



bombarded with stark images that remind us how closely intertwined our lives are with our surrounding environment. Since the 1960's people have begun to ask increasingly pointed societal and personally-difficult questions about this relationship and the problems that we are faced with on a daily basis. In keeping with this historical trajectory, *SOC 291 is an introduction to the sociological approach of understanding environmental values, beliefs and attitudes and behaviours that contribute to our current socio-environmental situation.*

This course will allow you to sharpen your questions about socio-environmental attitudes and behaviours and, in the process, explore solutions to increasingly wicked or messy environmental problems such as climate change, individual consumption-environmental degradation, the ideals of green consumption, human population and waste, and biodiversity. At the heart of all these questions is an underlying examination of power, inequality and social justice at local, national, and global scales. In this class you will be introduced to environmental sociology through an approach that seeks to understand the social causes of environmental problems and the pragmatic solutions that sociology can offer. The way in which we will do this is to examine current and future relevant environmental problems by learning from environmental sociologists' research and community engagement, exploring the issues facing community not-for-profit organizations through Community Service-Learning (CSL) projects, and critiquing video documentaries on environmental issues.

**A Note on the SOC 291's Scientific Assumptions:** This course rests on the extensive peer-reviewed research that has led to consensus positions among climate scientists worldwide on certain basic questions surrounding climate disruption. Part of that consensus is that anthropogenic (human-caused) changes to the earth, its water bodies, and its atmosphere are initiating an unprecedented and (so far) unbounded shift away from the broad climate parameters within which settled civilization emerged, and likely away from those within which the modern human species first arose. These changes rest primarily on unprecedented and accelerating emission rates and levels of several greenhouse gases over multiple decades worldwide, through fossil fuel combustion, deforestation, particular agricultural practices, and so on. The changes operate on the world's climate, over and above the multiple natural cycles and disruptions that long-run data sets and geological records have also revealed (sun spots, variations in the earth's orbit, etc.).

Climate scientists, oceanographers, and allied disciplines continue to examine the details, using a range of scientific methods. But that same family of methods has created virtual certainty that the general threats that this poses, both for non-human nature and for the existing conditions for human civilization, are unprecedentedly high, rising, and multi-faceted. To the degree that natural scientists still debate the rate and impact of these changes and risks, as much or more uncertainty surrounds possible understatement of these rates and impacts, as it does any possible overstatement. Other natural- and social-scientific disciplines have provided an extensive body of research into more specific practical implications of these trend lines. Once again, the broad consensus is that these impacts are and will increasingly be severe and unprecedented in human history. Social scientists and humanities scholars of many descriptions investigate what human societies can and should do (if anything) to limit, stop, and/or reverse these trends and their impacts.

Given that this is the state of the natural-scientific debate, given that I am not a climate scientist, and given that the University of Alberta is committed to the pursuit of knowledge based on the application of methods appropriate to the subjects investigated, this course takes a consensus position

and the continuing research initiatives on which it rests. A central question for this course is what human societies can, will, and should do about the environmental problems we face.

### Course Objectives

1. *Ability to speak to issues* relating to the relationship between human beings and the natural world and in doing so *introduce students to sociology* and its role in understanding environmental issues.
2. *Learn and articulate environmental sociological concepts and theories* toward developing a *deeper understanding* of why environmental problems occur and endure.
3. *Explore and deeply examine the interrelationship* between the local and the global as they pertain to environmental issues through the analysis of an environmental documentary film or, if the Community Service-Learning (CSL) Option is chosen, practical application of sociological knowledge to environmental issues in a directed practical project with a community partner not-for-profit organization.
4. *Apply a range of methods* that sociology offers for making sense of the social world and its articulation with the natural world.
5. *Address the sociological underpinnings of conflicts and inequalities* around the world that are linked to such issues as climate change/global warming, natural resource use and exploitation, food, water, wilderness preservation, and population.

### Course Structure: PLEASE READ!

This course uses asynchronous (recorded) and synchronous (live) lectures. Asynchronous materials such as lectures and PowerPoint slides will be linked to an associated Google Drive for SOC 291. In order to access Google Drive lectures, you MUST use your ualberta.ca email address. I will not give access to email addresses that are not ualberta.ca-based!

