School of the Environment, University of Toronto
Draft Course Syllabus – ENV 333H1F: Ecological Worldviews
Fall 2018 • Tuesday, 4-6 PM • Location: George Ignatieff Theatre (15 Devonshire Place)

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Note: In general, you can expect an answer to e-mail and phone inquiries within 24 hours from Monday to Friday (inquiries made on Friday will be answered by Monday). Specific questions regarding assignments #2 or #3 should be addressed to the TA. Questions regarding assignment #1 should be addressed to the course instructor. Medical certificates should also be submitted to the course instructor.

Important: To speed e-mail processing, please put “ENV333” somewhere in the e-mail subject line

Course Description
A worldview can be understood as “a comprehensive model of reality” combining “beliefs, assumptions, attitudes, values, and ideas” (Schlitz, Vieten, & Miller, 2010, p. 19). We all hold basic – although often unconscious – assumptions about the very nature of reality, including our relationship with what is commonly called “nature” or “the environment.” As well, we have assimilated a variety of sensorial habits or filters that affect the way we perceive the world. These assumptions – together with sensorial and cognitive habits – may influence our ability to perceive the problems we face and also limit our imaginations, making it more difficult to conceive of a path toward ecological sustainability and social well-being. As Albert Einstein noted, “the significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.” We may need a new vision of reality, or even a new modality of consciousness – a more ecological worldview – in order to address our most urgent crises and to create a more just and sustainable human society.

ENV333 explores how worldviews – including those with roots in scientific, religious, philosophical, and economic perspectives – have contributed to environmental and related social problems and how changes in our worldview might contribute to the solution of these problems. To delve into these questions, the course will examine the understanding of nature and environment in western, eastern, and Indigenous traditions. As well, the course will explore a variety of ecological worldviews including deep ecology, ecofeminism, and social ecology as well as cosmogenic and liberatory perspectives.

Course Learning Outcomes
1. Students will be able to describe what is meant by a worldview; explain how worldviews influence values, behaviours, and actions; and demonstrate how worldviews relate to concepts such as cosmologies and paradigms.
2. Students will be able to explain how the social, environmental, ethical, and psychological dimensions of the ecological crisis are related to worldviews.
3. Students will learn to analyse how worldviews have been shaped by economic, scientific, religious, political, psychological, and philosophical factors and how these, in turn, have been shaped by worldviews.
4. Students will explore and understand a variety of worldviews emerging from science, spiritual traditions, psychology, and philosophy and be able to analyse and explain how these could reshape the way we organise human societies and work for ecological sustainability.
5. Students will explore, clarify, analyse, and articulate their own personal worldview with respect to ecology or the environment.
Course Organisation

While classes will largely be given in lecture format, some class time will be spent in small group discussions with an opportunity to share insights and pose questions to the entire class. During the first class, discussion groups (with approximately eight students in each) will be formed which will meet most weeks during class time for discussions. (Each group will post a summary of their discussions to the appropriate forum on Quercus within a day after the class.) Classes may also make use of audio-visual media, including short films and videos.

Teaching and Learning Philosophy

In this course, it is assumed that all of us (instructors and students) will learn from each other and that students will engage actively with the course readings, lectures, discussions, and assignments. While lively discussion and probing questions are always encouraged, it is also assumed that each person will treat others with respect. Discussions, group work, and lectures will be used to address the issues relevant to the course. Students are expected to do all required readings, attend lectures, engage in appropriate practices and methods for assignments, and think critically. Critical thinking may be demonstrated by articulating a clear understanding of key course concepts; applying these concepts appropriately to specific questions and new contexts; putting forth logical arguments backed by appropriate references, examples, and evidence; making connections between different concepts and perceiving broader patterns; and seeking out the concrete (including personal) implications for values, policies, and actions.

Electronic Devices Policy

During class time, the use of electronic devices in class for making calls, texting, playing games, or surfing the internet is prohibited. Computers and tablets only may be used exclusively for taking notes. During small group discussion time, only the person taking notes for each group may use their computer or tablet. During the final class (December 2), students are encouraged to bring a computer to class in order to prepare and submit their final course evaluation.

