

## **POL377H1F Topics in Comparative Politics**

### **Capitalism, Fossil Fuels, and Climate Change**

Session: Summer (May/June) 2018

Time and Place: Monday and Wednesdays 4-6pm, Room LM 157

Instructor: Nathan Lemphers ([nathan.lemphers@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:nathan.lemphers@mail.utoronto.ca))

Office Hours/Location: 2-4pm Wednesdays, TBD

#### **Course Description**

Climate change is not simply an environmental problem for which there is a technological solution. The roots of climate change are inextricably linked to the international political economy of the fossil fuel industry and the current global economic system. This course examines the interactions between capitalism, fossil fuel extraction and use, and climate change. Students will learn about the political economy of fossil fuels and how the enmeshment of capitalism and fossil fuel use has led to the current climate crisis. Particular focus will be given to cases of wealthy, liberal democracies with major fossil fuel industries, namely: Australia, Canada, Norway, and the United States.

A central goal of this course is to engage and empower students to critically understand why existing climate policies remain largely inadequate and what ideas, interests and institutional arrangements must change if the worst of climate change is to be avoided.

More specifically this course will cover the following topics:

- Conceptions of fossil fuel dependence
- The economic histories of fossil fuels
- Neoliberal capitalism and the growth imperative
- Staples theory and Resource Curse theory
- Corporate responses to climate change
- Regulatory capture
- The role of the fossil fuel industry in shaping climate and energy policy institutions
- The role of ideas in shaping climate policy debates
- Opportunities to move forward on climate policy

**Learning Objectives:** 1) to understand how capitalism, fossil fuel extraction and use, and climate change intersect (content) 2) to critically examine these arguments and develop your own informed and reasoned positions (analysis) 3) to share these positions via a research essay, critical reflection and class discussion (communication).

## Course Requirements

No previous study on climate change or political economy is necessary or assumed.

The pre-requisite for this course is 1.0 full course equivalents in political science.

Some course sessions are more reading intensive than others, with an average of around 70 pages of reading per meeting. The assignments and final exam will require familiarity with the course readings, as well as with the substantive material covered in the lectures. Students thinking of enrolling in the course should keep this in mind.

While I will deliver a brief lecture during class, there will be time for discussion - an opportunity for you to tackle the assigned readings with your fellow students. Come ready to discuss and ask questions. The material we are working through is difficult and it is normal not to understand it all. Class discussions will be a safe environment to ask both simple and tough questions.

Assignment	Grade Value	Due Date
Research Proposal	10%	May 23
Critical Reflection	15%	Rolling due dates
Mid-term Test	15%	May 28
Research Essay	30%	June 18
Final Exam	30%	June 20

### Research Proposal (10%)

This proposal is due on May 23 and must be uploaded to Blackboard. The purpose of this assignment is to get valuable instructor feedback before you submit your research essay. A list of three research questions will be shared with students by the second class. The proposal can help you select a research question, locate references, form a compelling thesis, and organize your ideas. Research proposals should be 2 to 3 double-spaced pages (not including bibliography). The proposal should a) identify your research question, b) outline what scholars have said or found on the topic, c) outline your basic argument, d) outline what data sources you will use to support your argument and answer the research question. In addition, include a one-page bibliography (using Author-Year (Harvard) reference format). You must draw on material from

this course and you can also choose to draw on additional material. There will be time during class to discuss the research proposal and essay assignment in detail.

### **Critical reflection (15%)**

You will need to write one critical reflection on a week's readings that will help inform a few discussion questions, which you will share with the class on the discussion board. I will send a sign-up sheet around on the first day of class for students to select which readings they will respond to.

Critical reflections will be no more than 2 double-spaced pages with a minimum 75% of the page reserved for the reflection and the remainder for a few discussion questions. Do not summarize the readings; rather, critically engage some aspect of the readings. Do you agree or disagree with the authors? How would you improve their argument? What are the major themes? Students must post their critical reflection to Blackboard no later than 5pm on the day prior to the class. These reflections will be marked on an ongoing basis. Additional research beyond the readings is not required.