When viewing recorded lectures and materials it is very important that you do so following the course readings list (see below) in order to stay up to date on course material and not fall behind. The best way to do this is to take notes as you follow along with my lectures and slides (this is easy to do as you can pause & restart the recorded lectures as needed). Taking notes will help you remember the material and will be of real value for when you are studying and preparing for exams.

### Required Textbook:

1. Carolan, Michael. 2020. Society and the Environment: Pragmatic Solutions to Environmental Issues, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Routledge: NY  
eBook only: <https://www.vitalsource.com/en-uk/referral?term=9781000759211>
2. Other readings as assigned. Supplemental readings will be available electronically through eClass, The UA library, or through Internet links.

**Note:** “Policy about course outlines can be found in Course Requirements, Evaluation Procedures and Grading of the University Calendar.”

**Prerequisites:** None

**Anti-Requisite:** None

**Registration:**

Students are responsible to ensure they are officially registered. Use your “Class Schedule” on Bear Tracks to confirm that you are properly registered in this course and section. You must be officially registered to receive marks: instructors are not allowed to mark the exam of an unregistered student or to add a student name to the official class list.

**Class Format & Ground Rules: PLEASE READ!**

This class uses an online lecture format utilizing multiple forms of media to stimulate thought and illustrate concepts. In order to make this format more interactive, I ask that you respect the following ground rules:

- SOC 291 is an eClass section. If you have access to Bear Tracks, your CCID and Password allows you access to the SOC 291 eClass course site. This course syllabus will be posted there.
- If you have questions about the course, and they cannot be answered using the course syllabus or eClass, then you may contact me through email. Please be aware that I only check my email between 0900-1700 on weekdays, and not on weekends. In addition, I do not respond to non-ualberta.ca emails.
- I will not provide nor discuss any grades via e-mail. Grades can be accessed through the course eClass site, or you can discuss them with me during my office hours (or, in a prearranged private phone call or Zoom meeting)
- I do not discuss course and assignment grades in comparison to other students in the class.
- Although the nature of online teaching in a large class makes interaction difficult, I do ask that students express their views, raise questions, and challenge taken for granted assumptions about society. For this to be possible, it's necessary that we consider all lectures with an open mind and willingness to listen to other points of views and perspectives that may challenge our own values and ways of thinking.
- I strongly advise regular attendance and reading/viewing of recorded lectures. Assigned readings and lectures overlap and while not identical, they are complementary and mutually reinforcing. Students who keep up regularly and read the assigned chapters and readings in advance have greater comprehension and retention, and perform better on examinations.
- If you decide to not regularly attend classes or access online lectures be aware of the risk. The University holds students responsible for any information provided during class time.
- If you are having trouble in this class, please contact me sooner rather than later. Sooner – there is a good chance that we can work together to make things better. Later – there is a good chance that you will be left with a lower grade than you would like (thanks to the late Dr. Judith Golec for this advice!).

**Recording of Lectures**

As per the University Calendar: *Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).*

**Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components**

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify Dr. Caine by e-mail within two working days from the date of the missed exam (or as soon as possible, given the circumstances underlying the absence). Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult the Attendance section of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

**Accessibility Resources:**

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Students who require accommodations in this course due to a disability affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning, or mental or physical health are advised to discuss their needs with Accessibility Resources (AR): Room 1-80 SUB, 780-492-3381, <https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students/accessibility-resources/index.html>. Please inform me of any special accommodations recommended by AR for your participation in this course. Students registered with AR who will be using accommodations in the classroom, or who will be writing exams through AR, are required to provide me with a link to access their “Letter of Introduction” as early as possible after registering with AR.

**Basic Needs Security:**

If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or if you lack a safe and stable place to live, and you believe this may affect your performance in this course, please contact the Office of the Student Ombuds or the Dean of Students for support. The Campus Food Bank also offers multiple programs to help with food insecurity. If you are uncomfortable about asking about these things, please talk to me so I can help in any way.

