Instructors

Peter Hodson  
BioSciences 3134  
36129  
hodsonp@biology

Mick Smith  
BioSciences Complex  
3132  
& Mac-Corry D309

Teaching assistant  
Calvin Chan  
9cc25@qlink.queensu.ca

Time and Place
Monday evenings from 7:00 to 10:00 pm, Nicol Hall, Room 321

Course Structure
The course comprises three parts:

Part 1. Introductory material: A skills based introduction to the complexities of environmental research.

This section of the course is intended to:
- provide experience of necessary research techniques and presentation skills
- develop group work activities
- provide a forum for critical discussion of the presentation of environmental issues and research in public debates and mass media. What are the problems in conducting and communicating environmental research? How important is context? How ‘objective’ can or should such communications be?

Part 2. In depth study of a local environmental issue: Landscapes, Aesthetics and Sustainability: Kingston, Block D

This section of the course is intended to illustrate the complex ways in which environmental ideals, knowledge and values come into play in practical
situations. We will examine recent and ongoing debates about the
development of Kingston’s waterfront, in particular the proposed
development of block D, in relation to notions of sustainability and
landscape aesthetics.

Aesthetic values are one of the most important ways in which we relate to
our environment. For example, in appreciating the beauty of the Alps of the
Rockies we invoke aesthetic ideals about we ways we expect these ‘natural’
environments to look. These ideals are implicit in the very notion of a
landscape - which we might think of as an area ‘pictured’ from particular
perspectives and judged in terms of its aesthetic qualities as if it were a
painting. (In practical terms most of us have experience of framing our
holiday pictures so as to compose a perfected model of a vacation with
sunset and empty beach that also excludes the elements we feel don’t fit -
the television aerials or tower blocks that we leave just out of shot!)
Decisions about development and conservation almost always include an
aesthetic element, though the scenery or objects at issue may not be ‘natural’
at all, but the result of years of human interventions. This is certainly the
case where cityscapes are concerned. Here aesthetic ideals take quite
different forms, often emphasizing, for example, civic values and/or those
associated with notions of prosperity. Earlier descriptions of Kingston’s
waterfront might have pictured it as a bustling hive of industry, where signs
of industrial progress had positive associations with a work ethic, ideas of
progress, and so on.

One key question then might be to ask what an aesthetic ideal of Kingston’s
waterfront in terms of ‘sustainable’ development might look like – would it
mesh, for example with ideas of Kingston as a tourist destination, a historic
site, and so on. Peoples’ ideas of beauty have certainly changed over time
and landscapes have different symbolic associations for different people.
This makes it very difficult to say exactly which kinds of landscape are
worth sustaining for aesthetic reasons and how aesthetic values should be
weighted against other concerns, like biodiversity, or the economic needs of
human populations. This part of the course will look at some of the
presuppositions we make in judging environmental aesthetics and how those
play out, especially in terms of industrial and post-industrial landscapes,
environmental restoration works and local and provincial planning policy
and economics.
Part 3. Symposium: A student organized event around a contemporary and controversial environmental issue. These events have taken many different forms in past years but involve all aspects of staging a major event capable of making an important contribution to an environmental debate. (See details in appendix).

Evaluation will take place throughout the year via a variety of oral and written, individual and group assignments (see page 5 for mark assignments); there will be no final examination.

Regular attendance and participation in all aspects of the course are expected.

PART 1  INTRODUCTION

Week 1, Sept 13

- Introduction and overview of the course
- Information resources for environmental studies - Jane Philipps, Head, Engineering and Science Library will provide a brief overview of the range and complexity of information resources in this field. She will offer opportunities for one-on-one and/or group instruction on effective strategies for locating, evaluating, and using information for individual and group course assignments.
  - How to take briefing notes – for assignment 1
  - Allocation of working groups – you will be divided into working/discussion groups for collective exercises and the local project (assignment 4)
  - How to give an oral presentation – discussion in preparation for assignment 2
  - Announcement of field trip – Saturday October 16th, 9:00 – 1:00.
  - Class photos – Colin Khan

Week 2, Sept 20

- Announcements
- Speaker: Steve Lukits, RMC, and former Kingston Whig editor. Do you want to be published or read? How to write for a public audience.
• Popular writing exercise: Maureen Garvie – Senior Tutor in Writing Section at Queen’s University Writing Centre. Maureen too is a former editor at the Kingston Whig.

• Assignment 2: Oral presentation: Each member of the class will present a short talk on either October 4th or 18th. By September 27, you should confirm your topic with the TA, and select a presentation time.

• Assignment 3: Environmental Issues in the Headlines: Each member of the class will prepare a newspaper article or radio script article that examines the “story behind the headlines”. We suggest that you use the same topic that you chose for your oral presentation. The assignment is due November 22. Confirm your topic with the TA by September 27.

