
ENVS*6900 - Research Seminar in Environmental Sciences

Winter 2026 Course Outline

Section: 01

Credits: 0.50

Land Acknowledgement: Guelph

The University of Guelph resides on the ancestral lands of the Attawandaron people and the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We recognize the significance of the Dish with One Spoon Covenant to this land and offer respect to our Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Métis neighbours. Today, this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and acknowledging them reminds us of our important connection to this land where we work and learn.

Calendar Description

This course provides information and training in scientific presentations for thesis-based Environmental Sciences (ENVS) programs. Students will prepare a written research proposal and make an oral presentation of their proposed studies. Students are expected to complete this course in their second or third semester of study.

Restriction(s): Restricted to Environmental Sciences MSc and PhD students.

Department(s): School of Environmental Sciences

Lecture Schedule

Th 2:30pm-5:20pm in ROZH*108 (1/5 to 4/21)

Instructor Information

Simone Haerri

Email: shaerri@uoguelph.ca

Naresh Thevathasan

Email: nthevath@uoguelph.ca

Learning Resources

CourseLink

The instructors use CourseLink (<https://courselink.uoguelph.ca>) for posting class announcements, lecture slides, grades and other required and recommended materials that is relevant to this course. Please check CourseLink at least once a day.

If you need any assistance with the software tools or the CourseLink website, contact CourseLink Support.

Email: courselink@uoguelph.ca

Tel: 519-824-4120 ext. 56939 Toll-Free (CAN/USA): 1-866-275-1478

Campus Resources

If you are concerned about any aspect of your academic program: Make an appointment with a Program Counsellor (<https://www.uoguelph.ca/uaic/programcounsellors/>) in your degree program. If you are struggling to succeed academically: There are numerous academic resources offered by the Learning Commons (<https://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/using-library/spaces/learning-commons/>) including, Supported Learning Groups for a variety of courses, workshops related to time management, taking multiple choice exams, and general study skills.

Cost of Textbooks and Learning Resources

There are no costs for textbooks or learning resources.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Synthesize relevant literature to create context for your proposed research.
2. Develop hypotheses and/or objectives that clearly provide you with the necessary framework to develop your written and oral research proposal.
3. Evaluate your research methodology and work out necessary details to ensure your experimental methods will be appropriate to test your hypotheses.
4. Present and defend your research ideas orally and in writing to instructors and peers in a professional manner as a scientist.
5. Justify the impact of your research to your research field and to the general public
6. Develop the ability to assess your skills and set goals that are consistent with career opportunities in your field.
7. Critique and evaluate research presentations in a constructive manner regardless of discipline.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

| Day | Date: | Topic | Activities | Due |
|-----|-------|---|---|---|
| Thu | 1/8 | Introductions Course and assignment overview | | |
| Thu | 1/15 | Review of Individual Development Plan (Emmanuelle Arnaud) How to give an impactful scientific presentation "Storyboard" your presentation | | |
| Thu | 1/22 | Writing a strong proposal Library workshop (TBD) Discuss your literature gap | | |
| Thu | 1/29 | Student oral presentations | | Wednesday 1/28: Oral presentation slides for students presenting during week 4 |
| Thu | 2/5 | IDP check-in (Emmanuelle Arnaud) Student oral presentations | IDP (During January/February): Complete Steps 1, 2, 3 and Appendix A of your IDP; look for a mentor; save skills assessment summary | Wednesday 2/4: Oral presentation slides for students presenting during week 5 |
| Thu | 2/12 | How to Read, Review and Write Scientific Papers Importance of visual representation of methodology | | Friday 2/13: Literature review |
| Thu | 2/19 | Winter Break | | |
| Thu | 2/26 | Importance of knowledge transfer/science communication | | |
| Thu | 3/5 | In-class peer discussion on methodology | | Wednesday 3/4: Submission of graphical/visual methodology |
| Thu | 3/12 | Research Ethics in the Broad Sense | | Monday 3/9: Submission of peer assessment (part of methodology grade) |
| Thu | 3/19 | Research seminar presentations by students | | Wednesday 3/19: Submission of slides of research seminar for students presenting this week Tuesday 3/17: IDP - Submit notes from your informational interview (step 2) |
| Thu | 3/26 | Research seminar presentations by students | | Tuesday 3/24: IDP - Meeting with mentor to discuss IDP, complete step 4 in your IDP Wednesday 3/25: Submission of slides of research seminar for students presenting this week |

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| Thu | 4/2 | Knowledge transfer/science communication presentations | Wednesday 4/1: Submission KT/science communication assignment Friday 4/3: Final IDP submission |
| Thu | 4/9 | | Friday 4/10: Proposal submission |

Lab / Seminar Schedule

There will be time during certain weeks to add topics that are of interest to you. Please let us know if there are any topics in relation to graduate school and graduate research that you would like to discuss with your instructors.

Assessment Breakdown

| Description | Weighting (%) | Due Date |
|--|---------------|---------------------|
| Oral presentation (background and hypotheses/objectives) | 10% | Week 4 or 5 |
| Literature review | 10% | Week 6 |
| Methodology infographics and peer discussion | 10% | Week 8 |
| Research seminar | 20% | Week 10 or 11 |
| Science Communication/Knowledge Transfer | 15% | Week 12 |
| Written proposal | 35% | Week 13 (Exam week) |
| IDP | Pass/Fail | |

Assessment Details

Presentation

Oral presentation

10

This first round of presentation will focus on the background and hypotheses/objectives of your research. This will allow you to practice your oral presentation skills and get feedback on your hypotheses for your literature review.