To submit the reflection on the course Blackboard site, click on the discussion board and select the forum with the lecture topic that you have chosen and select "Create Thread." Label your new thread with a title that relates to your analysis. You can type your contribution directly into the message textbox or attach a file.

Every student should read others' submissions and come prepared with responses to the questions, or even with questions of their own. This will help you to more actively engage in class discussion.

### **Midterm test (15%)**

The midterm test will be cumulative up to and including the readings of Session 6. The format of the test will be short answer and short essay questions on material covered in readings and lectures.

### **Research Essay (30%)**

The research essay will be due on the last day of this class (June 18) and is the main deliverable for the course. You must upload this to Blackboard and Turnitin.com The purpose of the essay is to demonstrate your ability to apply the content you have learned in the course by responding to a research question. You will develop and test a thesis using well-referenced evidence. You can draw from, but are not limited to, the readings from this course.

The paper will be no shorter than 8 pages and no longer than 10 pages, double-spaced.

## **Final exam (30%)**

The final exam will cover all the material covered from the course and will take place in the exam period (date TBD). The exam format will consist of short answer and short essay questions.

## **Required Texts**

The following texts are required and can be purchased from through local bookstores or online retailers.

Klein, Naomi. (2014). *This Changes Everything: Capitalism v. the Climate*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Malm, Andreas. (2016). *Fossil Capital: The rise of steam power and the roots of global warming*. London: Verso.

Mitchell, Timothy. (2011). *Carbon Democracy: Political power in the age of oil*. London: Verso.

## **Important Administrative Dates**

Deadline to enrol in course: May 13

Victoria Day – no lecture: May 21

Deadline to drop course: June 5

Make-up Monday class (from Victoria Day): June 18

## **Lecture Outline and Reading Assignments**

### **May 7 - Session 1: Course Overview and Climate Change Science and Global Energy Trends**

*Readings – Skim only*

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. (2014). *Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report: Summary for Policymakers*. Retrieved from: [http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/AR5\\_SYR\\_FINAL\\_SPM.pdf](http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/AR5_SYR_FINAL_SPM.pdf)

International Energy Agency. (2016). *World Energy Outlook 2016*. Available online from University of Toronto Libraries.

IRENA. (2017). *REthinking Energy 2017: Accelerating the global energy transformation*. Retrieved from:

[http://www.irena.org/DocumentDownloads/Publications/IRENA\\_REthinking\\_Energy\\_2017.pdf](http://www.irena.org/DocumentDownloads/Publications/IRENA_REthinking_Energy_2017.pdf)

### *Additional Resources*

Documentary: Guggenheim, D. (Writer). (2006). *An Inconvenient Truth*. In L. Bender & S. Z. Burns (Producer). Narrated by Al Gore. Available from University of Toronto Libraries or online.

## **May 9 - Session 2: Conceptualizing Fossil Fuel Dependence**

### *Readings*

Clark, B., & York, R. (2005). Carbon metabolism: Global capitalism, climate change, and the biospheric rift. *Theory and Society*, 34, 391-428.

Malm, A. (2012). China as Chimney of the World: The Fossil Capital Hypothesis. *Organization & Environment*, 25(2), 146-177. doi:10.1177/1086026612449338

Wiedmann, T., & Minx, J. (2007). *A Definition of 'Carbon Footprint'*. Retrieved from:  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/252489707\\_A\\_Definition\\_of\\_'Carbon\\_Footprint](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/252489707_A_Definition_of_'Carbon_Footprint)

Unruh, G. C. (2000). Understanding carbon lock-in. *Energy Policy*, 28, 817-830.  
doi:10.1016/S0301-4215(00)00070-7

Video: Gaffney, O., & Pharand-Deschênes, F. (Writers). (2012). Welcome to the Anthropocene. In O. Gaffney & F. Pharand-Deschênes (Producer). Retrieved from:  
<https://vimeo.com/39048998> (3min)

Video: Prager University. (2015). Why You Should Love Fossil Fuel. Narrated by Alex Epstein, Center for Industrial Progress. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49Teja5YNCo> (5min)

## **May 14 - Session 3: Economic Histories of Fossil Fuel Development: Part One**

### *Readings*

Malm, A. (2016). *Fossil Capital: The rise of steam power and the roots of global warming*. London: Verso. Focus on Chapters 1, 2, 3, 16.

