

CONS 101: Introduction to Conservation (3 credits)

people | nature | engagement

UBC Faculty of Forestry
Fall 2020
Syllabus

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Early conservationists did not take into account the rights of Indigenous peoples, nor the existing Indigenous claims and historical ties to the lands they designated for the protection of “nature”. Indigenous peoples were almost entirely excluded from these conversations and decisions. The same history is true for the establishment of the City of Vancouver, and the University of British Columbia’s Point Grey Campus.

Although this year we are conducting CONS 101 online, we remind one another that the physical base of our university is located on Indigenous land: the traditional, ancestral, and unceded (occupied) territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) people. We make this acknowledgement to remember our history, and to remind ourselves of our responsibility: to heal past wrongs inflicted on Canada’s Indigenous Peoples, as well as on the lands to which they have deep, historic ties.

Land acknowledgements are increasingly common place in Canada, but this practice may be unfamiliar to you. The University of British Columbia officially recognizes its location on Musqueam territory. It is your choice to decide how and whether a land acknowledgement may be appropriate. If it something you believe is right, we encourage you to reflect on the history of the place you call home, and what events took place to make it what it is today.

More information:

Musqueam & UBC - <https://indigenous.ubc.ca/indigenous-engagement/musqueam-and-ubc/>
xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) people - <http://www2.moa.ubc.ca/musqueamteachingkit/>

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Title	Course Code Number	Credit Value
Introduction to Conservation	CONS 101 (sections 101 and 102)	3
Synchronous Session	Place	
Th 9:30-10:50 or 17:00-18:20 (Pacific Time)	On Canvas!	

PREREQUISITES

A desire to learn about, discuss, and explore conservation issues

COREQUISITES

None

University of British Columbia

TEACHING TEAM

Course Instructor	Contact Us!	Conservation Coffee Hour (aka 'Office Hours')
Jeanine Rhemtulla	Please email us directly from Canvas	Have a question? Want to chat about conservation issues, dream about solutions or ask about career options? Join us for CONS Coffee Hour: Tuesday 11-12 (pacific time)
Teaching Assistants		
Mariella Becu		
Emily Doyle-Yamaguchi		
Juliana Kaufmanis		

WELCOME

Welcome to CONS 101! This course is an introduction to the field of environmental conservation. Together we will explore the pressing global environmental challenges that we face and the reasons why addressing them is so difficult. What is the Anthropocene and how do we know we are in it? Why is biodiversity declining so quickly? Is it too late to stop climate change? Why should conservationists care about what they eat? What actions can we take to reduce our impacts on ecosystems? We will consider these questions and more, using examples from British Columbia and around the world. We will also encourage you to step out into nature, learn more about the ecosystems in your own backyard (wherever you are on the planet right now) and think about how conservation fits into your own life.

We welcome to this course students who are entering the Natural Resources Conservation and the Forest Bioeconomy Sciences and Technology programs in the Faculty of Forestry, as well as students who are joining us from other programs on campus. To the Forestry students, we hope that this course will provide a broad foundation for the rest of your program, get you excited about conservation, and make you feel welcome in this faculty! To other UBC students, we hope that your decision to take the course is rewarded by an appreciation of the field of conservation and how it might apply to your own field of study. Because social and economic systems are key drivers of environmental change, bringing a conservation perspective to economic, political, and social policy is critical. Many conservation issues are 'wicked problems' in that they resist easy solutions; we thus need many voices to bring different perspectives and creative solutions to these issues. Welcome to the course - we look forward to many spirited debates!

COURSE STRUCTURE

Given the extraordinary circumstances this fall, and the fact that many of you will be joining us from your homes around the world, we have completely redesigned the course this fall to take a "blended" approach that combines work that you do on your own time (asynchronous) with a weekly (synchronous) class session on zoom.

Every week on Sundays, we will post the weekly materials. There will be lecture videos to watch, readings to do, and discussion questions to answer online. We suggest that you complete these materials by Wednesday.