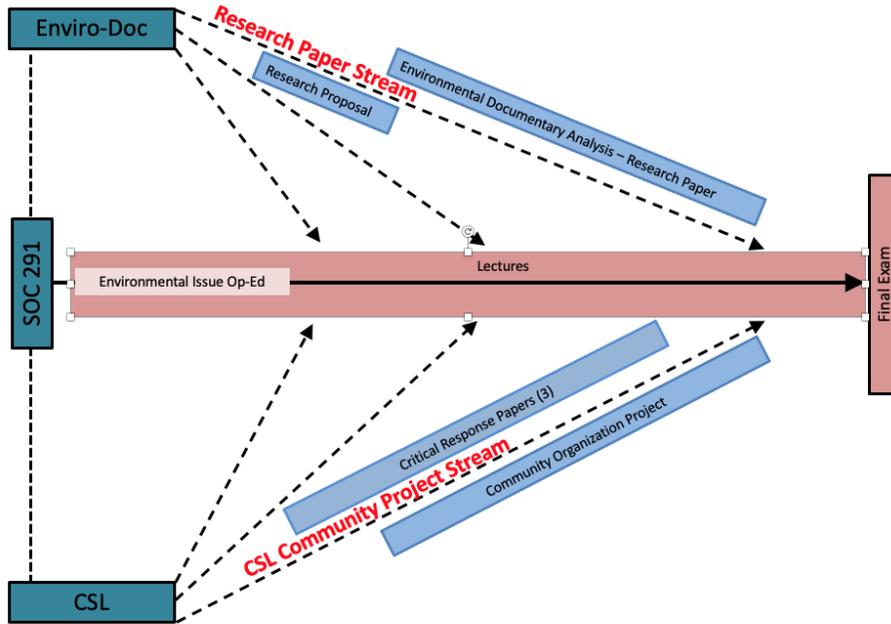
**Learning and Working Environment:**

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty, and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment.

**Writing Assistance**

Many students have difficulty writing. Editing each other’s work and carefully editing your own work are ways to improve your writing. I recommend contacting the Academic Success Centre (located in SUB 2-300, Tel: 780-492-2682, website: <https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students/academic-success-centre/index.html>). Also, the Centre for Writers offers free one-on-one writing support. Past experience has shown that seeking early help will avoid the last minute backlog of students needing writing assistance. Another option may be to hire a tutor. Visit Info Link to inquire about their tutor registry.

### Course Overview and Requirements



### Important Dates (Note: there is no mid-term exam)

CSL Stream	Research Paper Stream	Value	Important Due Dates
Group Social-Environmental Issue Op-Ed		30%	Group OpEd Due <b>Feb 13</b>
CSL Critical Response Papers (CR)		35%	First CR (10%) <b>Feb 27</b>
			Second CR (10%) <b>Mar 20</b>
	Environmental Documentary Critique		Third CR (15%) <b>Apr 11</b>
			Proposal (10%) <b>Feb 27</b>
			Final Paper (25%) <b>Apr 11</b>
<b>Final Exam</b>		35%	See Beartracks for date

NOTE: Detailed descriptions of all written assignments below, with accompanying grading outlines, will be provided by Dr. Caine, discussed in class, and posted on the eClass site.

**Group Opinion Editorial on a Social-Environmental Issue (30%):**

Drawing on the Section “Taking Action on Extreme Risks from Climate Change” in the Government of Canada’s 2020 *Speech from the Throne*, your group (as determined by Dr. Caine) will select a topic from this section and then research a current environmental issue/problem in Canada. Taking a social and ecological analytical approach in your research, your group will write a 750-800 word opinion-editorial (OpEd) of a quality that could be submitted to a news site or posted on a website/blog. Students who do not participate and contribute will receive a grade of zero. Students will provide an evaluation of each group member’s contributions to ensure fairness of grades.

**Main Course Assignment (You will choose one from either A or B below. Note: the CSL Stream is limited to the first 30 students)**

**A. Research Paper Stream (35%):**

**Environmental Documentary Critique (10% + 25%)**

This assignment allows you to decide on an environmental issue that interests you, select a related documentary film, and to critically examine it through a sociological lens.