### *Additional Resources*

Yergin, D. (1990). *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Documentary: Yergin, D. (Writer). (1992). The Prize: An epic quest for oil, money, and power. In B. McDaid & J. T. Taplin (Producer): Mill Creek Entertainment.

## **May 16 - Session 4: Economic Histories of Fossil Fuel Development: Part Two**

Mitchell, T. (2011). *Carbon Democracy: Political power in the age of oil*. London: Verso. Focus on the Introduction, Chapters 1, 2 and the Conclusion.

### *Additional Resources*

Yergin, D. (2011). *The Quest: Energy, Security, and the Remaking of the Modern World*. London: Penguin Press.

**My 21 – Victoria Day – NO CLASS TODAY**

## **May 23 - Session 5: Neoliberal Capitalism and the Growth Imperative**

### ***Research proposal due***

#### *Readings*

- Klein, N. (2014). *This Changes Everything: Capitalism v. the Climate*. New York: Simon and Schuster. Chapter 2.
- Wright, C., & Nyberg, D. (2015). Creative self-destruction and the incorporation of critique in *Climate Change, Capitalism, and Corporations: Processes of Creative Self-Destruction* (pp. 28-46). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Available online from University of Toronto Libraries.
- Case Study: Adkin, L. E. (2016). Alberta's Neoliberal Environment (Chapter 3). In L. E. Adkin (Ed.), *First World Petro-Politics: The political ecology and governance of Alberta* (pp. 78-113). Toronto: University of Toronto Press. Available online from University of Toronto Libraries.

#### *Additional resources*

- Buttel, F. H. (2004). The Treadmill of Production. *Organization & Environment*, 17(3), 323-336. doi:10.1177/1086026604267938
- Spaargaren, G., & Mol, A. P. J. (1992). Sociology, Environment, and Modernity: Ecological Modernization as a Theory of Social Change. *Society and Natural Resources*, 5(4), 323-344.
- (Documentary) Lewis, A. (Writer). (2015). *This Changes Everything*. In K. L. Production & L. O. Films (Producer): Abramorama.

## **May 28 - Session 6: Staples Theory and the Carbon Trap**

### ***Mid-term Test***

#### *Readings*

- Haley, B. (2011). From Staples Trap to Carbon Trap: Canada's Peculiar Form of Carbon Lock-In. *Studies in Political Economy*, 88, 97-132.
- Kellogg, P. (2015). *Escape from the Staple Trap: Canadian Political Economy after Left Nationalism*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. Chapter 1. Available online from University of Toronto Libraries.
- Stanford, J. (Ed.) (2014). *The Staple Theory @ 50: Reflections on the Lasting Significance of Mel Watkins' "A Staple Theory of Economic Growth"*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Pages 5-28 (Part One) and 53-57.

#### *Additional Resources*

- Watkins, M. (1963). A Staple Theory of Economic Growth. *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, 29, 141-158.

Kellogg, P. (2015). *Escape from the Staple Trap: Canadian Political Economy after Left Nationalism*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. Chapters 7 and 8. Available online from University of Toronto Libraries.

### **May 30 - Session 7: Fossil Fuels and the Resource Curse**

#### *Readings*

Frankel, J. A. (2012). *The Natural Resource Curse: A Survey of Diagnoses and Some Prescriptions*. HKS Faculty Working Paper Series, RWP12-014, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. Retrieved from <https://dash.harvard.edu/handle/1/8694932>

Ross, M. (2015). What Have We Learned about the Resource Curse? *Annual Review of Political Science*, 18, 239-259. doi:10.1146/annurev-polisci-052213-040359

Friedrichs, J., & Inderwildi, O. R. (2013). The carbon curse: Are fuel rich countries doomed to high CO2 intensities? *Energy Policy*, 1-10. doi:10.1016/j.enpol.2013.07.076

#### *Additional Resources*

Haber, S., & Menaldo, V. (2011). Do Natural Resources Fuel Authoritarianism? A Reappraisal of the Resource Curse. *American Political Science Review*, 105, 1-26. doi:10.1017/S0003055410000584

Karl, T. L. (1997). *The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petro-States*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Pages 1-67. Part 1 Available online from University of Toronto Libraries.

