**BIOL 411 Global Change Biology Media Presentation Group Seminar final synthesis assignment**

This assignment is centred on the following goal:

**Create an original, cohesive, engaging synthesis media presentation to promote some new global change biology insight or idea that you have learned in this course, which is worth communicating to a wider audience in terms of helping humanity to either better understand, cope with, and/or address global change issues.**

It is a true ‘synthesis’ exercise in that students could choose to relate one or more of any of the course learning outcomes to this assignment. To remind you, those outcomes are that by the end of the course the student should be able to:

1. Explain and contrast the major global environmental issues that our civilisation faces.
2. Identify and organize the principal interactions among the major global change issues that ramify their impacts by developing and applying an over-arching conceptual framework.
3. Describe the patterns and causes of previous civilisations’ rises and falls to appraise our current global environmental predicament within an historical context.
4. Summarize the impacts of western ‘progress’-based, individualist, and capitalist ideologies on humanity’s relationship with the rest of the nature, and contrast those with the more holistic ideologies of Indigenous and eastern cultures.
5. Use concepts such as Progress trap, Global Planetary Boundaries, The Anthropocene, Deep Ecology, Socio-Ecological Stewardship, and Complex Adaptive Systems to discuss, evaluate, and critique potential solutions for addressing individual global change issues.
6. Identify and analyze the fundamental biological root causes of our civilisation’s current environmental predicament, and use that assessment to develop lasting personal solutions for coping with, and constructively responding to, the major global change issues of the 21st century.

The exercise is aimed at encouraging you to reflect on all the global change biology concepts, ideas, and knowledge you have encountered in this course and evaluate which ones you think are most valuable to communicate to the wider public. Which ones do you think other people (e.g. students who have not taken this course, friends, family, the broader public) most need to know about? Working in groups of 3 people (sign-up sheet on the course OneDrive), you will meet and discuss those concepts, ideas or knowledge pieces that were the most inspiring, challenging and novel to you. Your top choice is likely to be worthy of broader communication, and that’s then your task in the assignment! Once you have decided on your top choice, your group will then generate a short media audio podcast or video to communicate that global change biology insight or idea to others.

**Outline presentation plan:**

Please email me an outline plan for your presentation by 10 pm on the evening of **Thursday, March 23rd** at the latest – earlier that week would be great. You can include as little or as much as you want – just the core global change biology idea or insight that you will focus on and some simple bullet points or short sections of draft text to describe the structure and content of your presentation, and any queries you may have on which you want feedback from me. Please make all text double-spaced. I will work through these outline drafts and provide feedback, and plan to return these in class on Friday March 24th. These initial drafts will be worth 10% of your course grade and will be marked for ‘depth of thought’ (i.e. on the basis of ‘perceptiveness’ and ‘relevance’ – just like your seminar questions). Treat the outline submission primarily as a way to get feedback on your best ideas and original thinking – especially on the content and wording of your main focus idea or insight.

**Final presentation grading criteria:**

Media presentations will be graded as a group exercise according to the following criteria:

1. Quality of the focus global change biology idea or insight in terms of its importance in helping humanity to either better understand, cope with, and/or address global change issues
2. Audience engagement potential -its likelihood of convincing a broad public audience of the particular special value of understanding your insight or idea
3. Evidence of independent critical thinking and originality in the concepts and linkages portrayed
4. Presentation structure, clarity and effectiveness – logical flow
5. Appeal to a broad audience - presentation creativity and energy

Please pay attention to the above criteria very carefully - They tell you what we are looking for! - An interesting, inspiring, and engaging media presentation that is likely to appeal to a broad audience, and to impress that audience of the particular value of knowing more about your particular choice of novel idea or insight. Dominic and I will grade them independently, but each group will also be asked to grade the other eight presentations.

**Timeline:**

The final presentations should be emailed to groganp@queensu.ca by 10 pm on **Thursday April 6th**. Big files can be uploaded directly to the course OneDrive folder, or you could use Dropbox. Dominic and I will be available to help as needed at the end of all prior seminar sessions, and especially over the full sessions on Friday March 24th and Tuesday March 28th which are otherwise free (i.e. these timeslots are intended to be brain-storming/production sessions; there are no scheduled seminars that week).

**Final presentation grading:**

* In grading the final presentations, each group should watch the presentation together and agree on a letter scale grade separately for each of the 5 criteria listed above. I anticipate that the range of grades you will assign for each criterion within each group will range from C+ to A+. Note that assigning identical or very similar high grades across each criterion, and/or across the groups is not being fair to those whose presentations really excelled – i.e. if you have some really, really good ones, then you probably should also have some weaker presentations too.
* As a group, I also want you to write 3-4 brief sentences of feedback (in the dedicated excel grading sheet that I will circulate to you), indicating the particularly strong and the weaker aspects of the presentation. Constructive criticism will be very helpful and much appreciated by your colleagues (- and will be circulated to them anonymously after the course). Please send me your assessment of all of the presentations (in the attached excel spreadsheet) as soon as you get them all completed, but definitely not later than 10 pmon **Thursday, April 13th**. On the basis of the other class groups’ assessments of the presentations, and my own and Dominic’s independent marking, a final grade will be awarded (probably the mean of the three) which will be worth 30% of your overall course grade.

Notes:

1. The presentation should be typically 3 minutes in length, and definitely no more than 5 minutes.
2. If you have other ideas of how to present such material in recorded media form (e.g. infographics, artwork, etc.), I am very open to considering your suggestions.
3. Review the student-led global change biology seminars and associated papers from the main part of the course as potential sources of inspiration, but do also check out the posted PDFs for Paul’s initial seminars along with the associated readings and films. Your journal notes from all of the above should be very helpful in this exercise, as well as the sources in the Course Reference list, and the potential f the Web of Science database.

Media presentation preparation skills training links that should be helpful:

<https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/tips_how_to/video-production-media-arts-toolkit/>

<https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/tips_how_to2/audio-recording-media-arts-toolkit/>