

# **Human Impact on the Environment**

## **Course Expectations**

- Students' work collaboratively to build knowledge around both local and global environmental issues
- Students share the findings of their collaborations with their peers through weekly presentations
- Students collaborate in a Web 2.0 environment along with weekly face-to-face classes
- Students develop a deeper understanding of the impact of humans in local and global environmental issues
- Students create a video to share online that details how an individual can impact a specific environmental issue

## **Course Outline**

### **Week 1** - *Introduction to the course - Class meets in the computer lab*

- Students introduced to the learning management system of the course (Knowledge eCommons and class wiki)
- An overview of course content, assignments, final project and final examination
- Course expectations discussed in detail, including: participation in the online environment, group work expectations and assessment
- Introduction of all class members. This will be done both in person and online. In the computer lab students will 'post' an introduction of themselves for class to refer to.
- Students generate a question for discussion online during the week. What have you done recently that has had a major impact on the environment, positive or negative?

### **Week 2** - *Environment (Global perspective)*

- Video "An Inconvenient Truth"
- Students break into groups and discuss an issue presented in the film.
- Student groups elaborate on the issue during the week and present in Week 3

### **Week 3** - *Local Perspective - Toronto Environmental Issues*

- Students visit a local waste management facility to gain firsthand experience into a local environmental issue
- Students explore Toronto's Solid Waste Removal site
- Students participate in an online blog (ongoing) about Toronto garbage created by the instructor ([www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com))

**Week 4** – *Local Perspective – Ontario Environmental Issues*

- Students explore media representations of provincial environmental issues

**Week 5** - *Global Perspective - North American Environmental Issues*

- Videoconference with a professor from a University in Florida concerning Gulf of Mexico oil spill

**Week 6** - *Global Perspective - South American Environmental Issues*

- Online conference with instructor during this week (students sign up for a meeting time online with the teacher) to discuss course and final project

**Week 7** - *Global Perspective - Antarctic/Arctic Environmental Issues*

- Guest speaker from the Canadian Geographic Society who participated in arctic studies as part of the International Polar Year from 2007 - 2009

**Week 8** - *Global Perspective - European Environmental Issues*

- Debate week - groups will debate the effectiveness of implementing a 'Carbon Tax' similar to Norway

**Week 9** - *Global Perspective - Australian Environmental Issues*

- Online conferencing with instructor to discuss final project

**Week 10** - *Global Perspective - African Environmental Issues*

**Week 11** - *Global Perspective - Asian Environmental Issues*

**Week 12** - *Wrap Up / Final Exam*

- Final exam (1.5 hours in length)
- Final paper due: 2000 words
- Students share You Tube video's as a wrap up to the class

**Face to Face Class Set Up** (3 Hours)

- Hour 1 - student groups present the information from previous weeks work with opportunity for class discussion,
- Hour 2 - interactive slide show presented by instructor and/or video with lots of opportunity for discussion,
- Hour 3 - students create groups that focus on specific parts of the issue and work within those groups to prepare presentation for the following week.

## **Grading Scheme**

### **Participation / Presentations = 40%**

- Weekly presentations
- Weekly posting of those online presentations (through KeC)
- Weekly commenting online about presentations (through wiki site)
- Weekly discussion of the topic of the week (through KeC)
- Reading of summary of discussions by the instructor

### **Term Paper = 30%**

- Overarching Subject - Describe an environmental issue and its impact on the global environment. Describe a plan to reduce the impact in a given period of time and include specific information as to how one person alone can create positive change.
- 2000 word paper following academic guidelines
- Assignment includes a 5 min video to be posted to You Tube that outlines your issue and how an individual can work to create positive change around that issue

### **Final Exam = 30%**

- Synthesis of topics covered in class
- This class has covered specific issues in depth and this exam will require a synthesis of these issues to achieve a deeper understanding of the underlying causes of environmental issues.