



# Global Studies (GLST) 343

## Global Environmental Change (Revision 2)

**Status:** Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#) for the current revision ❌

**Delivery mode:** [Individualized study online](#). Delivered via Brightspace.

**Credits:** 3

**Area of study:** Social Science

**Prerequisites:** None, but a second-year course that included critical social science analysis is recommended.

**Precluded:** GLST 343 is a cross-listed course—a course listed under two different disciplines—with the other being **ENVS 343**. GLST 343 may not be taken

for credit by students who have obtained credit for ENVS 243, ENVS 253, GLST 243, GLST 253, or ENVS 343.

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**Challenge:**

GLST 343 has a challenge for credit option.

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**Faculty:**

**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences** [↗](#)

## Overview

Students of GLST 343: Global Environmental Change gain foundational knowledge about contemporary global environmental issues, such as climate change, diminishing biodiversity, and plastics pollution. Students also acquire an analytical tool kit to examine the integrated complexity of global environmental issues and the relationships between the local, regional, and global dimensions of environmental change, how human societies make environments, and how environments influence humanity over time. Additionally, students critically reflect on how relations of power, production, and reproduction over various scales work in association with the web of life. While doing this, students also have opportunities to learn how they learn, and in so doing, tailor this course to fit their interests and passions.

Students of GLST 343 are expected to share at least some of their coursework with others and, optionally, to comment or provide constructive advice on the work of others. The work is problem-based and personalized so, for the most part, no two pieces of student work will ever provide the same answers.

## Learning outcomes

On completion of GLST 343, successful students will have the capacity to:

1. Explain major biogeochemical cycles and identify some of the key ways they are impacted by specific global environmental change processes.
2. Discuss the key components of complex systems theory and apply a systems lens to global environmental change issues to describe their integrated complexity.
3. Identify the key relationships between the local, regional, and global dimensions of environmental change issues.
4. Apply a political ecology analysis to global environmental change issues to explain how the structural dynamics within socioecological systems create effects that are unequal, not only in generating wealth and health disparities but also in exacting environmental and social burdens.
5. Apply an integrated global studies, systems, and political ecology analytical frame to undertake a case study of a specific socioecological problem.
6. Communicate effectively, and document and reflect on the processes used to plan, monitor, and assess their understanding and performance in the course.

## Outline

GLST 343 is divided into 10 units:

- Unit 1: The Learning Context
- Unit 2: Studying Global Socioecological Systems

- Unit 3: Atmospheric Science and Climate Change
- Unit 4: Water
- Unit 5: Biodiversity
- Unit 6: Soils, Agriculture, and Food
- Unit 7: Waste and Pollution
- Unit 8: Energy
- Unit 9: Mobility
- Unit 10: Pathways to Transition

## Evaluation

This course has a flexible, student-centered assessment structure. Students are given a smorgasbord of learning activities to choose from, and formative ungraded feedback is given along the way. Students are empowered to play a role in determining the kind of assessment they receive and their final course grade. At the end of the course, students present a portfolio of work and explain how they've met the course objectives.

To **receive credit**  for GLST 343, students must complete a course overview quiz, three learning process journal entries and corresponding meetings with the tutor, a final project and a few other self-selected learning activities—all of which will enable students to achieve a majority of the course learning outcomes. Students must also achieve a course composite grade of at least **D (50 percent)** .

# Materials

## Digital course materials

Links to the following course materials will be made available in the course:

Katz-Rosene, R. & Paterson, M. (2020). *Thinking Ecologically About the Global Political Economy*. New York: Routledge.

## Other Materials

All other materials are available online.

## Special Instructional Features

This course includes a guided and somewhat scaffolded process, but students are not told precisely what, how, or when to do it, as might be the case in a typical course. The onus is on the student to seek out information and undertake learning activities that allow them to achieve the course learning outcomes. This is, however, a supported process: Advice is given regarding the overall structure of development and the process of learning; recommendations are given about appropriate resources; a rich social space is provided in which to discuss issues, ask questions, and receive answers; and feedback is provided along the way on work that is done. Where possible, students are encouraged to help and support one another. Such support can be rewarding not just as a learning activity in itself, but also as a means of showing that the course learning outcomes have been achieved.

## Challenge for credit

## Overview

The challenge for credit process allows you to demonstrate that you have acquired a command of the general subject matter, knowledge, intellectual and/or other skills that would normally be found in a university-level course.

Full information about **challenge for credit** [↗](#) can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar.

## Evaluation

The challenge assessment for ENVS 343 involves the production of a portfolio of evidence/documentation and reflective commentary, mapped to the course learning outcomes, demonstrating competence, as well as an online oral examination based on the work submitted.

The evaluation will be based entirely on evidence presented in the portfolio and oral examination, mapped to the intended learning outcomes of the course. There is no explicit weighting given to any particular component: Grades are given based on evidence of achievement of learning outcomes.

To **receive credit** [↗](#) for the GLST 343 challenge registration, you must achieve a grade of at least **D (50 percent)** [📎](#) on the portfolio and oral examination.

[📎](#) **Challenge for credit course registration form**

## Important links

- › **Academic advising** [↗](#)
- › **Program planning** [↗](#)
- › **Request assistance** [↗](#)

› [Support services at AU](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery modes may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

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*Updated August 4, 2026*

View [previous revision](#) 

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