Course Learning Outcomes Assessed: 1, 2, 4

Literature Review

Literature review

10

You will submit your literature review and your objectives/hypotheses. This will eventually be part of your final research proposal. You will get feedback from your instructors so you can improve for the final presentation and proposal.

Course Learning Outcomes Assessed: 1, 2, 4

Assignment

Methodology infographics and peer review

10

You will create a visual/graphical representation of your methodology that fit your objectives/hypotheses. You will then present and explain your methodology in-class to one of your peers. You will then discuss your methodology. Your peer will submit a short peer assessment form assessing your methodology. The peer aspect will count 40% towards the methodology grade, your graphical representation 60%.

Course Learning Outcomes Assessed: 3, 4, 7

Science Communication/Knowledge Transfer

15

Create a science communication/knowledge transfer "piece" using a media type of your choice and highlighting the impact of your research for the general public.

Course Learning Outcomes Assessed: 4, 5

Presentation

Research seminar

20

Present your proposed research to your peers. We will also invite your supervisor and whoever else who wants to join and listen. You will be able to apply your feedback from the first presentation, your literature review, and your methodology for this presentation.

Course Learning Outcomes Assessed: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7

Research Proposal

Written proposal

35

Your full written research proposal that incorporates the feedback of all previously submitted parts.

Course Learning Outcomes Assessed: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Assignment

IDP

The IDP (Individual Development Plan) will be introduced by Dr. Emmanuelle Arnaud at the start of the course. It will include various activities that need to be completed during this semester.

Course Learning Outcomes Assessed: 6

Last Day to Drop Course

The final day to drop Winter 2026 courses without academic penalty is the last day of classes: April 06

After this date, a mark will be recorded, whether course work is completed or not (a zero is assigned for missed tests/assignments). This mark will show on the student's transcript and will be calculated into their average.

Course Grading Policies

Submission of Assignments

Assignments are to be submitted online via D2L before midnight on the due date.

Late Assignment

Assignments handed-in late, for which an extension has not been granted ahead of time, will lose 10 marks (out of 100) per day late (or part thereof). For example, if you receive an 85% on your assignment but you submitted one day late, you will receive a 75% instead. Assignments submitted one week (or later) after the due date will not be accepted. If you require an extension on an assignment, you must have a valid reason and contact Dr. Haerri or Dr. Thevathasan in advance of the due date.

Extensions will be considered for medical reasons or other extenuating circumstances.

Course Standard Statements

Plagiarism Software - Turnitin

In this course, your instructors will be using Turnitin, integrated with the CourseLink Dropbox tool, to detect possible plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration or copying as part of the ongoing efforts to maintain academic integrity at the University of Guelph. All submitted assignments will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site. All assignments will be screened, but you will only have access to your Turnitin score if you contact the instructor at least two days before the due date.

Use of Generative AI

Students may use generative AI for [editing, translating, outlining, brainstorming, revising, etc.] their work throughout the course so long as the use of generative AI is referenced and cited following citation instructions given below. Use of generative AI outside the stated use or without citation will constitute academic misconduct. It is the student's responsibility to be clear on the limitations for use and to be clear on the expectations for citation and reference and to do so appropriately.

- "[Generative AI tool]. (YYYY/MM/DD of prompt). "Text of prompt". Generated using [Name of Tool.] Website of tool"
- e.g., "ChatGPT4. (2023/05/31). "Suggest a cookie recipe that combines oatmeal, chocolates chips, eggs and sugar." Generated using OpenAI's ChatGPT. <https://chat.openai.com> (<https://chat.openai.com/>)"

Standard Statements for Graduate Courses

Academic Integrity

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/academic-misconduct/>) is outlined in the Graduate Calendar.

Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 10 business days in advance, and no later than the first business day in November, March or July as appropriate for the semester. Similarly, new or changed accommodations for online quizzes, tests and exams must be approved at least a week ahead of time. For students at the Guelph campus, information can be found on the SAS website. (<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas/>)

Accommodation of Religious Obligations

If you are unable to meet an in-course requirement due to religious obligations, please email the course instructor within two weeks of the start of the semester to make alternate arrangements.

See the Academic calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Accommodation of Religious Obligations (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/academic-accommodation-religious-obligations/>)

Copies of Out-of-class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Drop Date

Courses that are one semester long must be dropped by the end of the last day of classes; two-semester courses must be dropped by the last day of classes in the second semester. The regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/registration/>) dropping courses are available in the Graduate Calendar (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/registration/>).

Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

Health and Wellbeing

The University of Guelph provides a wide range of health and wellbeing services at the Vaccarino Centre for Student Wellness (<https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/>). If you are concerned about your mental health and not sure where to start, connect with a Student Wellness Navigator (<https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/navigators/>) who can help develop a plan to manage and support your mental health or check out our mental wellbeing resources. (<https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/shine-this-year/>) The Student Wellness team are here to help and welcome the opportunity to connect with you.

Illness

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g., final exam or major assignment).

Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources

The Academic Calendars (<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/?index>) are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the Graduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/grounds-academic-consideration/>).