Use of Quercus (Portal/Learning Management System)

It is your responsibility to check Quercus frequently (at least once a week). You must have a mail.utoronto.ca (or @utoronto.ca) email address indicated on ACORN to properly receive messages from the course instructor through Quercus. Please note that all written assignments will be submitted through Quercus. It is your responsibility to ensure that your written assignments are uploaded properly. Please make sure the confirmation page appears after submitting your assignments and, if possible, make a copy of the confirmation page (“print” to a pdf document and save).

Assignments and Evaluation

The grades for the course will be based on the following percentages for each activity:

| Class Attendance and Participation: | 15% |
| Assignment #1 (one personal reflection, 1200 words max): | 15% |
| Assignment #2 (experiential workshop, film reviews, or ecological practice): | 25% |
| Assignment #3 (three critical reflections, 1200 words max each): | 45% |

Note: There is no final examination for this class.

Class Attendance and Participation (15%)

Students are expected to attend all course lectures and to participate in small group discussions. As well, students may earn participation marks by posting reading reviews, participating in surveys, posting questions for clarification or discussion, and writing a course reading evaluation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>Maximum Possible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Attendance</td>
<td>0.5/class</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Survey (due Sept. 18th)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term Course Evaluation (due Oct. 23)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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Assignments

Note that assignments will be evaluated based on mechanics, writing style, structure, precision and accuracy, analysis (critical thinking), integrative thinking. A rubric will be available for each assignment posted on Quercus.

**Assignment #1 (15%) – Due Tuesday, 9 October 2018 – Maximum 1200 words**

To be submitted by Tuesday, October 13 (11:59 PM) via the Quercus Assignment function

Students will write a personal reflection of 1000 to 1200 words on the following:

Reflect on your personal worldview as it relates to ecology, “the environment,” or “nature”: Identify and describe some of the main aspects of your worldview and how you came to have this worldview. Are there specific experiences, practices, influences, or events that were important in this process? Draw on course readings and lectures as appropriate, particularly to describe your understanding of worldviews and related key concepts.

The answers this question should be formatted double-spaced with at least a 12 point font. A reference list for the question in APA format should be included with the assignment. For complete details, so the assignment instructions and evaluation criteria posted to Quercus.

**Assignment #2 (25%) – Due Tuesday, November 6**

Students must choose one of the following options for their second assignment. Please note that you must choose an option by Tuesday, September 18 (sign-up opens 6 PM). There are a limited number of spaces for each option and students will sign up using the Quercus group sign-up function on a first come, first serve basis.

Note that all assignment #2 papers, regardless of the option chosen, are due on Tuesday, November 6 by 11:59 PM to be submitted online on Quercus. More details on the assignment and each option will be posted on Quercus.

**Option #1: Experiential workshop and personal reflection paper (Required Attendance at Workshop on Saturday, September 29 from 10 AM to 5 PM).**

**Limited to 36 students**

This option is most appropriate for those who are interested in experiential, interactive, transformative learning in a workshop format. Those who choose this option should be willing to share personally of themselves with others and enter into experiential exercises with an open mind (some of which may involve minimal physical contact, such as touching hands).

All those who choose this option must be available to participate in a workshop on Saturday, September 29 from 10 AM to 5 PM to be held TBA (TBA). Those who do not attend the workshop in its entirety will not receive a credit for the assignment.

Those choosing this option must write a personal reflection paper of 800-1000 words (1000 words maximum) describing their experience of the workshop as well as how it may have affected or clarified their own worldview. Students should draw on course ideas and readings where appropriate and reference at least two course readings and one course lecture for this assignment, but the focus is primarily on

† To receive a participation credit, questions on readings must be posted in the discussion forums on Quercus by the Sunday (11:59 PM) immediately before the class in question. For example, questions on a week two readings would need to be posted by Sept. 16.
reflection on one’s personal experience. As well, each student will need to outline and describe an educational exercise (400-500 words) that could be used in a similar workshop setting. Evaluation will be based on the personal reflection paper (65%) and the proposed educational exercise (35%).