1. Proposal (10%): You will first prepare a 2-page proposal (double-spaced, 12 font Times New Roman, 1 inch/2.54 cm margins (approximately 600 words) describing your environmental documentary project. Late proposals will not be accepted and will receive a zero grade.
2. Research Paper (25%): Your research paper will be 9-10 pages (approximately 2700 - 3000 words), double-spaced, 12 font Times New Roman, 1 inch/2.54 cm margins. Late papers will be penalized 10% per day (including weekends), and you will not receive any written comments. Papers submitted more than five days late will not be accepted. If you fail to submit a paper, you will receive a zero grade.

**B. CSL Stream (35%):**

**Three Critical Response Papers (10% + 10% + 15%)**

All CSL students will submit a total of three response papers over the course of the term. These papers allow students to critically reflect on their CSL experiences and how those experiences have contributed to their learning of the subject matter. Each paper will be between 3-4 pages, double-spaced, 12 font Times New Roman, 1 inch/2.54 cm margins (approximately 900-1200 words). All papers must be submitted by the due date. Late response papers will be penalized 10% per day (including weekends), and you will not receive any written comments. Papers submitted more than five days late will not be accepted. If you fail to submit a paper, you will receive a zero grade.

**Final Examination (35%)**

Because of the cumulative nature of this course there is only one examination at the end of the term covering all material since the start of the term. The final examination will be on eClass, multiple choice, and questions will be based on lectures, the textbook, additional readings, the International

Week Keynote talk, and any materials used in the course. Sample questions will be made available before the exam.

### Missed Final Exam

The final exam cannot be rescheduled. Under extenuating circumstances (as outlined in the Attendance Section of the Calendar) students who cannot write the exam, or cancel their final exam during the exam period, must provide documentation and apply to their Faculty for a deferred exam. If approved by the student's Faculty, the deferred final exam date is: Saturday, May 1, 2021.

**Grading:** I do not grade on a curve. Final grades for SOC 291 are determined using the contract:

	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>4-Point Value</i>
Excellent	96 – 100	A+	4.0
	91 – 95	A	4.0
	85 – 90	A-	3.7
Good	80 – 84	B+	3.3
	75 – 79	B	3.0
	70 – 74	B-	2.7
Satisfactory	66 – 69	C+	2.3
	62 – 65	C	2.0
	58 – 61	C-	1.7
Poor	54 – 57	D+	1.3
Minimal Pass	50 – 53	D	1.0
Fail	0 – 49	F	0.0

Note: There is no rounding-up policy in this course. For example, a final course average of 94.2%, 94.5%, or 94.9% all receive a final % grade of 94 (**not** 95) and thus a letter grade of "A".

**COURSE OUTLINE**

*Be aware that this outline of readings may change over the course of the term.*

*You are responsible for 'attending' recorded class lectures, and checking eClass and your email for course notices.*

**Class Dates****Text/Topic / Readings**

**NOTE: Before January 14<sup>th</sup> you must pre-register for the free February 1<sup>st</sup> Int'l Week Keynote Talk.**

**NOTE: For each week: Tuesdays will be recorded lectures (posted on Google Drive) and Thursdays will be a live class (participation is required). Live classes will not be recorded. All PowerPoints used in recorded and live lectures will be saved on Google Drive**

**January 12** Introductions & Course Overview. Reading: Chapter One - Introduction: Individuals, Societies and Pragmatic Environmentalism

**January 14** Live Class. Reading: Klein, Naomi "One Way or Another, Everything Changes" (see eClass) + CSL Partner Organization Presentations

**January 19** Reading: Chapter Two – Greenhouse Gasses: Warmer isn't Better

**January 21** Live Class. Reading: Norgaard, Kari. 2018. The sociological imagination in a time of climate change. *Global and Planetary Change*, 163: 171-176 (access through the UA library)