On Thursdays, there will be two live Zoom sessions, from 9:30-10:50 and 17:00-18:20 (Vancouver time). They will cover the same material, and you can attend either one (no matter which course section you are registered in). Please attend! We will address questions arising from the lectures and readings, learn new material, discuss issues that don't have easy answers, and practice applying our knowledge.

At the end of each week, there will be a short quiz where you can test your understanding of the material. Your quiz will be need to be completed by Saturday.

Finally, every week you will spend 15-30 minutes in a nature spot of your choosing, documenting your observations in your nature journal. It may be nice to visit at about the same time each week, but that is up to you.

This course is structured with the assumption that you are excited about conservation, about meeting and engaging with other people who share this interest, and have the initiative to direct your own learning. (If that isn't the case, perhaps consider taking a different course?)

Summary of Weekly Activities:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Materials posted for the week.		CONS "coffee hour" 11am -12pm (optional!)	Finish reviewing materials posted on Sunday	Attend live Zoom session 9:30-10:50 OR 17:00-18:20		Complete weekly quiz. Complete nature journal.

COURSE TIME REQUIREMENTS

We expect that fully engaging in this course will require about 5-6 hours a week (more some weeks, less others): watching lectures (1 hour), readings (1 hour), discussion board (30 min), zoom session (1.5 hours), nature spot (30 min), quiz (30 min), plus additional time to complete assignments (although there will be fewer readings and lectures in weeks with big assignments).

We understand that keeping up with weekly materials can be challenging in a self-directed environment, especially this year given the other issues and worries that many of us face. We have tried to structure the course to help you to keep up with the material. If you find yourself falling behind, please contact us so we can help you get back on track.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Explain the scientific basis for major global conservation challenges (e.g., biodiversity loss, climate change, land-use change, food security, etc)
- Discuss the multiple perspectives on these issues (e.g., ecological, social, indigenous, economic, technological), potential trade-offs between them, and how these may complicate solutions

- Compare and contrast different approaches to conservation (e.g., classical, indigenous, matrix) and restoration and their role in addressing conservation challenges
- Provide examples of local and global conservation case studies
- Explain the UBC motto *Tuum Est* and apply it to your own studies

LEARNING MATERIALS

Canvas:

All course materials (videos, readings, etc), discussion boards, assignments, grades etc will be posted on Canvas. Thursday live sessions will be hosted on Zoom (with links posted on Canvas).

Required textbooks:

Please re-use/make/buy one nature journal to make notes during your weekly nature visits. Can be as simple, fancy, plain, or beautiful as you want.

Recommended computing equipment:

UBC Faculty of Forestry recommends that you have the following computer hardware and software:

Minimum setup (for both PC and Mac):

- i5, quad, 2+ GHz
- 8 GB ram
- 250 GB free disk space
- 14" screen size
- Webcam (720p) and with microphone
- ISP service 5 Mbps upload/download speed
- Free cloud storage

Optimal setup (for both PC and Mac):

- Windows PC
- i7, quad, 3 GHz
- 16 GB ram
- 512 GB or better free disk space
- 15" or better screen
- Webcam (720p) with microphone
- Separate monitor, 24"
- Separate keyboard and mouse
- ISP service 100 Mbps upload/download speed
- Paid cloud storage of 50 GB or better

Although we recognize that not everyone has access to an optimal setup, it will help if you have:

- a good enough computer and internet connectivity to easily stream the weekly videos and participate in live sessions
- webcam so we can see your face during class (helpful, but don't buy just for this class)
- a smartphone or similar to make videos, take pictures of your nature spot (helpful, but don't buy just for this class)

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

Schedule of topics may shift slightly, but the following table should provide a good overview:

CONS101: Introduction to Conservation ** 2020 Schedule (subject to change)				
Week		Topic	Quizzes (open until Saturday @ 6pm)	Assignment Due Dates
1	Sept 7	Welcome & Introduction	✓	
2	Sept 14	Anthropocene	✓	A1 (part1): Sept 19 @ 6pm
3	Sept 21	Biodiversity	✓	
4	Sept 28	Climate Change	✓	A1 (part 2): Oct 3 @ 6pm
5	Oct 5	Ecological Footprints	✓	A2: Oct 10 @ 6pm
6	Oct 12	Food	✓	A1 (part 3): Oct 17 @ 6pm
7	Oct 19	Midterm Exam - Friday Oct. 23		
8	Oct 26	Ecosystem Services, Resilience, Trade-offs	✓	
9	Nov 2	Debate Week		A3: due Nov 8 @ 6pm
10	Nov 9	Classical Conservation	✓	A1 (part 4): Nov 14 @ 6pm
11	Nov 16	Conservation with People	✓	
12	Nov 23	Restoration	✓	A1 (part 5): Nov 28 @ 6pm
13	Nov 30	Hope	✓	Virtual Field Trip (optional) due in class Thursday

ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING

In this course, you will show your mastery of and reflection on the topics that we discuss through a combination of assignments, exams, and participation. If you are interested, you can choose to complete an additional final assignment (an extension of the first assignment), which will reduce the weighting of the final exam. You can pick either Option 1 or Option 2 in the table below, and you don't need to decide which until the end of the semester (when the 'Virtual Fieldtrip' is due).

		Option 1	Option 2
Assignments			
	A1: inTo Nature	15%	15%
	A2: Ecological Footprint	15%	15%
	A3: Debate	15%	15%
	Virtual Fieldtrip of Your Nature Spot	Don't need to do this	15%
Exams			
	Weekly Quizzes	10%	10%
	Mid-term exam	10%	10%
	Final exam	25%	10%
Participation			
	Discussion board participation	10%	10%
Total		100%	100%

Assignments (3 @ 15% each):

There will be three course assignments. Full instructions will be provided on Canvas, and please submit your assignments through Canvas for grading.

Assignment 1: inTo Nature!

How can we conserve something that we don't know and love? Nature is all around us, from weedy back alleys and pigeons in city squares to parks small and large. This semester, you will choose a nature spot close to your home, and then visit that spot every week for half an hour to observe the natural world and makes notes on what you see as the seasons change. We will explore a few themes more formally to discover the human and ecological history of your site, identify the flora and fauna, assess the conservation challenges and possible solutions. You will upload your nature observations and explorations five times over the semester. Your submissions may include notes from your journals, writings, drawings, paintings, pictures, or whatever other creative approach you choose to take.

Assignment 2: Ecological Footprint (due October 10th @ 6pm)

The root of many of our ecological challenges is over-consumption. In this assignment, you will calculate your ecological footprint—a metric developed to measure and compare consumption—and reflect on its size and implications for sustainability.

Assignment 3: Conservation Debate (due November 8th @ 6pm)

Every year in CONS101, we take up a controversial conservation issue to debate. We are still choosing between several potential topics. The debate assignment will involve background reading on the issue, developing a series of arguments for and against the topic, then debating the issue with a small group of your classmates (format to be determined). After the debate, you will submit a short paper arguing your position on the debate.

Optional Final Assignment: Virtual Field Trip (15% if you choose to do it)

Create a virtual field trip of your nature spot (from assignment 1) to share with your classmates. The format of the field trip is up to you. You could film material over the course of the semester and then edit it into a 2-3 minute video showcasing your spot, or create a pamphlet introducing a newcomer to the area, or curate an illustrated nature journal, or...whatever other creative idea you want to pursue. As a guideline, projects should take ~20 hours to complete. Students choosing this option will present them to small groups of their classmates the last week of class.

Weekly Quizzes (10%), Mid-term (10%) and Final (25% or 10%) Exams:

Quizzes, and mid-term and final exams will assess your mastery of the course learning objectives. They will include multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions. All material (asynchronous and synchronous) will be included in assessments. The final exam will be cumulative.