**Option #2: Personal Ecological Practices and Journaling; Orientation on Saturday, September 22 in High Park from 2:30 to 4:30 PM (Rain Date: 2:30-4:30 PM Sunday, Sept. 23)**

Limited to 52 Students

This option is most appropriate for students who would like to deepen their own sense of connection with nature (or the “more-than-human” world) and engage in personal reflection on their own worldview.

*Students choosing this option should take part in the orientation session on September 22 in High Park or a make-up session with the instructor TBA.*

Students choosing this option must spend time engaging in outdoor meditation/reflection at least five times (minimum half hour each time) and keep a hand-written journal recording their experiences. As well, each student will write a personal reflection paper on the experience (800-1000 words). Evaluation will be based on submitting five key typed excerpts from five different journal entries (500 words maximum + photos of original entries and art/photos) (40%) and final reflection paper (60%).

**Option #3: Worldviews “Film Festival” and Movie Reviews Limited to 32 Students**

Students choosing this option must be available to attend all three film showings and discussions on Monday Oct. 15, Oct. 22, and Oct. 29 at the Robarts Library Media Commons. The films will focus on different themes related to ecological worldviews. Each student will write a film review of one of the films watched (800-1000 words) plus two brief summaries/reflections of the other two films (200-250 words each). Evaluation will be based on the film review (60%), the two summary/reflections (2 x 12.5%), and discussion participation (15%).

**Assignment #3 (45%) – Due Tuesday, December 6 – 3600 words maximum**

To be submitted by Tuesday, December 6 (11:59 PM) via the Quercus Assignment function

Students will choose three of the suggested critical or personal reflection questions provided in the assignment description (posted on Quercus) and write a reflection of 1000 to 1200 words on each of these (3 x 1200-word reflections). The total length of the assignment, excluding the reference list, should be no more than 3600 words. For more details, so the assignment outline posted to Quercus.

**Late and Length Penalties**

Please follow the length guidelines for each assignment carefully. A 2% penalty for the first 100 words over the maximum length will be deducted from the assignment, and 5% for each additional 100 words.

Late papers will be assessed a 3% reduction of the value of the assignment per day late, unless previously negotiated with the instructor over acceptable personal/medical reasons. Unless previously negotiated due to an acceptable personal/medical issue, late papers will only be accepted for one week after the due date. Papers later than this will not be assessed. Please do not leave potential issues to the last minute to discuss with the instructor.

If assignments are submitted late because of medical reasons, a signed medical note is required, stating the name of doctor, nature of illness, duration of illness, and expected delay and/or impact on the completion of student work. Students must use the official U of T medical certificate (available online at http://www.utoronto.ca/health/forms/medcert.pdf) and submit it to the TA. Please inform the instructor in advance (48 hours before the due time) if you anticipate that your assignment will be late on account of medical reasons.

**Remarking Policy**

If a student believes that their assignment has not been fairly assessed, they should first read all the comments (both in the text and terminal comments) and consult the assignment rubric. If, after reviewing these, the student would like to request a reassessment, they should write the TA – within one week of receiving their assignment grade – with a written justification explaining why the assignment should be reassessed. The TA will then consider the request and remark if they believe this is justified. If the student is still not satisfied, they may appeal the grade to the course instructor, but must submit a written rationale to do so.
Course Texts and Required Readings

Students are required to purchase the following book for the course:


A limited number of copies (40) will also be available for sale during the first two classes for $40 including HST (cash only, exact change). Alternatively, the book may be purchased online for approximately $50-54. The book is also available online as an e-book for approximately $34.

All other course readings, except those from *The Tao of Liberation*, are available online via Quercus. In some cases, to access electronic journal articles and some book chapters, you will need to login to the University of Toronto library.