**January 26** Reading: Chapter Three – Waste: Our Sinks are Almost Sunk

**January 28** Live Class

**[Monday February 1<sup>st</sup> International Week Keynote Talk 7pm.]**

**February 2** **NO CLASS** (in lieu of attending the Feb 1 Wed keynote talk)

**February 4** Live Class. Reading: Chapter Four – Biodiversity: Society Wouldn't Exist Without It

**February 9** Reading: Chapter Five – Water: There's No Substitute

**February 11** Live Class

**\*\*\* Group Op-Ed on Social-Environmental Issue DUE Saturday February 13 by 23:59hrs \*\*\***

**February 16 – 19: Winter Term Reading Week. --- NO CLASSES ---**

**February 23** Reading: Chapter Six – Population: A Question of Quantity or Quality

**February 25** Live Class

**\*\*\* Enviro-Documentary Research Proposal DUE Saturday February 27 by 23:59hrs \*\*\***

**\*\*\* CSL Reflection Paper #1 DUE Saturday February 27 by 23:59hrs \*\*\***

**March 2** Reading: Chapter Seven – Transportation: Beyond Air Pollution

**March 4** Live Class

**March 9** Reading: Chapter Eight – Food: From Farm to Fork

**March 11** Live Class

**March 16** Reading: Chapter Nine – Energy Production: Our Sunny Prospects

**March 18** Live Class

**\*\*\* CSL Reflection Paper #2 DUE Saturday March 20 by 23:59hrs \*\*\***

**March 23** Reading: Chapter Ten – Political Economy: Making Markets Fair and Sustainable

**March 25** Live Class

**March 30** Reading: Chapter Eleven – Governance: Biases and Blind Spots

**April 1** Live Class

**April 6** Reading: Chapter Twelve – Inequality and Growth: Prosperity for All

**April 8** Live Class

**\*\*\* Enviro-Documentary Research Paper DUE Sunday April 11 by 23:59hrs \*\*\***

**\*\*\* CSL Reflection Paper #3 DUE Sunday April 11 by 23:59hrs \*\*\***

**April 13** Reading: Chapter Thirteen – From our Beliefs to our Behaviours: Pragmatic Environmentalism

**April 15** Live Class - Last class: Review of course and Preparation for Final

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**Final Exam – Consult Beartracks for date, and Dr. Caine for the details of the examination**

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### **Academic Honesty:**

All students should consult the information provided by the Office of Student Judicial Affairs regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general. All students should consult the [Academic Integrity website](#). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

### **University Policy on Academic Integrity:**

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at [www.governance.ualberta.ca](http://www.governance.ualberta.ca)) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

The U of A considers plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation of facts and participation in an offence to be serious academic offences. Plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation of facts and participation in an offence can be avoided if students are told what these offences are and if possible sanctions are made clear at the outset.

Instructors should understand that the principles embodied in the Code are essential to our academic purpose. For this reason, instructors will be fully supported by Departments, Faculties and the University in their endeavours to rightfully discover and pursue cases of academic dishonesty in accordance with the Code.

### **30.3.2(1) Plagiarism**

No Student shall submit the words, ideas, images or data of another person as the Student's own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, project, assignment, presentation or poster in a course or program of study.

### **30.3.2(2) Cheating**

**30.3.2(2)a** No Student shall in the course of an examination or other similar activity, obtain or attempt to obtain information from another Student or other unauthorized source, give or attempt to give information to another Student, or use, attempt to use or possess for the purposes of use any unauthorized material.

**30.3.2(2)b** No Student shall represent or attempt to represent him or herself as another or have or attempt to have himself or herself represented by another in the taking of an examination, preparation of a paper or other similar activity. See also misrepresentation in 30.3.6(4).

**30.3.2(2)c** No Student shall represent another's substantial editorial or compositional assistance on an assignment as the Student's own work.

**30.3.2(2)d** No Student shall submit in any course or program of study, without the written approval of the course Instructor, all or a substantial portion of any academic writing, essay, thesis, research report, project, assignment, presentation or poster for which credit has previously been obtained by the Student or which has been or is being submitted by the Student in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.

**30.3.2(2)e** No Student shall submit in any course or program of study any academic writing, essay, thesis, report, project, assignment, presentation or poster containing a statement of fact known by the Student to be false or a reference to a source the Student knows to contain fabricated claims (unless acknowledged by the Student), or a fabricated reference to a source.

