

University of Western Ontario: Department of Political Science

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 3211F**  
**Environmental Politics**

Fall 2025

See the course outline on the OWL Brightspace site for the class time and location.

**Course Director**

Dr. Adam Harmes

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Office Hours: Mondays 12:00-1:00 pm

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**Course Description**

This course examines the politics, economics, history, and current policy debates related to environmental issues in Canada and internationally. Topics covered include: the environmental movement; national and international environmental institutions; environmental economics and policies; various business responses to environmentalism; and the politics of environmental policy in Canada and globally.

**Prerequisites**

At least one 0.5 course at the 2500 level within the Department of Political Science.

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, students will be able to: acquire knowledge of the history of environmental politics in Canada and at the global level including recognizing key milestones and events; identify and apply the key economic concepts that underpin contemporary environmental policies; demonstrate knowledge of, and an ability to critically assess, the different positions in contemporary debates over environmental policy; demonstrate knowledge of key environmental actors and institutions in Canada and at the international level; recognize the importance of time management, listening, and proper note-taking skills; acquire and apply knowledge on writing in a clear and analytic fashion; and apply research skills.

**Required Readings**

Links to all course readings are posted on the course OWL BrightSpace site on the Home page in the 'Readings' folder and then under the specific weekly topic. All readings in the folders are required readings and will be tested on the Midterm and Final Exam as outlined in class. See the Reading Guide for the specific points that will be tested from each reading.

**Course Structure**

Weekly classes are structured as two-hour lectures with some discussion.

## Evaluation

Midterm Exam	35%	Monday 27 Oct – during class time Friday 14 November - make-up exam
Stakeholder Analysis	25%	Friday 28 November - e-copy on BrightSpace
Final Exam	40%	In-person during the Exam Period

*Midterm Exam Note:* For students who are also in my POLS 2511F Politics of Economics course, the midterm and midterm make-up dates are the same as for this course. Students in both courses will have the option of writing one of them on the make-up date without an accommodation.

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### **Mid-Term Exam**

**35%**

The midterm exam will occur in-person during the scheduled class time. Students with a formal accommodation to write the exam separately and/or with longer time must register with Accessible Education as soon as possible. If you miss their registration deadline, you will have to write the exam with the rest of the class.

It will be a 1 hour exam with 50 multiple choice questions based on all the lectures and readings before the midterm. A brief study guide with example questions will be posted one week before the midterm.

The multiple-choice questions on the lectures will comprise 35/50 questions. They will focus on concepts, actors and organizations, acronyms, specific environmental policies, and historical events discussed in the lectures. The lecture on writing will also be covered. Some questions will cross different lectures.

The multiple-choice questions on the readings will comprise 15/50 questions and will be based on the points listed in the Reading Guide including the main arguments/points, main supporting points/concepts, and, where relevant, any basic history from each of the articles. The last page of the exam will include a list of the authors and titles of each of the readings as a memory aide as this is how some articles will be referred to in the questions. If you actually do the readings, take decent notes and study them, you will be well prepared. If you leave many of the readings until the end of the semester or only try to look for Control F shortcuts based on the reading guide, you won't be.

### Accessibility Accommodations

- Students with a formal accommodation to write the exam separately and/or with longer time etc. must be registered with Accessible Education.
- You will write the exam with them and not with the rest of the class. They will tell you where you write. If you have not heard from them, make sure you contact them.
- We are not able to provide extra time or other accommodations in the main exam.
- Having the 'flexibility with assignment deadlines' accommodation does not apply to the date you write the exam.
- If you miss the midterm, you must register again with Accessible Education for the midterm make-up exam.

### Make-Up Exam

- Exams cannot be written early under any circumstances.
- All requests for medical or compassionate accommodations must go through student counselling's absence/academic consideration portal. The course instructor will not grant any accommodations. Please do not email me unless it is absolutely necessary and not just because you are advised to by academic advisors. I will only return your email if your situation is not covered in the examples below.
- Any students using their one Undocumented Absence must also go through the absence/academic consideration portal and fill out the signed self-attestation and accompanying rationale. The only difference is you don't have to provide documentation.
- Any students missing the midterm will be required to write the scheduled midterm make-up.
- **The one hour make-up exam is scheduled for Friday 14 November.**
- The format for the make-up exam is exactly the same as for the main exam and it will cover the exact same material as the main exam and no more.
- Having another class or tutorial scheduled during the make-up exam will not be accepted as a reason to miss it. If you have a test or assignment that makes it impossible for you to attend the make-up exam, you must email me the course name and number, its exact start/finish times on the day, the professor's name and email (not a TA), and the reason you can't miss it. I will contact them to confirm.
- We cannot schedule multiple make-up exams. Accordingly, any requests to also miss the make-up exam will be denied without very good and very documented reasons that we will follow up with phone calls to confirm.
- If you miss the make-up exam without further accommodation, you will receive a grade of zero.
- If you miss the make-up exam with an accommodation, it will either be rescheduled or replaced with a significant essay based on all the lectures and readings covered on the midterm. This essay will be *hand-written* to offset copying and pasting from lecture notes and PDFs.
- Under no circumstances will you be allowed to miss the midterm and have your other grades reweighted.

