

## **GEOG 298 Selected Topics in Geography: *Systems Thinking and the Ecosystem Approach***

### **General Information**

**Term:** *Fall, 2020*  
**Prerequisites:** *None*  
**Credits:** *3*  
**Class time:** *Monday & Wednesday, 1:15 – 2:30*  
**Class room:** *Online*

### **Instructor Information**

**Name:** *Ricardo Duenez, P/T Faculty, GPE*  
**E-mail:** *ricardo.duenez@concordia.ca*  
**Phone:** *N/A*  
**Office hours:** *Online hours to be determined*  
**Office:** *Online meetings only*

### **TA Information**

**Name:** *N/A*  
**E-mail:** *N/A*

IMPORTANT DATES	
Last day to register:	<b>Monday, September 21<sup>st</sup> 2020</b>
Last day to withdraw (refund):	<b>Monday, September 21<sup>st</sup> 2020</b>
Last day to discontinue (no refund):	<b>Monday, November 9<sup>th</sup> 2020</b>
Last day of in-class testing:	<b>Monday, November 30<sup>th</sup> 2020</b>
Final exams:	<b>December 9<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020</b>
<b>Travel arrangements should not be made prior to the posting of the final Exam Schedule.</b>	



@concordiagpe



@GPEConcordia

Department of Geography, Planning and Environment

1455 De Maisonneuve Blvd. W., Henry Hall Building, 12th floor, Room 1255.26

Phone: 514 848-2424 Ext. 2050, E-mail: [geogplanenviro@concordia.ca](mailto:geogplanenviro@concordia.ca)

## Course Overview

This **blended learning course** introduces students to the basic elements of systems thinking and its application to contemporary environmental issues from an interdisciplinary perspective. Students learn about critical ecosystem functions and services, threats to ecological health and human well-being, and creative solutions to current environmental challenges. Case studies from around the world address biodiversity, forests, fluvial systems, oceans, climate change, urban ecosystems, human health, and conflict prevention. One online component of the course is shared with students and teachers around the world taking a **Massive On-line Open Course (MOOC) offered through the United Nations Environment Programme (please see required course materials below)**. Students will complete class requirements at home (exams, quizzes, term project); class lectures, discussions, and meetings will be held online. I plan to have at least one office hour per week during evening hours (TBD), and one during daytime hours (also TBD).

## Instructor Message Regarding Remote Delivery

The remote learning context presents new challenges for all involved, and student engagement is of particular concern. Foster student engagement by acknowledging the challenges that students may be experiencing due to the pandemic and committing to do your best to provide a supportive learning environment. Consult CTL's guidelines for [fostering student engagement](#). Point students to resources to support their academic success: post links on Moodle to [student-specific guidelines for remote teaching](#) and [Remote Learning Resources](#).

The University strongly encourages instructors to record all fixed (synchronous) sessions to accommodate students who are unable to participate in those sessions for reasons such as time zones, inadequate Internet bandwidth, and caregiver responsibilities. Instructors will make recordings available to students from Moodle, which limits access to students registered in the course.

Students must consent to being recorded if they are attending a lecture or participating in a component of a course that is being recorded. If they are not comfortable being in a class that is recorded, students may decide to not take part by logging off Zoom. Instructors will make class video recordings available in Moodle so that students who log off will be able to later watch the recording. Note that you may wish to pause the recording during student discussions if you are concerned that the recording may inhibit participation.

### **Learning Outcomes**

**Students will have the opportunity to examine important ecological and social issues using a systems approach to unravelling ‘wicked’ problems. In addition, the ‘Ecosystem Approach’ will introduce basic principles used by United Nations organizations to better understand the complexity of local, regional and global socio-ecological relationships that define many of these wicked problems that, in turn, require creative and dynamic solutions.**

### **Instructional Method**

This class will consist of online lectures, discussions, and individual participation. If I have posted a reading before class, I expect it to provide some type of platform for discussion. For the most part, the protocol will be for students to have muted microphones during lectures (with optional muted video), and unmuted mics during any general discussions or question periods. More exact details regarding expected online behaviour will be discussed during the first weeks of class, and/or mentioned in Moodle postings. Please review any readings and/or slides prior to the associated lecture. For the most part, all power point lectures and assignments will be posted on Moodle; the Yuja platform within Moodle may also be utilized for pre-recorded lectures and Zoom meetings/discussions. Exams will take place during official class/university-scheduled times, assignments all have due dates (normally by midnight of the due date), and I plan to have at least one office hour during a weekday evening (TBD) as well as at least one during daytime hours (also TBD).