### **June 4 - Session 8: Regulatory Capture**

#### ***Guest Lecture: Keith Stewart***

#### *Readings*

Carpenter, D., & Moss, D. A. (Eds.). (2014). *Preventing Regulatory Capture: Special Interest Influence and How to Limit it*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 2, and 10. Available online from University of Toronto Libraries.

Case Study: Campbell, B. (2014). *Willful Blindness? Regulatory Failures Behind the Lac-Mégantic Disaster*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Retrieved from: [https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2014/08/Willful\\_Blindness.pdf](https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2014/08/Willful_Blindness.pdf)

#### *Additional Resources*

Dal Bo, E. (2006). Regulatory Capture: A Review. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 22(2), 203-225. doi:10.1093/oxrep/grj013

Shapiro, S. A. (2012). The Complexity of Regulatory Capture: Diagnosis, Causality, and Remediation. *Roger Williams University Law Review*, 17, 221-257.

## **June 6 - Session 9: Corporate Responses to Climate Change**

### *Readings*

- Dauvergne, P., & Lister, J. (2014). *Eco-Business: A Big Brand Takeover of Sustainability*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Chapters 1 and 6. Available online from University of Toronto Libraries.
- Wright, C., & Nyberg, D. (2015). Climate change and the corporate construction of risk. *Climate Change, Capitalism, and Corporations: Processes of Creative Self-Destruction* (pp. 47-72). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Available online from University of Toronto Libraries.
- Case study: Corporate Knights. (2017). 2017 Global 100: An index of the Global 100 most sustainable corporations in the world. Retrieved from <http://www.corporateknights.com/reports/2017-global-100/>
- Case study: ExxonMobil. (2016). *2016 Corporate Citizenship Report*. Retrieved from [http://cdn.exxonmobil.com/~media/global/files/corporate-citizenship-report/2016\\_ccr\\_full\\_report.pdf](http://cdn.exxonmobil.com/~media/global/files/corporate-citizenship-report/2016_ccr_full_report.pdf)
- Case study: Suncor Energy, I. (2017). Report on Sustainability 2017. Retrieved from <https://sustainability.suncor.com/2017/en/default.aspx>

## **June 11 - Session 10: Power in Climate Change Institutions**

### *Readings*

- Hacker, J., Pierson, P., & Thelen, K. (2015). Drift and Conversion: Hidden Faces of Institutional Change. In *Advances in Comparative-Historical Analysis*. Eds. J. Mahoney and K. Thelen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Available online from University of Toronto Libraries.
- Dunlap, R. E., & McCright, A. M. (2011). Organized Climate Change Denial. In J. S. Dryzek, R. B. Norgaard, & D. Schlosberg (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Climate Change and Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Available online from University of Toronto Libraries.
- Farrell, J. (2016). Corporate funding and ideological polarization about climate change. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences U S A*, 113(1), 92-97. doi:10.1073/pnas.1509433112
- Case Study: Meyer, J. (2010). Covert Operations: The billionaire brothers who are waging a war against Obama. *The New Yorker*, 43-55.
- Case Study: Talberg, A., Hui, S., & Loynes, K. (2016). *Australian Climate Change Policy to 2015: A chronology*. Retrieved from: [http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/library/prspub/4590624/upload\\_binary/4590624.pdf;fileType=application/pdf](http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/library/prspub/4590624/upload_binary/4590624.pdf;fileType=application/pdf)



Case study: Public Accountability Initiative. (2017). LittleSis. Retrieved from <https://littlesis.org/>

#### *Additional Resources*

Mahoney, J., & Thelen, K. (2010). A Theory of Gradual Institutional Change. In *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power*. P. 1-37. Eds. J. Mahoney and K. Thelen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Available online from University of Toronto Libraries.

