supplement the things we talk about in class. I'll post the slides and links so that you can use them as study guides. I tend to use little text on the powerpoints so please don't use them as a substitute for lecture/seminar attendance. The slides should be used as a general outline but not as a comprehensive guide to what we will be talking about. You should still take notes.

Possible Project Topics - I'll post a longer list on UM Learn

The Forks through history

Mosquitos and "Pest Control"

Winnipeg's Urban Rivers

- Urban Rivers as a 'Sink'
- 'Disappeared' Rivers

The Brady Landfill

Urban Oil Refineries

FortWhyte Alive

The Quarries

Controlling the Red River

- Floods (1950, 1997, 2009, etc.)
- Building the RR Floodway

Making Nature in New Subdivisions

Lead in St. B/NPD

Polar Bears and Assiniboine Park Zoo

Dutch Elm Disease and Urban Trees

Westview Park/Garbage Hill

Sustainability in City Planning

Urban Animals

The Health of Lake Winnipeg

- Lake Winnipeg Regulation
- Hog Farming and Water Pollution
- Algae Blooms and Zebra Mussels
- Water Pollution and Cottage Life

Winnipeg River as "Organic Machine"

- Early Hydro on the WPG River

Shoal Lake 40's Freedom Road

Rooster Town

Rapid Transit Planning (history/present)

Bird's Hill Park

Union Stockyards