



Canadian Mennonite University

## Citizenship, Land, and Economy (POLS-2950)

Winter Semester 2022-23, Tuesday 6-8.45 PM, Room C167

**Instructor:** James Magnus-Johnston (MPhil, Land Economy, Cambridge University)  
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*"Nothing so important... as a land ethic is ever 'written'. It arises in the minds of a thinking community"*  
- Aldo Leopold

**Summary:** Economic and ecological challenges – including climate change and inequity – are symptoms of a deeper spiritual and cultural conflict: human separation from each other, our inner-beings, and the land. This course examines acts of land justice through re/connections to people and place. We examine philosophical questions related to land justice and stewardship – including those surrounding economic scale, economic and ecological literacy, land use, land speculation – and consider alternative ways of being and acting that might foster a more just society.

*Note: The course will culminate in a one-day colloquium, organized by its participants, highlighting ideas and initiatives related to ecological stewardship.*

### Objectives:

1. Become familiar with heterodox approaches to economics
2. Consider warrants for the use of technology and fossil energy
3. Nurture real-world connections to land and community
4. Consider "citizenship" as a way of enacting justice
5. Become aware of the connection between spiritual health and immersion in nature
6. Cultivate a contemplative learning practice through independent reading and study

**Deadline for withdrawal** without academic penalty: March 20

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## Reading List

### REQUIRED TEXTS

Louv, Richard. *The Nature Principle: Reconnecting with Life in a Virtual Age*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2012.

### REQUIRED TEXTS (PROVIDED)

*Download at [postgrowth.ca/clecon](http://postgrowth.ca/clecon)*

Alexander, Samuel. *A Critique of Techno-Optimism: Efficiency without Sufficiency is Lost (Post Carbon Working Paper Series)*. Melbourne: Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute, 2014.

Eisenstein, Charles. *Sacred Economics: Money, Gift, & Society in the Age of Transition*. Berkeley, California: Evolver Editions, 2011.

Latouche, Serge. *Towards a Society of Frugal Abundance*. Melbourne: Simplicity Institute, 2014.

Magnus-Johnston, James. "What is the Steady State Economy?" in Washington, Haydn and Twomey, Paul, *A Future Beyond Growth: Towards a Steady State Economy*. London: Routledge, 2016.

Schumacher, E. F. *Small Is Beautiful: Economics As If People Mattered: 25 Years Later ... with Commentaries*. Point Roberts, Wash: Hartley & Marks Publishers, 1999.

Weber, Andreas. *Enlivenment: Towards a fundamental shift in the concepts of nature, culture, and politics*. Berlin: Heinrich Boll Foundation, 2013.

## SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS

Raworth, Kate. *Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Economist*. White River, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2017.

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## Assignments and Grades

Letter	Percentage	GPA	Descriptor
A+	90-100	4.5	Exceptional
A	80-89	4	Excellent
B+	75-79	3.5	Very Good
B	70-74	3	Good
C+	65-69	2.5	Satisfactory
C	60-64	2	Adequate
D	50-59	1	Marginal
F	0-49	0	Failure

<b>Commonplace notebook</b> (Feb 14 / Apr 4)	10%
<b>Attendance and Participation</b> (ongoing)	10%
<b>Presentations</b> (ongoing)	20%
<b>Project proposal and bibliography</b> (Mar 21)	20%
<b>Final project</b> (Mar 28)	20%
<b>Colloquium participation</b> (Apr 4)	20%

**An “excellent” assignment (A) would display:**

1. Original thinking and a superior grasp of the subject matter
2. A highly developed capacity for critical evaluation, synthesis, and creativity
3. Appropriate descriptions and quotations
4. Organizing and subordinating information well; writing and/or speaking clearly
5. The use of research sources using *any* recognized style format. For reference, see:

Hacker, Diana. *A Pocket Style Manual*. Eighth edition. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2018

**Commonplace notebook:** In order to catalyze conversation for in-class discussions, students will be expected to maintain a notebook that keeps track of direct and indirect connections to course material. In your notebook, you will be expected to record daily experiences, quotations of readings, facts, and summaries of information that you might use throughout the course. You might also record something provocative or interesting from class discussion, a link to relevant online material, a relevant photograph you have taken, or a summary of a presentation, newscast, sermon, speech, or film that you experienced. You can be creative: draw diagrams, write in point form, take pictures, record sounds, or come up with some other brilliant way to share information with the class. Some class time will be designated for free writing reflections, exercises, and peer evaluation.