Week 3, Sept 27

• Announcements

• Introduction to PART 2: Assignment 4
  • Speaker: Joe Davies, Senior Project Manager, City of Kingston. Issues in Brownfield Development. Prepare a briefing note for this talk.

• Introduction to PART 3, Assignment 5 – Symposium: First organizational meeting for the February symposium

Week 4, October 4

• Announcements
  • Speaker: Nabil Mailloux – Give Pests a Chance Prepare a briefing note for this talk.

• Oral presentations

Week 5, October 11

• There will be no class on Thanksgiving Day, October 13. In place of this we have planned a one-day field trip for Saturday October 16.

This activity is a required part of Assignment 4.

• October 16 9a.m. Fieldtrip to Block D
  • Speaker: Bill Glover (Sydenham Ward Ratepayers Association)

• Speaker: Leonore Foster (City Councillor)
Week 6: October 18
- Announcements
- Assignment 5: Symposium: Second meeting – a review of planning and tasks - first reports.
- Oral presentations

Week 7, October 25
- Announcements
- Speaker: Brian Osbourne ‘Kingston’s Changing Waterfront’?
  Prepare a briefing note for this talk
- Group Work on local environmental issue

Week 8, November 1
- Announcements
- Speaker: Bianca Bielski (City Planner, City of Kingston)
  Prepare a briefing note for this talk
- Speaker: Mick Smith - Aesthetics, Landscape and Sustainability – Some Conceptual Issues
- Group Work on local environmental issue

Week 9, November 8
- Announcements
- Workshop: David Gordon (School of Urban and Regional Planning) on Waterfront Planning

Week 10, November 15
- Announcements
- Group Work and Progress Reports on local environmental issue
- Assignment 5: Symposium: Third meeting – a review of planning and progress - reports

Week 11, November 22
- Announcements
- Assignment 3 due (Newspaper article)
- Final Presentations on local environmental issue to a panel of “clients”
PART 3  SYMPOSIUM

Week 12, November 29
  • Assignment 5: Symposium – group work

Week 13, January 10
  • Announcements
  • Assignment 5: Symposium: Fourth meeting – a review of planning and progress - reports

Week 14, January 17 – no scheduled class
Week 15, January 24 – no scheduled class
Week 16, January 31 - Class Optional – free time for Symposium planning

Week 17, February 7: Symposium

MARKS
The assignment of marks for ENSC 410* is as follows:

Individual Work (30%):
  Short oral presentation 10
  Briefing Notes on guest presentations (throughout the course) 10
  Newspaper article 10

Group Work (70%):
  Local project
    Forum presentations 15
    Reports 15
  Symposium 40

TOTAL 100
Assignment:
To prepare briefing notes for some invited speakers. Briefing notes will be written by each student and submitted immediately after each talk.

Purpose:
To give you practice in summarizing complex or lengthy presentations in a form that could be understood by someone who was not there - i.e. a briefing for a supervisor or colleague. This is not the same as taking notes for a course or simply repeating the talk verbatim.

Essential elements:
1. who spoke?
2. what was the topic area or title?
3. what were the main points? Were there any points contested by the audience?
4. in a nutshell, what did it all mean and were there contradictions or common features in previous talks?
5. YOUR NAME, AT THE TOP OR BOTTOM!

Format:
One page or less, hand-written précis (300 word maximum) on technical talks by our guest speakers in the Fall semester. `Bullets’ are allowed, but we also require an integrative summary statement (about 200 words maximum). Choose the important points, not every point!

Marking:
Your briefing note will be marked and returned the following week. There will be four talks, worth a total of 10% of your final mark, with emphasis on items 3 & 4 above.
ENSC 410* - 2003/04- Assignment 2- ORAL PRESENTATION

Assignment:
To present a talk about an environmental issue. This should be the same issue that you have selected for your newspaper article (assignment 3).

Purpose:
To give you practice in oral presentations of technical information, and to help you summarize the information for assignment 3.

Format:
For the oral presentation, time is limited to ten minutes followed by two minutes of discussion. A maximum of four overhead transparencies may be used in the talk. For this exercise, we will not allow use of Computer Projected Powerpoint, or equivalent, slides. However, this is an important aid to presentations and we will encourage its use in subsequent group projects. Evaluation, done by students, TA's and instructors, will be concerned with both content and style of the presentation – and will draw on student generated discussion in week 1. The talk should describe the main features of a specific environmental issue, and identify questions that must be answered for a better understanding or for resolving the issue. The talk should have an introduction outlining your subject and what aspects you will address, the main body in which you describe the issue and the unknowns, and a summary where you draw together the information succinctly.

