

Procedural suggestions for Tutorial #3: Ecological Footprint

Some information:

My office: Rm. 3256

Overview:

- discuss the ecological footprint
- collect assignment 1
- introduce assignment 2: stakeholder management

Procedural suggestions for Tutorial #3:

1. Bring the attendance sheet for this tutorial.
2. Remind them about the name tags
3. **Main activity:** I think it will be worthwhile to give a 3-minute introduction to Ecological Footprints.

Here are a few things that you can say about ecological footprints:

When Bill Rees (UBC prof) and Mathis Wackernagel (UBC grad student, at the time) thought of the ecological footprint concept in the early 1990s (first publication was in 1992), they had been trying to calculate a carrying capacity for part of the Vancouver peninsula.

Carrying capacity gives you the number of organisms (people, in this case) that can be supported by a piece of land or an ecosystem, without causing irreparable damage. They basically turned the carrying capacity concept upside down, and instead calculated the amount of land that would be required to sustain a population living at a certain level of resource use. This amounts to calculating the amount of carrying capacity that has been appropriated by that population, and indeed that's what they originally called it – "appropriated carrying capacity".

So the thing that people need to understand is that the ecological footprint calculation takes all sorts of resource use and "translates" it into terms of land use (usually in units of hectares, although this varies). This introduces a number of complexities and, some would say, weaknesses into the calculation, because it is very difficult to translate something like, say, freshwater withdrawals into "land" terms.

I wouldn't say too much more than that – they have been through the exercise, so they should have a pretty good idea about the pros and cons, by now.

4. Break them into **small groups**. **Small group discussions:** You should ask them to focus on the following questions:

1. What does the ecological footprint try to measure and what does it not measure in terms of environmental impact?

These materials were created for educational purposes by the course instructor, Professor Tenley Conway.

2. What were the largest footprint categories for the UTM-wide campus calculation?
3. What were the largest categories for their own footprint?
4. When do they think calculating a footprint would be useful? Individuals, companies, countries?
What are the limitations of the approach?

They can compare notes in their groups on the questions from Assignment #1. This should take approximately 25 minutes.

5. **Large group reporting** (allow 15 minutes): Have groups report back. Focus discussion on the 4th small group question.

6. **You will need to introduce Assignment #2.** (5 minutes) You should give them a heads-up not to wait until the last minute for this one.

7. **Collect Assignment #1 at the end.** And that's it!

ENV201H5S “House Rules” for Tutorials

1. Please always attend the tutorial in which you are registered.
2. The tutorials are not review or help sessions – new content will be covered, and activities that are different from what we are doing in lecture.
3. Tutorial handouts, readings, and all assignments will be posted on the website for access by anyone who is unable to attend a tutorial session.
4. There is a participation component in the course mark. For attending the tutorial session that you are registered in, signing in, and staying through the entire session, you will receive 1.5 participation marks. For participating in the discussions you will receive another 0.5 marks. Thus, on the basis of attendance alone you can earn $1.5 \times 5 = 7.5$ marks, and by actively participating from week to week you can top this up to a total of 10 marks.
5. If you must attend a different tutorial session from the one you are registered in, please wait until those who are registered in that tutorial are seated. Then, if there are seats available, you can speak to the TA and sign in.
6. If you attend a different tutorial from the one you are registered in, your participation marks won't be counted. If you miss your tutorial session for a verifiable reason, such as illness, you can submit documentation through the usual channels (to Sabrina Ferrari in the Geography Department, sabrina.ferrari@utoronto.ca) and, if the petition is accepted, your other tutorial participation marks will be averaged to make up for the missed tutorial session.
7. Assignments are due by the end time on the day of the tutorial session in which you are registered. If you hand in an assignment later than the due date or time (such as in a later tutorial session or in the drop box), it will be counted as late.
8. If you want to hand in an assignment earlier or later than the due date or time, you can submit it to the drop box in the hallway, at the entrance on the Department of Geography in the South (Davis) Building.