Here are some online tools that provide some examples and ideas for record-keeping:

<https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Commonplace-Book>

<https://evernote.com/blog/how-to-create-commonplace-with-evernote/>

<http://www.marknagelberg.com/creating-a-commonplace-book-with-google-drive/>

**Attendance / Participation:** To foster more active discussions on class readings, your participation will be graded. You will be graded on the quality and quantity of interaction – that is, not only the volume of interaction, but its quality and consistency. Someone who interacts often but attempts to monopolize the conversation, for instance, may receive a lower grade than someone who contributes regularly and is respectful of the contributions of others. Regular contributions, however, are required. Your participation grades will be posted at the middle and the end of the semester.

*Note: When the weather cooperates, classes will be held outside or at alternative venues. Destinations won't always be pre-determined.*

**Presentations:** Much of this class draws upon the required reading. Our first exercise will be for you to come up with a reading schedule to designate time outside of class to read; you will be expected to hold yourself accountable to this reading schedule. If helpful, you can arrange peer group reading sessions. For each assigned reading, one student will prepare a synopsis in point form that outlines the main argument of the reading in order to catalyze in-class discussion. Following the discussion, please prepare a 1-2 page written summary of the reading and discussion to be handed in (by email) the following day.

*Note: Periodically, class time will be allocated to reading but students should not rely on this time to study.*

**Essay/speech proposal + Annotated bibliography:** In preparation for your final work and eventual conference participation, you will be expected to identify a topic of interest relatively early in the course. For this proposal, you are expected to identify a problem and pose a research question, which will inform

the scope of your research (related to economics, political ecology, energy/environmental policy, land use, or citizenship). Your annotated bibliography gives an account of the research that has been undertaken on a given topic. In addition to bibliographic data, an annotated bibliography also provides a concise summary of each source and some assessment of its relevance to your paper. Please include 5-10 sources, and ensure that approximately half of them are scholarly journals or books.

**Final essay / speech:** Write a 1500-word essay or speech dealing with an issue related to the course material, with adequate coverage (or defence) of a contrary position. Your final product will be evaluated on its appraisal of the issue, its quality of argument, and the topic's relevance to the subject matter covered in the course. Following the work you will have undertaken in your proposal, your paper must interrogate the problem and prescribe potential solutions. The essay will be used as the basis for your participation in a final colloquium, in which you will participate in a panel discussion with other participants. *If you opt to compose a speech, you are encouraged to enter the C. Henry Smith Oratorical Contest. Rules for the contest are posted on the course webpage.*

**Colloquium participation:** In lieu of a final exam, you will be expected to participate in a student-led final colloquium. Students will be expected to organize and participate in a round-table discussion, in which you will discuss the contents of your final paper. Your contribution to this conference will be peer-reviewed through a web-based form.

**Peer grading:** A number of assignments will be peer-reviewed using a web-based form; grades and feedback will be "crowdsourced" and recommended to the instructor (the instructor reserves the right to adjust grades up or down). Peer-reviewed assignments include the free writing notebook, reading synopses, the essay proposal, and final colloquium participation.

## Policies

**Final grades:** Grades submitted by instructors become final only after they are vetted by the Dean's Council. That process occurs early in January for fall semester grades and early in May for winter semester grades.

**Academic integrity:** *Academic Integrity*—All material referred to in any assignment MUST be appropriately referenced. Plagiarism is a serious matter. Students should be aware of CMU Academic Policies, particularly those regarding academic misconduct (plagiarism and cheating), which apply to all University courses. These are detailed on CMU's [website](#) and in the CMU Calendar. If you still have questions about appropriate referencing and what plagiarism is, a useful tutorial can be found [here](#). For more information on CMU policies regarding grades, academic misconduct, appeals, and other matters, please see CMU's *Academic Calendar*.

**Accessibility:** CMU strives to provide a fair and supportive learning environment for academically qualified students with disabilities. If you are eligible for these services or have questions about becoming eligible, please contact Sandra Loepky, Coordinator of Accessibility Programs at [sloepky@cmu.ca](mailto:sloepky@cmu.ca) or 204.487.3300 x.340. In recognition of individuals with asthma, allergies and severe environmental/chemical sensitivities, CMU is striving to become a scent-free campus. Students, staff and guests are asked to refrain from wearing fragrances and scented personal care products at CMU. This

includes perfumes, colognes, aftershave and scented hair products. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated by those affected.