Case Study: Lerum Boasson, E., & Lahn, B. (2017). Norway: A dissonant cognitive leader? In R. K. Wurzel, J. Connelly, & D. Liefferink (Eds.), *Still taking a lead? The European Union in international climate change politics*. London: Routledge.

Case study: Graham, N., Daub, S., & Carroll, B. (2017). *Mapping Political Influence: Political donations and lobbying by the fossil fuel industry in BC*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Retrieved from: [https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2017/03/ccpa-bc\\_mapping\\_influence\\_final.pdf](https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2017/03/ccpa-bc_mapping_influence_final.pdf)

### **June 13 - Session 11: Shaping Climate Discourse through Ideas**

#### *Readings*

Klein, N. (2014). *This Changes Everything: Capitalism v. the Climate*. New York: Simon and Schuster. Chapters 1 and 3.

Layzer, J. (2014). Discerning the Impact of Conservative Ideas (Chapter 2), In *Open for Business: Conservatives' Opposition to Environmental Regulation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Available online from University of Toronto Libraries.

Case Study: Raso, K., & Neubauer, R. J. (2016). Managing Dissent: Energy Pipelines and “New Right” Politics in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 41, 115-133.

Case Study: Supran, G., & Oreskes, N. (2017). Assessing ExxonMobil's climate change communications (1977–2014). *Environmental Research Letters*, 12(8). doi:10.1088/1748-9326/aa815f

#### *Additional Resources*

Oreskes, N., & Conway, E. M. (2010). *Merchants of Doubt: How a handful of scientists obscured the truth on issues from tobacco smoke to global warming*. New York: Bloombury Press.

Documentary: Kenner, R. (Writer). (2014). Merchants of Doubt. In R. Kenner & M. Robledo (Producer): Mongrel Media.

### **June 18 - Session 12: Hope for the Future (Make-up Monday class)**

#### *Readings*

- Alfred, Taiaiake. (2012). The Great Unlearning (Blog post). Retrieved from <https://taiaiake.net/2017/02/28/the-great-unlearning/>
- Princen, T., Manno, J. P., & Martin, P. L. (2015). On the Way Down: Fossil Fuel Politics in the Twenty-First Century. In T. Princen, J. P. Manno, & P. L. Martin (Eds.), *Ending the Fossil Fuel Era* (pp. 333-364). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Available online from University of Toronto Libraries.
- Case Study: Morris, C., & Jungjohann, A. (2016). Healthy Democracy: Key to the Energiewende's Success. *Energy Democracy* (pp. 227-250). London: Palgrave Macmillan. Available online from University of Toronto Libraries.
- Case Study: Haluza-Delay, R., & Carter, A. V. (2016). Social Movements Scaling Up: Strategies and Opportunities in Opposing the Oil Sands Status Quo. In L. E. Adkin (Ed.), *First World Petro-Politics: The Political Ecology and Governance of Alberta* (pp. 456-498). Toronto: University of Toronto Press. Available online from University of Toronto Libraries.

#### *Additional Resources*

- Alfred, T., & Corntassel, J. (2005). Being Indigenous: Resurgences against Contemporary Colonialism. *Government and Opposition*, 40(4), 597-614. doi:doi:10.1111/j.1477-7053.2005.00166.x
- REN21. (2017). *Renewables 2017 Global Status Report*. Paris: REN21 Secretariat. Retrieved from: <http://www.ren21.net/gsr-2017/>

### **June 20 – FINAL EXAM**

#### **Course Rules and Policies**

**Assignment Format:** All written assignments must be submitted as Word or PDF documents.

Term papers must strictly adhere to the following guidelines:

- 12 point, Times New Roman font, double-spaced, one inch margins,
- Author-date (Harvard) referencing style
- Page numbers at the bottom of the page, the title of the paper appearing at the top of the first page, and your name and student number in the top left header of each page.
- No title page.

Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in a 5% penalty on each paper. Formatting, spelling, grammar, and punctuation matter. These are simple and easy ways to see if you have been thorough and methodical. Assignments will not be accepted via email and students will be asked to submit their research essay to Turnitin.com under terms set by the University of Toronto and as described on the Turnitin.com website.