### **Expectations for Student Participation**

Students are expected to view synchronous, online lectures and discussions, and to access instructor office hours on an ‘as needed’ basis. Most ‘live’ lectures/discussions will be recorded and eventually downloaded to Yuja. Modified (often summarized) power point presentations will usually accompany live, online lectures/discussions; full power point presentations (with content, but without audio/narration) will be accessible via the class Moodle. Students are further expected to follow up all instructor-suggested online links to outside resources. In terms of class conduct, while online via Zoom, students are expected to generally keep their audio muted; visual participation is encouraged, but not mandatory. In the event that the instructor deems that rules of conduct have been violated (e.g. disruption of the lecture via audio or visual means), the instructor reserves the right to terminate the session, and any subsequent sessions that are felt to be ‘at risk’. The ‘chat’ component of zoom will generally be directed at the instructor, and will not be available to be used among students during the lecture/discussion (unless otherwise stated by the instructor). There will generally be an open question period at the end of each live lecture, and students are encouraged to send in particular questions/observations/etc. via e-mail or during office hours. Student should check

Moodle on a regular basis to keep up with any/all downloaded materials and messages sent by the instructor.

#### BEHAVIOUR

All individuals participating in courses are expected to be professional and constructive throughout the course, including in their communications. Concordia students are subject to the Code of Rights and Responsibilities which applies both when students are physically and virtually engaged in any University activity, including classes, seminars, meetings, etc. Students engaged in University activities must respect this Code when engaging with any members of the Concordia community, including faculty, staff, and students, whether such interactions are verbal or in writing, face to face or online/virtual. Failing to comply with the Code may result in charges and sanctions, as outlined in the Code.

#### Required Course Materials

All students in this GEOG 298 class must register with the United Nations online MOOC. Enrollment starts on August 25, and ends on November 6 (after which students may no longer register to access course content). The MOOC starting date (when this year's iteration of the course should be available to everyone) is September 8 and the ending date is December 8. Students should register for the MOOC entitled "*Wicked Problems, Dynamic Solutions*" through the following website: <http://www.environmentacademy.org/> You will be required to fill out an information page (e-mail address, and the creation of a password); then you should be able to log-in to the site. Hint: add this site to your 'favorites', as you will be accessing it with some frequency.

As you will see when you sign in to the MOOC, course materials will be provided primarily by the on-line MOOC course, supplemented with power point presentations, and outside materials – esp. films/videos and associated articles - recommended by the instructor, MOOC authors and participants. Students are fully expected to keep up with course materials as per course schedule listed below. Do not fall behind!

#### Optional Course Materials

To be announced throughout the semester, as needed.

#### Course Content

MOOC Contents: Systems Thinking, the Ecosystem Approach, the Human Dimension, Biodiversity, Forests, Fluvial Systems, Oceans and Coasts, Urban Ecology, Human Health, Climate Change. This material will be supplemented with other articles, videos, as well as personal experiences of the instructor relating to development work in East and Southern Africa.

*GEOG 298 Tentative Course Schedule, Fall 2020*

<b>Mondays &amp; Wednesdays</b>	<b>General Topics</b>	<b>To read/do for class</b>
<b>1</b> Wed, Sept 9	<b>Wednesday: Intro to the blended course/MOOC; Overview of course schedule, evaluation scheme, and course materials</b>	<b>MOOC enrollment starts Aug. 25, MOOC start date: Sept 8, when Module 1 should be available</b>
<b>2</b> Sept 14, 16	<b>Mon: 'Systems Thinking' Wed: 'The Ecosystem Approach'</b>	<b>Module 1 (<i>Systems Thinking</i>) and Module 2 (<i>The Ecosystem Approach</i>)</b>
<b>3</b> Sept 21, 23	<b>Mon: Class discussion: Modules 1 &amp; 2 Wed: Class discussion: Module 3</b>	<b>Module 3 (<i>The Human Dimension</i>)</b>
<b>4</b> Sept 28, 30	<b>Mon: Class discussion: Module 3 Wed: Class discussion</b>	
<b>5</b> Oct 5, 7	<b>Mon: Class discussion: Module 4 Wed: Module 4, continued</b>	<b>Module 4 (<i>Biodiversity</i>) Assignment 1 due on Oct 7 (10%)</b>
<b>6</b> Oct 12, 14	<b>Mon: Class discussion: Module 5 Wed: Module 5, continued</b>	<b>Module 5 (<i>Forests</i>)</b>
<b>7</b> Oct 19, 21	<b>Mon: Class discussion: Module 6 Wed: Module 6, cont'd</b>	<b>Modules 6 (<i>Fluvial Systems</i>) Wed: Progress report due (5%)</b>
<b>8</b> Oct 26, 28	<b>Monday: Review for exam 1 Wed: Exam 1 (covering Modules 1-6)</b>	<b>Wed: Exam 1 (15%)</b>
<b>9</b> Nov 2, 4	<b>Mon: Class discussion: Module 7 Wed: Module 7, continued</b>	<b>Module 7 (<i>Oceans &amp; Coasts</i>) Assignment 2 due Nov 4 (10%)</b>
<b>10</b> Nov 9, 11	<b>Mon: Class discussion: Module 8 Wed: Module 8, continued</b>	<b>Module 8 (<i>Urban Ecology</i>)</b>
<b>11</b> Nov 16, 18	<b>Mon: Class discussion: Module 9 Wed: Class discussion: Module 10</b>	<b>Module 9 (<i>Human Health</i>) &amp; Module 10 (<i>Climate Change</i>)</b>
<b>12</b> Nov 23, 25	<b>Mon: Class discussion, Module 10 continued Wed: Discussion</b>	<b>Assignment 3 due Nov 25 (10%)</b>
<b>13</b> Nov 30, Dec 2	<b>Mon: Exam 2 Wed: Online Presentations I</b>	<b>Mon: Exam 2 (20%)/ Presentations begin (5%) Wed: Term Project (written report) due on Dec 2 (25%)</b>
<b>14</b> Dec 7	<b>Mon: Presentations II</b>	<b>Last day of official classes</b>
	<b>Note: Concordia's exam period: Dec 5-19</b>	

