

Environment, Natural Resources, & Society

Syllabus

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Classroom: 10 Agricultural Hall
Lecture: M/W/F 12:05-12:55
Office Hours: By appointment

This course introduces undergraduate students to the sociological study of environmental issues. We learn how problems we are all familiar with (climate change, pollution, wilderness destruction, toxic exposure, fisheries collapse) relate to social factors like race, class, gender, power, capitalism, political institutions, culture, identity, and technology. We will look beyond technical and scientific aspects of contemporary ecological issues to their social roots and social implications. Students do not need to have previous coursework in sociology or environment-related fields to succeed in this course, only a willingness to read carefully, think deeply, and challenge themselves and their fellow students in class discussion. The overall goal of this course is not merely to accumulate facts and abstract ideas, but to be able to follow and participate in contemporary debates concerning environmental issues.

Note: This syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

1. Learn concepts and theories of basic social processes, especially those concerning relationships between society and the environment.
2. Understand how social science arguments are constructed and evaluated.
3. Develop critical thinking skills around social organization and social processes.
4. Develop written and oral communication skills for the social sciences.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The assigned readings constitute the bulk of the work you will have to do for this course. Your primary task is to master those readings and participate in class regularly. You are expected to complete the readings before class; if you do not prepare, you will not benefit fully from class. During class, I will often ask for your questions and feedback about the readings. I may call on students who have raised their hand, or I may call on lucky students at random. Often during discussions we will refer back to a text; you will benefit more if you bring the reading to class. The course reader is printed on 3-hole paper so you can keep it in your own 3-ring binder and bring to class only that day's reading (and leave the rest at home). Links to all readings are also available on the course website.

Required Texts

1. Course Reader (available at University Book Store)
2. Juliet Schor. 2010. *True Wealth*. Penguin
3. Naomi Klein. 2016. *This Changes Everything: Capitalism and the Climate*. Simon and Schuster.
4. Arlie Hochschild. 2016. *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. The New Press.

Your course grade will reflect performance on the following components. I will provide more details about each in class.

Assignment	% of grade
Reading reflections	30
Exams	36
2 Essays	20
Participation	10
In-class activity	3
Course evaluation	1

Final grades will be based on the following scale:

A = 93% + , AB = 88-92% , B = 83-87% , BC = 78-82% , C = 70-77% , D = 60-69% , F =<60%

This class is worth 3 credit hours: 1 credit hour for the 3 hours of class time over 15 weeks, and 2 credit hours for 6-12 hours of reading and writing per week for 15 weeks.

Grading

Todd will grade your reading reflections and essays. He is an expert both in writing and in this subject, and we are very lucky to have him! Please take time to read and understand Todd's comments and constructive criticism. It is expected that your reflections and papers will improve as the semester progresses and you incorporate his feedback. If you have any questions or concerns about your writing grades, please contact me rather than Todd.

Weekly reading reflections (30%)

For each reading, I encourage you to set aside time both to complete the reading and to critically reflect on it. What are the main arguments and what do they imply? How does this material relate to previous readings? To current events?

For one reading per week, during weeks with no exams or papers due, you will submit a reading reflection as a prompt for class discussion. Notice that these short weekly writing exercises cumulatively make up a large part of your overall course grade. This is intentional. I want you to do the readings and come to class prepared to discuss them. If you do so, you will enjoy class much more, and you will learn much more. Each of the reflections will be due to Canvas by midnight on the evening before that particular reading is scheduled for discussion. Submitted reflections will be between 350-450 words and will demonstrate your understanding by:

- 1) Summarizing in about five sentences the main arguments of the reading
- 2) Explaining one finding or concept you found novel, challenging, or poorly supported
- 3) Listing (but not defining here) important vocabulary words you did not fully understand (conceptual are more important, like 'commodification')
- 4) Raising at least one *thoughtful* question prompted by your reading

Be sure to specify which reading you are responding to at the top. Your written answers will follow this 4-part format, with each item number taking a separate paragraph. I will read these reflections in the morning before our class discussion, to get an idea of what concepts and issues need to be clarified in lecture. Please come to discussion with your reflection in mind; I will call on individuals to summarize the reading, discuss a concept, or pose a question for the class.

Reflections will be graded on a 10-point scale. A 10 will be earned by a solid grasp of the material and its implications, an inquisitive engagement with the material, concise and clear language, and correct spelling and grammar.

Exams (36%)

There will be three multiple-choice exams during the semester. Each will count for 12% of your overall course grade and will cover lectures, discussions, readings, and in-class films. They are not cumulative. There is no final exam for the course. A make-up exam will be given only if you provide me, in writing, an acceptable excuse no later than the day before the exam.

Critical essays (20%)

Two short essays (1200-1500 words, or about 5 pages) give you the opportunity to practice and get feedback on your writing skills, and to delve more deeply and critically into the material we have covered in the readings and class discussions. More details will be included in separate assignments.