You can access the quizzes and exams on Canvas. We will not be using Proctorio software. It is okay to consult your own notes during the exam, but it is not okay to google non-class sites. Moreover, you must take the quizzes or exams by yourself, and cannot ask anybody (fellow classmates or anyone else) for help. You must not discuss the exam with any of your classmates during the period that the exam is open. Although I trust you all to be honest, to reduce the possibility of cheating, the order of the questions will be randomized, and many of the questions will have multiple versions.

Quizzes - there will be quizzes most weeks during the semester. All quizzes will be graded, but we will drop the two worst grades, and take the average of the rest of them to calculate your final quiz grade. Quizzes must be completed by Saturday at 6pm. Once you begin the quiz, you will have 30 minutes to complete it. Quizzes will typically have 5 questions.

The mid-term and final exams (pending approval) will be available for ~12 hour period; once you begin the exam, you will have a set period of time to complete it.

Participation (10%):

The best learning occurs when you engage deeply with a course. Beyond doing the coursework, this means asking questions, engaging with your peers, and debating ideas. We have designed the class to be interactive and will use a number of methods to engage discussion. In particular, each student will join a small discussion group (15-20 students) on Canvas. Every week, we will post a question for you to discuss in your group. We ask that you spend about 30 minutes engaging in discussion online, posting your thoughts and responding to other students. A member of the teaching team will also participate in these discussions, although the onus is on you, the students, to keep the discussion going. Students who engage regularly and thoughtfully in these discussion groups will receive full participation grades (100%). Students who contribute less regularly or in a perfunctory manner will receive partial participation grades (50%). Students who make little attempt to engage will not receive participation grades.

It is super important to keep your discussion space friendly and open to different perspectives. It is precisely these different perspectives that make conservation issues so interesting and oftentimes challenging. Remember also that many students are not native English speakers and that it takes incredible bravery to put yourself out there in a language that you are just learning to speak. Be kind. Rude, combative, discriminatory, and similar comments will not be tolerated, please let us know if we miss any.

COURSE POLICIES

This crazy time: First and foremost, let's acknowledge that this is a crazy time. We are excited about how we have redesigned the course, but we will deeply miss meeting you in person.

We also understand that this period brings additional challenges. Don't worry if your internet connection drops, if your little brother (or your kid) interrupts while you are in a class zoom meeting, if your 'desk' is a shelf in your bedroom (as Jeanine's is), or if you are occasionally too overwhelmed to get through all the readings. In addition to class, many of us have other responsibilities, people to care for, bigger things to worry about.

Please - if you find yourself overwhelmed or falling behind, contact us. We will do whatever we can to help. Your well-being comes first.

Late assignments: Please submit assignments on time, as it makes our job grading them easier. When exceptional circumstances will prevent you from completing an assignment on time, you may request an extension before the deadline (contact Jeanine) and it will be granted where possible and appropriate. In the absence of a granted extension, grades will be reduced by 10% per day. Late assignments will not be accepted once graded assignments have been returned to other students.

Exam Policy: To accommodate different time zones, exams will be set up so that you can choose when to take them within a period of ~12 hours. Once you start the exam, you will have a set period (1.5-2.5 hours) to complete it. If, despite this flexibility, you have a conflict or are in a time zone that really doesn't work, **please email Jeanine to discuss at least 10 days in advance. If you miss an exam due to unforeseen and excusable circumstances (e.g., major illness), please contact Jeanine as soon as possible to discuss a make-up.** We may ask for documentation.

Use of Canvas: We use Canvas (<https://canvas.ubc.ca>) for everything – to post course material, communicate with you, submit/return assignments, post grades, etc. Please make sure that you can access Canvas and that you are receiving our messages.

Learning Analytics: Learning analytics includes the collection and analysis of data about learners to improve teaching and learning. In this course, we use Canvas, which records data about your activity and provides information that we can use to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In this course, we may use analytics data to:

- View overall class progress
- Track your progress in order to provide you with personalized feedback
- Review statistics on course content being accessed to support improvements in the course
- Track participation in discussion forums
- Assess your participation in the course

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: We are committed to making our class accessible to everyone and are happy to provide accommodations for students with physical/learning disabilities, ongoing medical or mental health conditions. Eligibility for accommodations is determined through the Centre for Accessibility (<https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/centre-for-accessibility>). Please register with them early in the semester if possible. They can help with a wide range of issues, so don't hesitate to contact them. Once you have consulted with them, you can bring your letter of accommodation to us. You do not need to discuss the details of your situation with us, and we promise to keep all discussions confidential. Accommodations may look a little different this year, but we will work with you to provide the support you need.

