

ECON 2713 COINT: Economics of the Natural Environment

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Syllabus

Course Overview

Welcome to Economics 2713: The Economics of the Natural Environment, through Open Acadia. This course is primarily designed to build upon core tools developed in a principles of economics or principles of microeconomics course, and use those tools to talk logically and clearly about how our economy - how we produce things - interacts with our natural surroundings. Now more than ever, the issues of environmental economics are on the front page. As I write this, Canadian negotiators are heading home from the Paris climate accords with a mandate to reduce greenhouse gas emissions - but with as of yet no indication how Canada will tackle that challenge.

We first spend a little time on some tools you might, hopefully, faintly recollect from your previous exposure to microeconomics. We spend some time building those back up to scratch, and try to emphasize how the mechanism of the market is at play. What are the virtues of the market? How can government intervene in a market? Who wins and who loses from a change to a marketplace? Probably unlike your principles course, though, we make a point of dedicating some serious time early in the course to understanding goods that aren't traded in a market. Just because a sunset or clean air or many other environmental goods aren't traded in markets doesn't mean they're not important.

With these tools in hand, we tackle many of the environmental problems facing us as a society. We analyze the choice between carbon taxes and cap-and-trade schemes. We talk about government provision of what we'll call 'public goods' that we all collectively enjoy, like clean water and biodiversity. We discuss the management of fisheries and the politics of regulation. We examine the biggest issues - how society and the market uses finite natural resources today and how we save them for the future, to the smallest issues - for example, whether or not a tiny project to protect a few birds is worth investing in.

Having slogged through all that, the course concludes with a paper. It's important that you practice developing a voice of your own and the ability to take economic insights, economic logic, economic models that you're exposed to within this course or elsewhere, and articulate those thoughts to others. Between all that, I have a lot of hope you'll find this course a worthwhile experience.

Instructor

Hi there. My name is Andrew Davis, an assistant professor of economics here at Acadia University. I joined the Acadia faculty over the summer of 2014 and have been teaching and researching here ever since. I hold a B.Sc. from Memorial University, and received my Ph.D. in economics from the University of Rochester in 2014. My research specialties revolve around - for the most part - macroeconomics, labour markets, and personal finance. However, I'm always interested in discussing environmental economics in the classroom or online since our natural environment forms such a core part of our existence, and I've enjoyed the opportunities I've had to spread the message of what economists can contribute to the discussion. I hope you enjoy the course!

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Course Materials

The main text for this course is written by Peter Berck and Gloria Helfand, entitled 'The Economics of the Environment' (ISBN-13: 9780321321664). We'll cover 80% of what's in that book, so don't feel like you're throwing money away by investing in it. I don't get a cut for selling copies - I think it's the best text out there for what the course is trying to achieve. See the [student handbook](#) for ordering information. If you have a text lying around that you used in a principles of microeconomics course, though, hang on to it - it'll be useful for extra practice and for a second take on some of the material.

Beyond the text, the course contains a variety of audio slides that I've put together and narrated, a few videos of me doing examples when we hit some of the more technical parts of the course, and many other documents, links, videos, stories, etc, that I've created or found in my time teaching environmental economics. To access library articles and journals from off-campus, use the [VPN](#) web service link for direct access - though I've tried to minimize the number of paywalls you might encounter in exploring the content in the course.

Evaluation

Here's the three components which form the evaluation scheme for the course.

Assignments	20%
Paper	20%
Final Exam	60%

The assignments are delivered to the instructor via assignment drop-boxes. Please remember to put your name, student number, course number, and assignment number on the assignment and keep a copy in the event the original is lost. The last assignment should be received at least 4 weeks prior to the date you wish to write the exam. This will allow adequate processing time for the request, and for setting the exam. I strongly prefer to receive assignment files in .pdf format.

Writing a paper is a mandatory part of this course, for (at least) two reasons. One, it's important to develop some ability to talk about these issues in a style that's readable and understandable by someone without training in economics - while still basing your positions and arguments in solid economic logic. Two, I can't possibly hope to cover every environmental issue you personally find interesting, so

take the opportunity to explore something you're genuinely interested in.

The final exam is a comprehensive one that covers the entirety of the material and I make no apologies for it being worth the majority of the grade. The exam is a closed book exam. You are allowed a basic, non-graphical calculator and extra blank paper. No notes, computer, phones, etc, will be allowed. You have three hours for the final.

Course Schedule

Click to download the suggested schedule for this course: [ECON 2713 COINT - Suggested Schedule](#)

Print out this schedule and fill in your start date to use the recommended timeline to plan out when you will do readings and assignments. This is a tool to help you plan and time manage this course. If you get off-track, make sure to revisit your schedule and re-evaluate the dates you've set for yourself.

You have 6 months to complete this course. You may set your own schedule, but if you intend to complete the course in less than 2 months, you should let me know so that we can arrange a schedule. In the classroom, this course is delivered over a normal semester, with the expectation that students are taking four other courses. The recommended schedule is set to correspond to a standard 14-week term.

Please do not leave all of your course work until a few weeks before your completion date. Although I will make every effort to accommodate your schedule within reason, I need time to grade assignments and mark exams.

Quick Overview: Recommended Schedule

Week 1-2	Module 1
Week 3-4	Module 2
Week 5-7	Module 3
Week 8-9	Module 4
Week 10-12	Module 5
Week 13-14	Module 6

Exam

How to apply: Fill out the form 'Apply to write the Final Exam' link in the final module of your course.

Proctored at Acadia

- The final exam in an online course must be passed to successfully pass the course unless otherwise stated in the assessment section of the course syllabus. There are no rewrites or supplemental examinations at Acadia University.
- Examination requests must be received 14 days or 2 weeks prior to the date you wish to write your examination.
- Course requirements must be completed to the satisfaction of your instructor.
- Graduating Students Note: If you are graduating in Spring Convocation you must write by April 15th. If you are graduating in the Fall you must write by September 15th.

Proctored at Another Location

If it isn't practical to take your exam at Acadia, off-campus exams can be written at another university or college. Arrangements for an examination may be made through the Registrar's Office or the Continuing Education office of most universities and colleges. If it is not possible to write your exam at an approved institution, please contact us for assistance.

- All fees associated with examinations written at other locations are your responsibility.
- Some courses may require specific software or internet accessibility at the off-campus examination location.

Student Handbook

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity demands responsible use of the work of other scholars. It is compromised by academic dishonesty such as cheating and plagiarism. A student who is uncertain whether or not a course of action might constitute cheating or plagiarism should seek in advance the advice of the instructor involved.

- Cheating is copying or the use of unauthorized aids or the intentional falsification or invention of information in any academic exercise
- Plagiarism is the act of presenting the ideas or words of another as one's own. Students are required to acknowledge and document the sources of ideas that they use in their written work.
- Self-plagiarism is also a form of plagiarism. It is the presentation of the same work in more than one course without the permission of the instructors involved.
- A student who knowingly helps another to commit an act of academic dishonesty is equally guilty.
- Penalties are levied in relation to the degree of the relevant infraction. They range from requiring the student to re-do the piece of work, through failure on that piece of work, to failure in the course, and to dismissal from the university.

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[◀ Course Introduction Video](#)

[ECON 2713 Suggested Schedule ▶](#)

 [Help and documentation](#)

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