### **30.3.6(4) Misrepresentation of Facts**

No Student shall misrepresent pertinent facts to any member of the University community for the purpose of obtaining academic or other advantage. See also 30.3.2(2) b, c, d and e.

### **30.3.6(5) Participation in an Offence**

No Student shall counsel or encourage or knowingly aid or assist, directly or indirectly, another person in the commission of any offence under this Code.

There are helpful tips for Instructors and Students. The following procedures are drawn from the Code of Student Behaviour as approved by GFC and the Board of Governors. The guidelines summarize what instructors must do when they have reason to believe that a student has plagiarized, cheated, misrepresented facts or participated in an offence. See the [Code of Student Behavior](https://www.ualberta.ca/governance/resources/policies-standards-and-codes-of-conduct/code-of-student-behaviour) <https://www.ualberta.ca/governance/resources/policies-standards-and-codes-of-conduct/code-of-student-behaviour>:

### 30.5.4 Procedures for Instructors in Cases Respecting Inappropriate Academic Behaviour

**30.5.4(1)** When an Instructor believes that a Student may have committed an Inappropriate Academic Behaviour Offence [30.3.2] or that there has been Misrepresentation of Facts [30.3.6(4)] or Participation in an Offence [30.3.6(5)] in cases respecting Inappropriate Academic Behaviour in the course that he or she instructs, the Instructor will meet with the Student. Before such a meeting, the Instructor shall inform the Student of the purpose of the meeting. In the event that the Student refuses or fails to meet with the Instructor within a reasonable period of time specified by the Instructor, the Instructor shall, taking into account the available information, decide whether a report to the Dean is warranted. (CLRC 30 MAY 2002) (EXEC 7 APR 2003) (CLRC 27 NOV 2003)

**30.5.4(2)** If the Instructor believes there has been a violation of the Code, the Instructor shall, as soon as possible after the event occurred, report that violation to the Dean and provide a written statement of the details of the case. The instructor may also include a recommendation for sanction. (CLRC 27 NOV 2003).

#### Possible Sanctions

One or more of the following sanctions given in 30.4.3 (2) and (3) of the Code are commonly used for plagiarism, cheating, participation in an offence, and misrepresentation of facts.

**30.4.3(2) a.i** A mark reduction or a mark of 0 on any term work or examination for reason of Inappropriate Academic Behaviour (GFC 24 SEP 2007);

**30.4.3(2) a.ii** Reduction of a grade in a course **30.4.3(2) a.iii** A grade of F for a course.

**30.4.3(2) a.iv** [A remark on a transcript of 8 \(or 9 for failing graduate student grades\), indicating Inappropriate Academic Behaviour in addition to 30.4.3\(2\)a.i, 30.4.3\(2\)a.ii, 30.4.3\(2\)a.iii](#)

**30.4.3(3) b** Expulsion

**30.4.3(3) c** Suspension

The following sanctions may be used in rare cases.

**30.4.3(3) e** Suspension of a Degree already awarded

**30.4.3(3) f** Rescission of a Degree already awarded

#### 30.6.1 Initiation of an Appeal

**30.6.1(1)** When a Student has been found to have committed an offence under the Code of Student Behaviour or an Applicant is found to have committed an offence under the Code of Applicant Behaviour (Section 11.8 of the GFC Policy Manual), whether or not that Student or Applicant has been given a sanction, the Student or Applicant may appeal that decision, except in the case of a decision of the Discipline Officer under 30.5.6(2)e.ii, which remains final and is not subject to appeal. In cases where a severe sanction has been recommended to the Discipline Officer, once the student receives the final decision of the Discipline Officer, the student can appeal the decisions of both Dean and the Discipline Officer at the same time. The written appeal must be presented to the Appeals Co-ordinator in the University Secretariat within 15 Working Days of the deemed receipt of the decision by the Student or Applicant. The finding that an offence has been committed, the sanction imposed or both may form the basis of appeal. The written appeal must also state the full grounds of appeal and be signed by the Appellant. The appeal shall be heard by the UAB. (CLRC 30 MAY 2002) (CLRC 25 SEP 2003) (EXEC 01 MAY 2006) (GFC 24 SEP 2007) (BEAC 17 OCT 2007)