Your Well-Being: We understand that family emergencies, physical or mental illness, personal crises, childcare issues (or the potential transition back to homeschooling our kids this year), etc. can significantly impact your academic performance, ability to meet deadlines, etc. If academic or personal issues are affecting your ability to engage in this course, don't hesitate to talk to us and we'll work on a fair resolution. We don't need all the details of your situation, and you may also speak to someone in student services who will work with us to determine adequate accommodations without revealing sensitive information to us. You are welcome to contact any member of the teaching team. Further resources are available at:

<https://students.ubc.ca/health-wellness/wellness-centre>

<https://wellbeing.ubc.ca>

Academic Integrity (Cheating & Plagiarism): The Faculty of Forestry, UBC, and the scholarly community at large share an understanding of the ethical ways that we use and produce knowledge. A core practice of this shared value of academic integrity is that we acknowledge the contributions of others to our own work, but it also means we produce our own contributions that add to the scholarly conversation: we don't buy or copy assignments or put our names on work that we have not meaningfully contributed to (e.g., by cutting and pasting material from the internet). We also don't falsify data or sources or hand in the same work in more than one course.

In our experience, there are several common types of plagiarism: outright cheating, sloppiness and an honest misunderstanding of what plagiarism is. It is your responsibility to understand what plagiarism is, and to ask for clarification if you are not sure. We will report all suspected cheating and plagiarism cases to the Associate Dean (Academic) in the Faculty of Forestry.

Please review the UBC policies on Academic Honesty and Standards (see below) for more information.

Regrading of Assignments and Exams: We work hard to grade and provide feedback on assignments and exams. If you feel that your grade does not fairly reflect your work, please start by reading our comments carefully, and then making an appointment with the person who did the grading to discuss. If you still believe that there is an error in the grading, please contact the course instructor. If warranted, we will re-grade the entire assignment again, which may result in either a lower or higher grade.

Basic Needs Security: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact Student Development and Services or your academic advisor for support. Furthermore, please talk to one of us if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable us to provide any resources that we may possess.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions.

Details of the policies and how to access support are available on [the UBC Senate website](#).

Academic Honesty and Standards:

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,286,0,0>

Academic Freedom:

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,33,86,0>

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,34,0,0>

Freedom from Harassment and Discrimination:

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,33,87,0>

Prevention of sexual violence and support for survivors:

<https://svpro.ubc.ca/>

Religious Observances:

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,48,0,0>

Sexual Assault and Other Sexual Misconduct:

<https://universitycounsel.ubc.ca/policies/policy131.pdf>

POTENTIAL RESTRICTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' ONLINE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

During this pandemic, the shift to online learning has greatly altered teaching and studying at UBC, including changes to health and safety considerations. Keep in mind that some UBC courses might cover topics that are censored or considered illegal by non-Canadian governments. This may include, but is not limited to, human rights, representative government, defamation, obscenity, gender or sexuality, and historical or current geopolitical controversies. If you are a student living abroad, you will be subject to the laws of your local jurisdiction, and your local authorities might limit your access to course material or take punitive action against you. UBC is strongly committed to academic freedom, but has no control over foreign authorities (please visit <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,33,86,0> for an articulation of the values of the University conveyed in the Senate Statement on Academic Freedom). Thus, we recognize that students will have legitimate reason to exercise caution in studying certain subjects. If you have concerns regarding your personal situation, consider postponing taking a course with manifest risks, until you are back on campus or reach out to your academic advisor to find substitute courses. For further information and support, please visit: <https://academic.ubc.ca/support-resources/freedom-expression>

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