Please confirm your topic with the TA by September 27th.

Due date: Oct 4th or 18th

Value: 10% of final mark in course
Assignment: In this assignment we ask you to tackle the challenge of writing a newspaper article that provides analysis of a newsworthy environmental topic. We suggest that you use the same topic that you use for Assignment 2 (Oral presentation). However, if you decide to change your topic, please discuss this with the TA.

Purpose:  
- To practice writing succinctly for a lay audience.  
- To develop a critical approach to environmental reporting.

Many people rely on newspaper or magazine articles for information on environmental issues, and form their opinions based on those sources. Newspaper reporters and journalists have a large responsibility to present these issues in an accurate and balanced way. Do they succeed? Do you have confidence that the articles that you read provide enough factual detail and explain both sides of controversial issues? Do researchers make enough effort to explain their work to the public? Have you ever read an article on a topic on which you have first-hand knowledge and thought you could do better? Are there environmental topics that you feel strongly about but rarely see discussed in the newspaper? Here’s your chance! Your article may even be selected for publication in The Kingston Whig-Standard.

Format: Writing for a newspaper is different than writing for your professors or classmates. Firstly, it is important to ensure that the writing is clear and accessible. Complex concepts must be explained succinctly and accurately to an audience with varying educational backgrounds. Technical jargon must be avoided. It is critically important that the information is presented in a balanced manner. As well, the material must be lively and engaging; you need to persuade your reader to continue past the headline, past the first paragraph and hopefully to the end of the piece. Finally, you need to get your message across in very few words. Most newspaper reports are very brief and the limits are strictly enforced. We are asking you to write an “in-depth” or “backgrounder” article of 800 words or less that might appear as an op-ed piece or in a weekend edition so that you have a chance to develop the topic. You may choose a topic that interests you (but not one that you have researched for other courses). You may use a ‘real’ newspaper article as a starting point, but this is not necessary. As most professional journalists will tell you, interviews are a critical part of many articles and we encourage you to conduct an interview with at least one knowledgeable
individual. This person may be an expert in the area, or they may be strongly involved in the issue. For example, if you were writing on genetically-modified foods, you might choose to interview a geneticist at the University, or a local farmer, or both.

*Please remember that interviews about technical subjects do not usually involve issues of privacy. In contrast, interviews about a person’s personal life (e.g. the environmental choices they make) risk invasion of privacy and require advance review and approval by Queen’s Research Ethics Board. Given the time required for such a review, we strongly recommend that you avoid interviews on personal issues.*

Details: **Please hand in two versions of your article, both versions double-spaced.**

(1) **The article as it would appear in print.**
   Include a headline, Illustrations not necessary

(2) **An annotated version, indicating:**
   The sources quoted
   How you simplified technical jargon or difficult concepts.

**Maximum length: 800 words**
**Due date: 7 pm, Nov 22 in class**
**Value: 10% of final mark in course**
CLASS EXERCISE:
HOW TO MAKE AN ORAL PRESENTATION

Purpose: To explore what makes a good oral presentation as a guide to getting the best possible mark in your oral assignment

Approach: Break into four groups
1. Two groups (A & B) will spend 20 minutes “brain-storming” on what makes a bad lecture
2. Two groups (C & D) will spend 20 minutes “brain-storming” on what makes a great lecture
3. Groups A and C will spend 20 minutes collaborating on a list of “Top 10 recommendations for making an oral presentation”
4. Groups B and D will spend 20 minutes collaborating on a list of “Top 10 recommendations for making an oral presentation”
5. All groups will take a 10 minute break while the “scribes” prepare an overhead
6. The combined groups will each make a five minute presentation on their recommendations (remember to follow your own advice!)

First group activity (20 minutes)
• Introduce yourselves to each other
• Someone volunteer to be the facilitator and a second person to be the “scribe”
• Everyone “brainstorm” by writing their top three ideas on three “sticky notes” (5 minutes)
• Post these
• Review to group “like” ideas
• Create a priority list - rank from top to bottom in importance

Combined group activity (20 minutes)
• Compare lists - How many “Don’t do’s” can be balanced by a “Do”?
• For orphan problems, is there a recommended fix?
• For orphan recommendations, is there a real problem?
• Re-rank to identify your top 10 problems with associated solutions
• Prepare a handwritten overhead with “bullets”

Break: Scribes complete the overheads
Plenary (10 minutes) Appoint a “spokesperson” to briefly present your top 10 list - volunteers needed!
ENSC 410* – Assignment 5
Symposium: Subject to be decided by the class

**Assignment:**
To work in groups to design, plan and stage a one-day symposium the environment issues associated with the class’s chosen topic.