*Please note: schedule and topics subject to change.*

## Evaluation

At the end of each course, the instructor will submit a letter grade for every student registered. Final marks will be distributed at the discretion of the course instructor, normally based on an overall curve of grades accumulated throughout the semester. Students will be expected to produce a well-written report and a short oral presentation as part of the overall marks for the class. Assignments will be evaluated on quality and content, and will cover a variety of issues related to the class topics. Exams, for the most part, will be composed of multiple-choice, fill-in-the blanks, and open-ended questions.

Name of Assignment	Due Date	% of final grade
Assignment 1	Oct 7	10
Assignment 2	Nov 4	10
Assignment 3	Nov 25	10
Progress Report	Oct 21	5
Final Project Report	Dec 2	25
Oral presentation (online)	Dec 2, 7	5
Exam 1	Oct 28	15
Exam 2	Nov 30	20

**Late items:** Late assignments and the progress report must be in by the next available classtime, less 15%, and will not be accepted after that point. The final project written report will be not be accepted after the posted due date. Exams must be submitted by the date/times set by the instructor.

More information on university regulations concerning evaluation can be found [here](#). The grading system is described in [section 16.1.11](#) of the Undergraduate Calendar.

Please note that for 200-level courses, instructors in the Department of Geography, Planning and Environment reserve the right to adjust the final reported grades so that under normal circumstances no more than 25% of students registered in a course receive an outstanding grade (A-, A, A+).

## University Regulations

Students should be aware of the following university regulations (see [Undergraduate Calendar](#) for complete details).

- Late Completion of courses with “INC” notations – Procedures and Regulations ([Undergraduate Calendar 16.3.5](#))
- Academic Re-evaluation ([Undergraduate Calendar 16.3.9](#))
- Degree Requirements for BA, BSc, BEd – 24 credit rule and general education requirements for students in degree programs offered by Faculty of Arts & Science ([Undergraduate Calendar 31.003](#))

### **Class Cancellation**

Should the instructor experience a problem with the internet, or with setting up a Zoom session, students may log off and expect an update regarding makeup or other ways of dealing with course material to be announced via Moodle and/or email. As this is both an asynchronous and synchronous class, most, if not all, course material will eventually be made available on Moodle.

### **Intellectual Property**

Content belonging to instructors shared in online courses, including, but not limited to, online lectures, course notes, and video recordings of classes remain the intellectual property of the faculty member. It may not be distributed, published or broadcast, in whole or in part, without the express permission of the faculty member. Students are also forbidden to use their own means of recording any elements of an online class or lecture without express permission of the instructor. Any unauthorized sharing of course content may constitute a breach of the Academic Code of Conduct and/or the Code of Rights and Responsibilities. As specified in the Policy on Intellectual Property, the University does not claim any ownership of or interest in any student IP. All university members retain copyright over their work.

### **Extraordinary Circumstances**

In the event of extraordinary circumstances and pursuant to the Academic Regulations, the University may modify the delivery, content, structure, forum, location and/or evaluation scheme. In the event of such extraordinary circumstances, students will be informed of the changes.