**Academic support services:** Student studying, tutoring, and the Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) program are offered to CMU students free of charge in the Marpeck Mezzanine.

**Counselling:** University students face many challenges and at times may benefit from having a trained professional to talk to. There are qualified counsellors at CMU who volunteer their services free of charge to students on the CMU campus. Students wishing to book an appointment with a counsellor are asked to contact the North Side Receptionist at 204.487.3300 or [info@cmu.ca](mailto:info@cmu.ca). Confidentiality is maintained at all times. The counselling office is located at C365 (north side) and is free for CMU students.

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## Course Schedule

### LAND / ECONOMY

#### Definitions

**Jan 10 // Definitions: Mainstream economics and heterodox alternatives (degrowth; SSE)**

Schumacher Pt I: The Modern World

Magnus-Johnston: What is the Steady State Economy?

Latouche: What is Degrowth?

**Jan 17 // Time/money: Gift economics, productivist culture, and the "great separation"**

(Monbiot, Ch. 1-2: A Story of Our Times; A Captive Audience)

Eisenstein, Ch. 1-6 (Pt I): The Economics of Separation

Louv, Pt I: Nature Neurons: Intelligence, Creativity and the Hybrid Mind

#### Interrogating "Separation"

**Jan 24 // Separation from other: individualism, alienation, isolation**

Monbiot, Ch. 3-5: Alienation; Belonging; Our Economy

Pick one: Jay: A History of Alienation / Jaffer: In Extremis / Leung: Why is Loneliness So Toxic?

Delistraty: Only the Lonely

Louv, Pt II: Vitamin N: The Power of the Natural World...

**Jan 31 // Separation from inner-being: desire, the soul, mindfulness**

(Schumacher Ch 6: The Greatest Resource – Education)

Burch: Educating for Simple Living

Eisenstein Ch. 7-8: The Crisis of Civilization; Turning of the Age

**Feb 7 // Separation from land: body and place**

Schumacher Ch. 7-8: The Proper Use of Land; Resources for Industry

(Eisenstein Ch. 9-10: The Story of Value; Law of Return)

Louv Pt III: Near is the New Far...

Leopold: The Land Ethic

**Feb 14 // Heterodox approaches: conclusion and criticisms**

(Monbiot Ch. 6-7: Our Economy; Framing the Economy)

Eisenstein Ch. 11-13: Currencies; Negative-Interest; Steady-State and Degrowth

Latouche I/II: Towards a Society of Frugal Abundance

**\*\*COMMONPLACE NOTEBOOKS DUE\*\***

**CITIZENSHIP**

**Technology, Energy, Jobs**

**Feb 28 // Energy: EROEI, labour, and dividends**

(Schumacher Ch. 9: Nuclear Energy...)

Eisenstein Ch. 14-15: The Social Dividend; Local Currencies

Tverberg: The Physics of Energy and the Economy

Hall/Day: Revisiting the Limits to Growth

**Mar 7 // Non/electoral citizenship: technology, polarization, engagement**

Monbiot Ch. 8-9: Our Politics; Making it Happen

Louv Pt IV: Creating Everyday Eden

Alexander: A Critique of Techno-Optimism

Burch: Twenty Questions – Technology and Simple Living

**Mar 14 // International citizenship: development and improving wellbeing**

Schumacher Ch. 10-14: Development; Intermediate Technology; Ownership

Louv Pt V: The High-Performance Human

**Re/framing the Big Picture**

**Mar 21 // Cosmological citizenship: faith and the frame for wellbeing**

(Schumacher Ch. 15-16: A Machine to Tell the Future; Large-Scale Organization)

Eisenstein Ch. 16-17: Transition to Gift Economy; Roadmap

Weber: Enlivenment

Korten: A New Story for a New Economy

Norgaard: The Church of Economism and its Discontents

**\*\*ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE\*\***

**Mar 28 // Questions of engagement and right livelihood**

(Schumacher Ch. 17-end: Socialism; Ownership)

Eisenstein Ch. 18-20 (Pt III): Living the New Economy

Graeber: A World With No BS Jobs

CBC: The Disappearing Company Job

**\*\*ESSAY/SPEECH DUE\*\***

**Apr 4 // The "more beautiful world" + Colloquium**

Eisenstein Ch. 21-end: The Gift; The Unquantifiable; The New Materialism