**Students are strongly advised to keep rough and draft work and hard copies of their essays and assignments before uploading their work to Blackboard. All essays/assignments should be kept by the student until the marked essays/assignments have been returned to them and the grades are posted on ACORN.**

**Extensions and Make-ups:** No extensions or make-ups will be granted unless students have acceptable reasons that are adequately documented – for example, a medical emergency supported by an official U of T medical certificate. Extensions and permission to write make-up midterms will only be granted in extenuating and unavoidable circumstances outlined to the instructors in writing or via email **prior** to the due date in question. Extensions will not be granted in any case after the submission deadline or mid-term. Appropriate documentation must be submitted within one week of the missed course requirement. Multiple assignments or midterms from other courses scheduled for the same date – or other work commitments – do not constitute acceptable reasons for extensions, so please plan accordingly.

**Late Penalties:** Assignments are to be handed in at the beginning of class on the date that they are due. Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day, weekends included. All late work must be submitted to the Main Office of the Political Science Department (3rd floor of Sidney Smith, Room 3018). Students must make sure late submissions are date stamped by Department staff. Barring extensions, work submitted more than 10 days after assignment deadlines will not be accepted.

**Office Hours and Communication:** Office hours will take place from 2-4pm on Wednesdays. I will endeavour to respond to emails within 24 hours, weekends not included. Please do not expect an immediate reply to emails sent on the weekends or after 7pm. Email is for short clarification questions only. If you have concerns or questions that cannot be answered in a short response please see me during office hours.

**Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.

-Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing unauthorized aids.
- Looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test.
- Misrepresenting your identity.

In academic work:

- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.
- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources (see <http://www.utoronto.ca/academicintegrity/>).

For details on how not to plagiarize, see the University's policy at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-toplagiarize>. Students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

**Blackboard:** All students should ensure that they have access to the Blackboard website, as reading materials & announcements will be posted electronically. Students are expected to regularly check Blackboard for course updates.

**Using Turnitin.com:** Normally, students will be required to submit their research essay to Turnitin.com for review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

**Accessibility Needs:** The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the

classroom, or materials, contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible at <https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as> or [accessibility.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:accessibility.services@utoronto.ca).

**Grade appeals:** If you have concerns regarding your grade, you must first come to my office to discuss it. Thereafter, you can submit a grade appeal. You need to provide a detailed written explanation of why you feel the grade is unjustified. Once an appeal is submitted, I will re-examine the entire assignment. It can result in one of three outcomes: no change to the original grade, a higher grade, or a lower grade. If you wish to submit a written appeal, you must submit it within two weeks of grade submission.

### **Policy on Religious Observances:**

As noted in the [Policy on Scheduling of Classes and Examinations and Other Accommodations for Religious Observances](#), the following provisions are included:

“It is the policy of the University of Toronto to arrange reasonable accommodation of the needs of students who observe religious holy days other than those already accommodated by ordinary scheduling and statutory holidays.

Students have a responsibility to alert members of the teaching staff in a timely fashion to upcoming religious observances and anticipated absences. Instructors will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, examinations or other compulsory activities at these times. If compulsory activities are unavoidable, every reasonable opportunity should be given to these students to make up work that they miss, particularly in courses involving laboratory work. When the scheduling of tests or examinations cannot be avoided, students should be informed of the procedure to be followed to arrange to write at an alternate time.

It is most important that no student be seriously disadvantaged because of her or his religious observances. However, in the scheduling of academic and other activities, it is also important to ensure that the accommodation of one group does not seriously disadvantage other groups within the University community.”

With respect to minimum advance notice, the Policy provides that "Students have a responsibility to alert members of the teaching staff in a timely fashion to upcoming religious observances and anticipated absences." Since students would normally be aware of upcoming religious observances as well as examination schedules in advance, a minimum of three weeks advance notice will be considered sufficient.

More information and some dates of potential relevance for the U of T community are available at [www.viceprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/publicationsandpolicies/guidelines/religiousobservances.htm](http://www.viceprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/publicationsandpolicies/guidelines/religiousobservances.htm).