Participation (10%)

The quality of this class will depend on your active participation. This entails coming to class having completed and reflected on the readings (even when you do not complete a reading reflection) as well as regular and on-time attendance, attentive listening to others, and active contribution to our discussions. You are allowed **one** unexcused absence during the semester without any penalty. After this one absence, you will lose *for each unexcused missed class* one-half point from your 10 total participation points. Class attendance is critical. The exams will include material not in the readings. I will post power-point slides after class, but they will not be nearly sufficient to do well on the exams. If you are unable to attend class, please work with another student to go over their class notes.

Class discussion and debate is essential to understanding and integrating class material. Without debate, the complexity of the material is harder to grasp and you are more likely to forget what you have read/heard. I do not lecture on the readings but rather build from them. However, quality is as important as quantity so please be aware if you are contributing in a way that might interfere with others' contributions. We will work to cultivate an environment of respect for one another's views. This is by no means saying that disagreement is discouraged! Debate and discovery is the heart of this course. Rather, an environment of respect means taking each other's contributions seriously, collaborating to advance all of our knowledge and understanding, and expressing disagreement in a gracious, humble, and friendly way.

Each student will get a blue book for in-class activities. This is also how I will track attendance. You will pick up your blue book from the accordion folder before class begins and put it back after class.

At the end of the semester, you will receive one point for completing the course evaluation.

In-class activity (3%)

To be announced in class.

Submission of written work

All written work will be submitted through Canvas. Uploaded documents will be in a Word format (.doc or .docx), and use 12-point Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins on all sides, and double line-spacing. Please format your citations following ASA guidelines: http://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/quick_tips_for_asa_style.pdf. When citing course readings or lectures, just use in-line citations in the form (Ostrom 1990), (Ostrom 1990:16) where 16 is the page number, or (Anderson, class lecture, 9-15-17). A reference section is needed only if you cite non-course sources, and that section does not count against your word limit. Heed each assignment's word limit. Word limits force you to prioritize your claims and to use words carefully. Any submission that exceeds the word limit will not be graded and therefore will not receive any credit.

There will NOT be any re-writes.

You are always welcome to submit an assignment *in advance* of a deadline. Critical essays submitted after a deadline will be docked 10% for each day (up to 24 hours) the assignment is late. **Reading reflections must be submitted by the deadline or will receive no credit at all.**

Classroom etiquette

Please be on time to class. If you need to arrive late or leave early, please let me know ahead of time and please enter/exit quietly, taking a seat near the door. Please hold side-conversations until after class. **Please turn cell phones off or place in airplane mode during class, and keep out of your sight. Use of cell phones, tablets, laptops or other devices during the class is NOT allowed. Students who violate this class rule will lose participation points.**

Communication

I will communicate with you often using your Wisc.edu addresses; please make sure you check your Wisc.edu addresses. Please communicate with me via email rather than through Canvas.

Accommodation

Please email me by the end of the second week of the course if you need special accommodations in testing, assignments, or other aspects of the course. The McBurney Center (608-263-2741) provides assistance to students who qualify for disability services and provides a formal accommodations request (VISA).

If you wish to request a scheduling accommodation for religious observance, please email me by the end of the second week of the course, stating the date(s) for which you request accommodation. For details of University policy, see: <https://kb.wisc.edu/page.php?id=21698>.

Academic integrity

Please take a moment now to familiarize yourself with the University's rules and regulations regarding academic integrity: <http://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/>
I take these policies very seriously, as should you. Cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated and will follow disciplinary penalties and procedures outlined by the Dean of Students. Make sure that all work that you submit is either your own or is properly acknowledged. The grader for this course may use an online plagiarism checker, so be sure to cite appropriately.