### ***Stakeholder Analysis Report and Slide Deck***      **25%**

Each student will complete one stakeholder analysis report and slide deck assignment. The written stakeholder analysis report must be 5-6 typed double-spaced pages in length (not including the title page, any tables, endnotes, and bibliography). It must have a minimum of 15 sources including some academic sources. The slide deck component must have 12-15 slides with 1-2 images on most slides. The slide deck is a presentation version of the stakeholder analysis report and does not require extra research. There is NO presentation, you are just creating a slide deck. Students are allowed to fully use AI for this assignment. You can use it for research, writing, slides, etc. The goal is to allow you to experiment with AI without fear of any academic penalty. See the Stakeholder Analysis Instructions for more details.

The Stakeholder Analysis Instructions document is available in the Stakeholder Analysis folder on the course website. It will be discussed in Week 6 of the course. The assignment must be submitted on the course website (through Turnitin) by 11:59 pm on the due date. The threshold for each day late is then 11:59 pm. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 3% per day -

including weekends, holidays, and reading week - to a maximum of 10%. Late assignments not handed in by 11:59 pm on the day of the last class will receive a grade of zero. **The Stakeholder Analysis assignments is designated as ‘not eligible’ for an Undocumented Absence.**

### Plagiarism

- While you are allowed to fully use AI for this assignment, you are NOT allowed to plagiarize other work.
- Turnitin.com is excellent. Do not copy-and-paste from your own or others’ previous papers as they are in the Turnitin international database. Do not copy-and-paste from media, blogs, etc. as the Turnitin search engine will find it.
- Plagiarism is about intent, and we can tell the difference between that and legitimate misunderstandings about citations. If you make an honest mistake in your citations, that is no problem.

### Extensions

- **The Stakeholder Analysis is designated as ‘not eligible’ for an Undocumented Absence.**
- All requests for medical or compassionate accommodations must go through student counselling’s absence/academic consideration portal only and must be no later than 48 hours following the due date. The course instructor will NOT grant any extensions. Please do not email me unless it is absolutely necessary and not just because you are advised to by academic advisors. I will only return your email if your situation is NOT covered in the examples below.
- If it is approved by academic advising, your extension will be for exactly how many days they approve. For example, if the due date was the 10th, and your accommodation is from the 10th to 12th, you will get a 3-day extension (10, 11, 12) meaning your essay is then due by 11:59 pm on the 13<sup>th</sup>. You must then submit your essay through the course website by 11:59 pm on the new due date. After that it will be counted as late, and the late penalty will start to apply.
- If the accommodation dates given by academic advising start a day or two after the essay due date, your extension is still only for the number of days between their start and end dates. For example, if the essay is due on the 10th, and your accommodation is from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>, you will receive a 2-day extension only from the original due date, making it due on the 12<sup>th</sup> with a penalty applying after that. Applying for an accommodation on a Friday and not hearing back from counseling until the Monday will not give you extra days.
- Students who have the ‘flexibility with assignment deadlines’ accommodation from Accessible Education do NOT need to email me. You must contact academic counseling to have an extension approved and it will be for a maximum of 3 days. Longer extensions will not be granted. Therefore, if the due date was the 10th, and you receive the 3 day ‘flexibility with assignment deadlines’ accommodation, your essay is then due by 11:59 pm on the 13th.

### ***Final Exam***

***35%***

This will be an in-person exam held at a time and date determined by the Registrar’s Office during the scheduled exam period. The course instructor has no control whatsoever over the time and date of the exam.

It will be a 2 hour exam with 75 multiple choice questions. The first 55 questions are based on the lectures. The final 20 questions are based on the readings and are drawn from the points covered in the Reading Guide.

The exam will cover:

1. All lectures and readings after the midterm i.e. from The Geopolitics of Climate Change onward and...
  2. The lectures from weeks 4 and 5 on Parties, Ideologies, and Current Policies and The History of Global Environmental Politics. You don't need to study the readings from these 2 weeks.
- The last page of the exam includes a list of the authors and titles as a memory aide.

#### Accessibility Accommodations

- Students with a formal accommodation to write the exam separately and/or with longer time etc. must be registered with Accessible Education.
- You will write the exam with them and not with the rest of the class. They will tell you where you write. If you have not heard from them, make sure you contact them.
- We are not able to provide extra time or other accommodations in the main exam.
- Having the 'flexibility with assignment deadlines' accommodation does not apply to the date you write the exam.