Course Outline and Weekly Readings

*Note:* Students are expected to read all core readings as well as the indicated number of additional readings each week. In reading, *attempt to focus on the ideas that are most interesting for you, keeping in mind the critical and personal reflection questions* in the assignments. (See the guide to reading posted on Quercus for more details.)

Week 1 (September 11): *Introduction: Worldviews and the Ecology*

**Learning Outcomes**

Students will gain an overview of the course and have a clear understanding of expectations for assignments and evaluation.

Students will be able to describe, define, and contrast what is meant by a worldview, cosmology, and paradigm and reflect on how worldviews influence values, behaviours, and actions.

Students will begin to reflect on the importance of worldviews in addressing the ecological crisis.

**Core Readings (read all of the following)**


**Optional Readings**


**Week 2 (September 18): *Neoliberal Capitalism, Consumerism, and the Religion of the Market***

**Learning Outcomes**

Students will be able to explain and analyse the role that consumerism, growth, development, corporations, finance, monoculture, and power play in the ecological crisis.

Students will gain a clearer understanding of the underlying assumptions at the root of consumerism, corporate capitalism, and neoliberalism.
Core Reading

Additional Readings (choose at least one of the following)

Introductory Survey due September 18, 2018
Sign-up for Assignment 2 begins September 18 at 6 PM

Ecological Practice Orientation on Saturday, September 22 (Sept. 23 = Rain Day)

Week 3 (September 25): The Worldview of Modernity and the Ecological Crisis

Learning Outcomes
Students will be able to identify key characteristics of the worldview that arose in Europe beginning in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, during the Enlightenment, and on through modernity marked by the scientific/industrial revolutions.

Core Readings

Alternate Readings (Choose at least one of the following)

Experiential Workshop on Saturday, Set. 29 from 10 AM to 5 PM

Week 4 (October 2): Deep Ecology and Ecofeminism

Learning Outcomes
Students will deepen their analysis and understanding of the worldview of modernity drawing on insights from ecofeminism, and deep ecology.

Students will be able to analyse and explain how the worldview of modernity affects the relationships between humans, “nature,” the Earth, and the wider cosmos.

Students will be able to describe and contrast the key characteristics of both deep ecology and ecofeminism and apply their perspectives to specific issues.

Students will be able to explain the connection between anthropocentrism, patriarchy, and other forms of domination.

Core Readings

Optional Readings

Week 5 (October 9): Indigenous Worldviews
Learning Outcomes
Students will be able to describe key characteristics typical of a variety of Indigenous worldviews, including concepts related to land, nature, and spirituality.
Students will be able to explain how Indigenous languages and understandings of knowledge often demonstrate a worldview where process (rather than “progress”) and relationships (rather than objects, matter, or “resources”) are primary.
Students will gain a clearer understanding of the concept of “re-indigenisation” and seek to apply what such a process might entail in their own society and lives.

Core Readings

Optional Readings

Assignment #1 Due on Tuesday, October 9 at 11:59 PM

Film #1: Monday, October 15 from 1-4 PM

Week 6 (October 16): East and South Asian Religions and Ecological Worldviews
Learning Outcomes
Students will explore ecological perspectives within Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Confucianism, and Taoism in order to identify ways that these spiritual traditions could contribute to a more ecological worldview.
Students will apply the learnings on religions and ecological worldviews to reflect on their own experience of religions and ecology.
Core Readings


Optional Readings


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**Film #2: Monday, October 22 from 1-4 PM**

**Week 7 (October 23): Middle Eastern/Western Religions and Ecological Worldviews**

**Learning Outcomes**

Students will explore ecological perspectives within Judaism, Islam, and Christianity in order to identify ways that these spiritual traditions could contribute to a more ecological worldview.

Students will apply the learnings on religions and ecological worldviews to reflect on their own experience of religions and ecology.

**Core Readings**


**Optional Readings**


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**Mid-Term Evaluation Due October 23**

**Film #3: Monday, October 29 from 1-4 PM**

**Week 8 (October 29): Science, Cosmology, and Ecological Worldviews**

**Learning Outcomes**

Students will be able to explain some of the key implications of quantum physics, systems theory, evolution, modern cosmology, and the Gaia hypothesis for ecological worldviews.