**Purpose:**
To provide experience in:

- working in large groups
- organizing a major public event
- interacting with suppliers, support staff, banks, donors and experts in the subject matter
- budgeting and managing finances for a complex undertaking
- project management

**Format:**
The class will work together in teams to organize and run a symposium to be held in the Biosciences Atrium and adjoining classrooms on February 7th, 2004. The elements include selection of specific themes; recruitment of speakers; selection of venues; organization of symposium format and schedules, refreshments, social events, travel, and advertising; and financial management, including preparation of a budget and financial statements as well as fund raising. The group must decide on how it will organize and manage itself, who will have what responsibility, and how it will meet and communicate on a regular basis. Both oral and written progress reports are required, as is a final summary report that describes successes, failures, and final accounting. See the “working schedule” listing report deadlines.

**Marking:**
The marks will count for 40% of your final mark and will be assigned by the instructors in consultation with the TA. Marks will recognize the quality of the final product, as well as the success of the team in working together and the quality of the planning. Participation journals will be considered in the marking.
ENSC 410* Symposium Work Schedule

September 22nd  Introduction and first organizational meeting.

*Progress reports will be required on three occasions, both as an oral presentation and as a brief written report.*

October 18th  First progress reports (oral and written) – emphasis on sub-theme selection, committee structure and membership, tasks assigned to each committee and initial plans for the symposium. We would like a report from each committee. Participation journals will be discussed.

November 15th  Second progress reports (oral and written) – program, speakers, fund raising, etc. Again there should be a report from each committee and different speakers from the previous time. First instalments of individual participation journals are due.

November 29th  Planning meeting.

January 10th  Third progress reports – (oral and written) completion of planning, progress on organization, financial status, etc.

January 12, 19, 26  Meeting of committee chairs or spokespersons with instructors – last minute details or problems.

February 7  Symposium!

February 27  Final report, including participation journals due.

**ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE**

- No fixed model – it is your task to design an effective committee structure
- Need to be able to communicate with instructors and with other committees
- All students need to participate fully in planning and producing the symposium
INTERIM AND FINAL REPORTS

- Progress reports (both oral and written) are required on three occasions as well as a final written report
- These should demonstrate progress, identify work remaining, identify barriers to progress (and potential solutions) and stimulate discussion between groups
- Oral: You decide on the format – approximately 50 minutes total for oral presentations. We want to hear from all members of the class by the end of the three reporting sessions.
- Written: 2-5 pages double-spaced, first reports are expected to be shorter

WHEN?

October 18th
- Draft plans and budgets
- Description of organizational structure, lists of committees and committee chairs

November 29th
- Final plans and budgets including list of revenue and expenses
- Progress towards objectives, work remaining
- Problems encountered, etc.
- Participation journals need to be handed in

January 10th
- Updated plans, detailed budgets
- Progress, problems
- Detailed schedule for remaining work
- Contingency plans for bad weather, missing speakers, etc.

January 17, 24, 31
- Additional opportunities for meeting with instructors and TA
BUDGETS

• Need for adequate resources to support the style and content of the event
• Identify sources and uses of funds, and the need for, and extent of, fund raising
• Framework for planning, reporting, financial accountability

ACCOUNTABILITY

• Exert control on all expenditures – communicate the budget
• Keep receipts & record expenses up to date
• Issue receipts for funds received & record income

FUND RAISING

• School - $750 (seed money)
• Fund raising = Budget - $750
• Remember that you are representing your class, the School, Queen’s University
• All excess funds revert to the School

SYMPOSIUM MARK (40%)

(20%) – Progress and Final summary reports including participation journals
(20%) – The quality of the symposium and the success of the team in working together

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

1. ORGANIZATION
   a. Did things run smoothly?
   b. How well were crises handled?

2. TIMING
   a. Was the time well used?
   b. Were the organizers prepared for each stage?

3. QUALITY OF PROGRAM
   a. Were the speakers well chosen?
b. Introductory remarks: Was there a clear message about the purpose and environmental theme of the symposium?
c. Is it clear that the students learned the issues and transmitted that knowledge?
d. Introduction and “thank you’s” for speakers
e. How well were questions from the audience managed?

4. WAS THERE OBVIOUS CARE AND PLANNING?
   a. Advertising
   b. Welcome and registration
   c. Set-up and posters
   d. Food and food service
   e. A-V services

5. AFTERWARDS
   a. Clean-up and disassembly
   b. 

6. REPORT
   a. Should describe: successes, failures, and final financial accounts.
   b. Part 1: 10-15 pages long; includes contributions from all sub-groups (with names on the sub-group section) – due Friday February 27.
   c. Part 2: finance report; a table of accounts, a written description, and a cheque made out to the School for any residual funds – due Friday February 27
   d. Final individual Participation Journals due Feb 27