#### Make-Up Exam

- Final exams cannot be written early, or converted to online exams, under any circumstances. Avoid booking any flights or trains too early until the exam schedule is released.
- **As per university policy, final exams are not eligible for an Undocumented Absence.**
- All requests to write a make-up exam must go through student counselling's absence/academic consideration portal. The course instructor will not grant any accommodations related to the exam.
- Make-up exams for finals are very difficult to schedule. Accordingly, any requests to miss the final exam will be denied without very good and very documented reasons that will be followed up with phone calls to confirm.
- Make-up exams will occur either in-person in January, or they will be replaced with a significant essay based on all the lectures and readings covered on the final exam. This essay will be *hand-written* to offset copying and pasting from lecture notes and PDFs.
- If you miss the main exam without an accommodation, you will receive a grade of zero.
- The format for the make-up exam is exactly the same as for the main exam and it will cover the exact same material as the main exam and no more.
- If you miss the make-up exam date that you agree to, without a further accommodation, you will receive a grade of zero. Or, if you failed to complete the writing assignment substitute for the exam within 30 days of the main exam, you will receive a grade of zero.
- Under no circumstances will you be allowed to miss the final exam and have your other grades reweighted.

**Lecture Notes and PPT Slides**

Lecture notes and PowerPoint slides will NOT be posted. If you miss class, you will need to get notes from other students. For students with accommodations, and accessibility accommodations, notes will be available from a volunteer notetaker.

**Notice on Pre/Anti-requisites**

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that they have NOT taken an anti-requisite course. Lack of prerequisites may not be used as a basis for appeal.

**Turnitin.com**

Electronic copies of all assignments submitted on OWL are automatically processed by the plagiarism detection service turnitin.com. Please be advised that: All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between the University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

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**COURSE SCHEDULE AND TOPICS**

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| <b>Sept. 8</b>  | <b>Course Introduction and the Politics of Green Parties</b><br>The first part of this class will be used to introduce the general subject matter of the course and to outline the course structure, readings, and requirements. The remainder will be a lecture and discussion on the origins and politics of green parties in Canada and around the world. |
| <b>Sept. 15</b> | <b>Environmental Economics and Policies</b><br>This week examines different policy approaches to environmental issues and the key economic concepts that underpin them.  |
| <b>Sept. 22</b> | <b>Resource Law and Politics in Canada</b><br>This week examines past and contemporary debates over natural resources development and environmental policy in Canada including the role of federalism, the constitution, and indigenous groups.  |
| <b>Sept. 29</b> | <b>Parties, Ideologies, and Current Policies</b><br>This week examines how the ideologies of different political parties in Canada influence their views on environmental issues and how these have played out over recent policies.   |
| <b>Oct. 6</b>   | <b>The History of Global Environmental Politics</b><br>This week examines the origins and evolution of the environmental movement including the growth of national and international environmental agencies, summits, and treaties.  |

Oct. 13	Thanksgiving: NO CLASS
<b>Oct. 20</b>	<b>Stakeholder Analysis and Slide Deck Assignment</b> This class will be used to outline the specific requirements for the Stakeholder Analysis and Slide Deck assignment as well as key points on professional writing, presentations, and the use of AI. If time permits, we will also watch a video related to environmental policy. As with the other lectures, there will be several questions on the midterm exam based on the content of this class.
<b>Oct. 27</b>	<b>MIDTERM EXAM DURING CLASS TIME</b>
Nov. 3	Reading Week: no class
<b>Nov. 10</b>	<b>The Geopolitics of Climate Change</b> This week examines the geopolitics and economics of global climate change including North-South relations, the competing international relations approaches of climate liberalism and climate realism, and key policy issues such as carbon tariffs, climate refugees, and the impact of climate change on national security.
Nov. 14	(Friday) Midterm Make-up
<b>Nov. 17</b>	<b>Environmental Activism</b> This class examines different forms of environmental activism including inside and outside lobbying strategies, brand-based activism, fossil fuel divestment and litigation, and indigenous activism.
<b>Nov. 24</b>	<b>Pro-Development Activism</b> This class examines different forms of pro-development activism and their significance for environmental politics and policy.
Nov. 28	FRIDAY – STAKEHOLDER ANALYSES DUE ON COURSE WEBSITE BY 11:59 PM
<b>Dec. 1</b>	<b>CSR and Corporate Environmentalism</b> This class examines the origins and evolution of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate environmentalism including their various types and the political debate over them.
<b>Dec. 8</b>	<b>ESG and Investor Environmentalism</b> This class examines the origins and mechanics of ESG investing (environmental, social, governance) including the role of institutional investors, corporate governance, and investor networks. It also examines the recent anti-ESG backlash in the US.