Students will be able to draw connections between these ideas and worldviews from a variety of religious and philosophical perspectives.
Students will gain insight into the relationship between causality and the way transformation is understood.

Core Readings

Plus, choose one of the following

Assignment #2 Due on Tuesday, Nov. 6 at 11:59 PM (Reading Week)

Week 9 (November 13): Social Ecology, Ecological Justice, and Liberation
Learning Outcomes
Students will explore the relationships between ecological worldviews, social ecology, eco/environmental justice, liberation, and transformative social change.

Core Readings

Optional Readings

Week 10 (November 20): Ecopsychology and the Transformation of Worldviews
Learning Outcomes
Students will be able to describe some of the key ideas from ecopsychology, particularly the concept of the ecological unconscious, and be able to explain some of the psychological factors that may make it difficult to respond to the ecological crisis.
Students will reflect on how, concretely, a shift towards a more ecological worldview might be facilitated drawing on insights from ecopsychology, ecospirituality, “The Work that Reconnects,” transformative learning, and eco-phenomenology.

Core Readings

**Optional Readings**


**Week 11 (November 27): Cultivating Ecological Wisdom in Practice**

**Learning Outcomes**

Students will become familiar and analyse a variety of initiatives and approaches which aim to facilitate a shift towards a more ecological worldview and cultivate ecological wisdom including the Work that Reconnects, Transition Towns, permaculture, Awakening the Dreamer, Generation Waking Up, and the Earth Charter Initiative.

**Core Readings**


**Additional Readings (explore at least two of the following websites):**

- Earth Charter Initiative: [http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/](http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/)

**Assignment #3 due Tuesday, December 4 at 11:59 PM**

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**Week 12 (December 4): Course Conclusion and Final Evaluation**

Students will reflect on and integrate their leaning to date regarding ecological worldviews and worldview transformation. (Please bring a computer to class if possible this day)

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**Other Administrative Issues**

**Accessibility Needs and Services**

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. The office of Accessibility Services at U of T provides a range of services to students with disabilities to help them meet their educational objectives. In conjunction with Accessibility Services, the course instructor and teaching assistant would like to ensure the inclusion and full participation of everyone in the course. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: [http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility](http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility). As well, if there are things that we can do to facilitate your learning, or that we need to know as members of the teaching team, please contact the instructor during the first few weeks of the course

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree
that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

Familiarise yourself with the University of Toronto’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

**In papers and assignments:**
- Using someone else’s ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Copying material word-for-word from a source (including lecture and study group notes) and not placing the words within quotation marks.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.
- Including references to sources that you did not use.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorised assistance on any assignment including
  - working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work,
  - having someone rewrite or add material to your work while “editing”.
- Lending your work to a classmate who submits it as his/her own without your permission.

**On tests and exams:**
- Using or possessing any unauthorised aid, including a cell phone.
- Looking at someone else’s answers.
- Letting someone else look at your answers.
- Misrepresenting your identity.
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

**Misrepresentation:**
- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including doctor’s notes (and attendance list signatures).
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

You can get further guidance on academic integrity at: www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/students

To remind you of these expectations, and help you avoid accidental offences, I will post an Academic Integrity Checklist with each assignment on Quercus. *By submitting your assignment, you confirm that you have read the checklist and affirm that its statements are true.*

The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the Code. The consequences for academic misconduct can be severe, including a failure in the course and a notation on your transcript. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, seek out additional information from me, or from other available campus resources like the U of T Writing Website. If you are experiencing personal challenges that are having an impact on your academic work, please speak to me or seek the advice of your college registrar.

**University of Toronto Writing Centres**

Students having difficulty with writing skills, or those who would simply like to improve their ability, are encouraged to visit the writing centre affiliated with their college at U of T. The writing centres offer free individual tutoring, group workshops, and other resources. For more information, see the U of T website (http://students.utoronto.ca/Academic_Resources/Writing_Centres.htm).