

University of Toronto at Scarborough  
“COHORT CAPSTONE COURSE in ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES”  
(ESTD17Y3; EESD17Y3, Fall 2021)

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<b>Class Hours</b>	Wednesday 7:00pm to 9:00pm, IC208
<b>Office Hours</b>	Monday 12:00pm to 2:00pm, or by appointment.
<b>Tutorial Assistant</b>	Ichha Kohli (PhD Student) Email: <a href="mailto:ichha.kohli@mail.utoronto.ca">ichha.kohli@mail.utoronto.ca</a>
<b>Prerequisite</b>	14.5 credits
<b>Exclusion</b>	EESD17Y3
<b>Breadth Requirement</b>	Natural Sciences

### Course Description

This course is designed to provide a strong interdisciplinary focus on specific environmental problems including the socioeconomic, institutional, and political context in which environmental issues are addressed. The cohort capstone course is undertaken in two consecutive semesters, providing final year students the opportunity to work in a team as environmental researchers and consultants, combining knowledge and skill sets acquired in earlier courses. Group research on local environmental problems and exposure to critical environmental policy issues will be the focal point of the course. Classes in the fall will be focused on the mechanisms of knowledge integration and application; work in the winter term will be directed towards completing a major project that addresses a key environment issue, as identified in collaboration with administrators, researchers, stakeholders, and practitioners.

### Course Objectives

This course has three fundamental objectives:

- 1) As a starting point, it is critical that students comprehend the fundamental complexity and interconnectedness of environmental issues. Whether identified as *wicked*, *complex*, or *hyper-complex*, it is important that students become aware of the depth of uncertainty surrounding environmental issues, and the inherent limitations of science-based problem-solving.
- 2) Having appreciated the challenging nature of environmental problem-solving, students will then be exposed to *what might be considered* the *leading edge* of environmental problem-solving in Canada. Leading experts\advocates\practitioners associated with the ‘*course theme*’ will be called upon to describe their efforts in addressing these environmental issues.
- 3) Finally, given the multiple and interacting knowledge domains, networks, policies, and institutional landscapes associated with the given “course theme,” students will be required to identify efficacious and efficient ‘solutions’ to environmental problems that students\course partners have identified. Naturally, how problems are defined or framed is fundamental to their solvability; it is equally important to keep in mind the relationship between the proximate and ultimate goals associated with the project.

**Course Theme**

Social\environmental issues are invariably complex, composed of numerous interacting components, operating over multiple and extended scales. A proactive response to environmental issues not only presumes an ability to anticipate impacts, but to ameliorate their effects in a manner that is consistent with societal needs and reactions. Minimally, this requires that the isolated products of scientific research are interpreted, synthesized, and then integrated within the context of societal needs. How this is accomplished is not entirely self-evident. We will expose students to the broad, inter-related issues that are associated with environmental issues and provide them with the tools to respond.

**Required Text**

In the first half of this course, students will be responsible for key articles\reports representing the core elements of the relevant lecture topics. A complete list of articles will be posted on QUERCUS.

**Class Attendance**

Because of the applied nature of the course, class participation is highly recommended. Students are required to do readings before class and come prepared with questions about the readings to discuss in class. In the winter term, attendance is also critical since your fellow team members are relying upon you to participate in your selected project.

**Grading Scheme**

This course is effectively divided into two parts. During the first term you will acquire the skills and knowledge that are needed to address an environmental issue; to meet this objective you will have two assignments and one exam. The midterm is a take-home-exam that will be handed out on a given Monday and submitted by you, on the associated Friday of that week (see due date below). Also, to take advantage of UTSC\CECCS Sustainability Celebrations which has relevance for your first and second assignments, we have decided to make a small part of your 'Participation' and 'Proposal' marks (from the Winter Term) related to that 'event' (details are to follow but the tentative date is October 19th, 2021). In the second term, you (we) will address a real-world environmental issue of local and\or international significance. To do so, you will first need to identify an issue that is of concern\relevance to a specific institution, and then develop a proposal that identifies a course of action to address the issue. To the extent that is feasible, your final project will include research\analysis that addresses key aspects of the environmental issue, as well as identifies next steps to deal with the problem. Finally, you will present your project to a select audience that are associated with the environmental issue you have defined.

The marking scheme:

<i>First Term</i>	<u>Due</u>	<u>By term</u>	<u>By Year</u>
Assignment 1	Oct 19th	30%	15%
Mid-term Exam	Nov 19th	30%	15%
Assignment 2	Dec 3rd	40%	20%
			50%
<i>Second Term</i>			
Attendance		10%	5%
Capstone Project Proposal	Jan 26th	10%	5%
Capstone Final Project	(Last day of class)	60%	30%
Capstone Final Presentation	(Last day of class)	20%	10%
			50%
			100%

### Missed Term Work

Late assignments will be subject to a late penalty of 5% (of the total marks for the assignment) for the first day, and then 10% per day after that (including weekends). All assignments are due before midnight (11:59pm) on assigned date.

### A Note on Marking

Feel free to contact me at any time to discuss the requirements of this course. If you are unhappy with the mark you received on an assignment\exam\project please come speak to me with a written response to the comments provided for your assignment\exam\project.

### Handing in Your Assignment

PDF (Portable Document Format) hardcopy files of the assignments must be uploaded to QUERCUS on the day that it is due. If you do not know how to create a PDF, please search online for a tutorial (<https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Save-or-convert-to-PDF-d85416c5-7d77-4fd6-a216-6f4bf7c7c110> ). I do not accept assignments sent by email.

Please follow University of Toronto procedures to be completed to be considered for academic accommodation for any course work such as missed tests or late assignments. Verification of Student illness or injury forms can be found on the Office of the Registrar's webpage (<http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca/getattachment/index/Verification-of-Illness-or-Injury-form-Jan-22-2013.pdf.aspx> ).

Students MUST submit a request for extension in ADVANCE of the deadline to receive a decision. For extensions of time beyond the examination period you must submit a petition through the Office of the Registrar (<http://www.erin.utoronto.ca/index.php?id=6988> ).

### **Academic Integrity**

The University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil/utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences.

Potential offences in papers and assignments include using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement, submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor, making up sources or facts, obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment. On tests and exams, cheating includes using or possessing unauthorized aids, looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test, misrepresenting your identity, falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes. Please avoid academic dishonesty, have confidence in your own ability to learn and grow academically by doing your own thinking and writing!

### **Accessibility**

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course! If you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Accessibility Services Office as soon as possible. I will work with you and Accessibility Services to ensure you can achieve your learning goals in this course. Enquiries are confidential. The UTSC Accessibility Services staff (located in SW302) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations (416-287-7560, [ability@utsc.utoronto.ca](mailto:ability@utsc.utoronto.ca) ).

### **Communicating With You**

The best way to communicate with the instructor is during class and office hours. If you need a response more quickly, you must contact the TA for this course. The TA will discuss with me the details of your enquiry; for any correspondence by email, please note that the subject line of your email must contain the course number and course title (i.e. EESD17Y3 Capstone) or we will be unable to differentiate your email from the numerous other emails we receive.

From time-to-time, I will send email messages or post messages on QUERCUS to notify you of changes in schedule and opportunities that you may want to take advantage of. I can only send messages to your U of T e-mail address. If you use another account (gmail, hotmail, yahoo, etc.) make sure that your U of T email is sent to your alternate email account. Similarly, if you want to communicate with me, please send the message from your U of T address as I will not respond to emails from other email accounts.