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity means that every student must be honest and accurate in their work. The Academic Code of Conduct includes rules and regulations students must follow. Unacceptable practices include the following

- Copy from ANYWHERE without saying from where it came.
- Omit quotation marks for direct quotations.
- Let another student copy your work and then submit it as his/her own.
- Hand in the same assignment in more than one class without permission.
- Have unauthorized material in an exam, such as cheat sheets, or crib notes. **YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE CAUGHT USING THEM - JUST HAVING THEM WILL GET YOU INTO TROUBLE!**
- Copy from someone else's exam.
- Communicate with another student during an exam by talking or using some form of signals.

- Add or remove pages from an examination booklet or take the booklet out of an exam room.
- Get hold of or steal an exam or assignment answers or questions.
- Write a test or exam for someone else or have someone write it for you.
- Hand in false documents such as medical notes, transcript or record.
- Falsify data or research results.

**PLAGIARISM:** The most common offense under the Academic Code of Conduct (see link below) is plagiarism, which the Code defines as "**the presentation of the work of another person as one's own or without proper acknowledgement.**"

This could be material copied word for word from books, journals, internet sites, professor's course notes, etc. It could be material that is paraphrased but closely resembles the original source. It could be the work of a fellow student, such as an answer on a quiz, data for a lab report, or a paper or assignment completed by another student. It could be a paper purchased through one of the many available sources. Plagiarism does not refer to words alone. It can also refer to copying images, graphs, tables, and ideas. Plagiarism is not limited to written work. It also applies to oral presentations, computer assignments and artistic works. Finally, if you translate the work of another person into French or English and do not cite the source, this is also plagiarism. In simple words: DO NOT COPY, PARAPHRASE OR TRANSLATE ANYTHING FROM ANYWHERE WITHOUT SAYING FROM WHERE YOU OBTAINED IT!

Take care to inform yourself of the rules, regulations and expectations for academic integrity.



List of Student Services	
Academic Code of Conduct	<a href="http://www.concordia.ca/academics/undergraduate/calendar/current/17-10.html">http://www.concordia.ca/academics/undergraduate/calendar/current/17-10.html</a>
Academic Integrity	<a href="http://www.concordia.ca/students/academic-integrity">http://www.concordia.ca/students/academic-integrity</a>
Access Centre for Students with Disabilities (ACSD)	<a href="https://www.concordia.ca/offices/acsd">https://www.concordia.ca/offices/acsd</a>
Advocacy and Support Services	<a href="http://www.concordia.ca/offices/advocacy">http://www.concordia.ca/offices/advocacy</a>
Campus Services	<a href="http://www.concordia.ca/students/campus-services">http://www.concordia.ca/students/campus-services</a>
Conduct on Campus	<a href="http://www.concordia.ca/students/campus-services/conduct">http://www.concordia.ca/students/campus-services/conduct</a>
Counselling and Psychological Services	<a href="http://www.concordia.ca/offices/counselling-psychological-services">http://www.concordia.ca/offices/counselling-psychological-services</a>
Dean of Students' Office	<a href="http://www.concordia.ca/offices/dean-students">http://www.concordia.ca/offices/dean-students</a>
Financial Aid & Awards Office	<a href="http://www.concordia.ca/offices/faao">http://www.concordia.ca/offices/faao</a>
Student Health Services	<a href="http://www.concordia.ca/students/health">http://www.concordia.ca/students/health</a>
HOJO (Off Campus Housing and Job Bank)	<a href="https://www.concordia.ca/students/housing/off-campus.html">https://www.concordia.ca/students/housing/off-campus.html</a>
International Students' Office	<a href="http://www.concordia.ca/offices/iso">http://www.concordia.ca/offices/iso</a>
Library Services	<a href="http://library.concordia.ca/">http://library.concordia.ca/</a>
Library Citation and Style Guides	<a href="http://library.concordia.ca/help/citing/">http://library.concordia.ca/help/citing/</a>
Safety and Security	<a href="http://www.concordia.ca/students/campus-services/safety-emergency">http://www.concordia.ca/students/campus-services/safety-emergency</a>
Sexual Assault Resource Centre	<a href="http://www.concordia.ca/students/sexual-assault">http://www.concordia.ca/students/sexual-assault</a>
Student Hub	<a href="http://concordia.ca/students">http://concordia.ca/students</a>
Student Success Center	<a href="http://www.concordia.ca/students/success">http://www.concordia.ca/students/success</a>
Aboriginal Students Resource Centre	<a href="https://www.concordia.ca/students/aboriginal/resources-services.html">https://www.concordia.ca/students/aboriginal/resources-services.html</a>

Outline version: August 22, 2020