Office hours

To be fair to all students, I do not hold set office hours. However, I am more than happy to meet with you during a scheduled appointment. Nonetheless, please strive to ask routine questions of clarification during the lecture, so that everyone may benefit. Office hours will not be devoted to tutorial for materials missed when not attending class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Class	Date		Reading
Week 1		<i>(no reflection due this week)</i>	
1	24-Jan		Introduction
2	26-Jan		Lesson 1: The Social Construction of Nature: Of Computers, Butterflies, Dogs, and Trucks. Stella M. Capek. In Kenneth Gould and Tammy Lewis, eds. (2015). <i>Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology</i> . Second Edition. (14 pps)
Week 2			
3	29-Jan		Imada, Toshie (2012). Cultural Narratives of Individualism and Collectivism: A Content Analysis of Textbook Stories in the United States and Japan. (16 pps)
4	31-Jan		Lesson 5: Corporate Power: The Role of the Global Media in Shaping What We Know About the Environment. Campbell, Elizabeth H. (16 pps)
5	2-Feb	In-class activity	Keohane, Nathaniel and Sheila Olmstead. 2007. "Markets and the Environment," pp. 1-6 & 65-72 (stop before 'Why do markets fail to provide public goods?')
Week 3			
6	5-Feb		Keohane, Nathaniel and Sheila Olmstead. 2007. "Markets and the Environment," pp. 72-83.
7	7-Feb		Fullerton, Don & Robert Stavins. 1998. "How Economists See the Environment." Nature.
8	9-Feb		Ostrom, Elinor. 1990. Ch 1: "Reflections on the Commons." Pp. 1-15 (stop before 'An alternative solution'), in <i>Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action</i> .
Week 4			
9	12-Feb		Ostrom, Elinor. 1990. Ch 1: "Reflections on the Commons." Pp. 15-25 in <i>Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action</i> .
10	14-Feb		Wright, Erik Olin. 2010. "What is So Bad about Capitalism?" Chapter 3 in <i>Envisioning Real Utopias</i> . P 21-35 (stop before 'Proposition 5. Capitalism is inefficient in certain crucial respects.')
11	16-Feb		Wright, Erik Olin. 2010. "What is So Bad about Capitalism?" Chapter 3 in <i>Envisioning Real Utopias</i> . Pps 35-56.
Week 5		<i>(no reflection due this week)</i>	
12	19-Feb	Exam #1	
13	21-Feb		Schor. <i>True Wealth</i> , Ch1: Introduction
14	23-Feb		Schor. <i>True Wealth</i> , Ch2: From Consumer Boom to Ecological Bust
Week 6			
15	26-Feb		Schor. <i>True Wealth</i> , Ch3: Economics Confronts the Earth
16	28-Feb		
17	2-Mar		Schor. <i>True Wealth</i> , Ch4: Living Rich on a Troubled Planet
Week 7		<i>(no reflection due this week)</i>	
18	5-Mar		Schor. <i>True Wealth</i> , Ch5: The Economics of Plenitude
19	7-Mar		
20	9-Mar	Paper #1 due by	

		midnight on Friday	
Week 8			
21	12-Mar		Lesson 2: Theories in Environmental Sociology, Luiz C. Barbosa
22	14-Mar		Desmond and Emirbayer. 2009. What is Racial Domination?
23	16-Mar		Lesson 3: The State and Policy: Imperialism, Exclusion, and Ecological Violence as State Policy, David Naguib Pellow
Week 9			<i>(no reflection due this week)</i>
24	19-Mar		Lesson 10: Environmental Inequality and Environmental Justice, Michael Mascarenhas
25	21-Mar		Catch-up and review
26	23-Mar	Exam #2	
Spring break 3/24-4/1 (no class)			
Week 10			
27	2-Apr		Klein, Naomi. 2016. Introduction, in <i>This Changes Everything: Capitalism and the Climate</i> (29 pps)
28	4-Apr		
29	6-Apr		Klein. "The Right is Right." Chapter 1 in <i>This Changes Everything</i> (33 pps)
Week 11			
30	9-Apr		Klein. "Hot Money." Chapter 2 in <i>This Changes Everything</i> (32 pps)
31	11-Apr		
32	13-Apr		Klein. "Public and Paid For." Chapter 3 in <i>This Changes Everything</i> (24 pps)
Week 12			
33	16-Apr		Klein. Planning and Banning." Chapter 4 in <i>This Changes Everything</i> (41 pps)
34	18-Apr		
35	20-Apr		Hochschild. <i>Strangers in Their Own Land</i> , Preface and Chapter 1-2. (39 pps) <i>Optional</i> : Freudenburg, William. 1992. "Addictive Economies: Extractive Industries and Vulnerable Localities in a Changing World Economy." <i>Rural Sociology</i>
Week 13			
36	23-Apr		Hochschild. <i>Strangers in Their Own Land</i> , Chapters 3-5 (46 pps). <i>Optional</i> : Bell, Shannon and Richard York. 2010. "Community Economic Identity: The Coal Industry and Ideology Construction in West Virginia." <i>Rural Sociology</i> <i>Optional</i> : Guilford, Gwenn (2017). The 100-year capitalist experiment that keeps Appalachia poor, sick, and stuck on coal. <i>Quartz</i>
37	25-Apr		Hochschild. <i>Strangers in Their Own Land</i> , Chapters 6-8 (50 pps) <i>Optional</i> : Bell, Shannon and Yvonne Braun. 2010. Coal, identity, and the gendering of environmental justice activism in central Appalachia. <i>Gender & Society</i>
38	27-Apr		Hochschild. <i>Strangers in Their Own Land</i> , Chapters 9-11 (46 pps)
Week 14			<i>(no reflection due this week)</i>
39	30-Apr	Exam #3	
40	2-May		Hochschild. <i>Strangers in Their Own Land</i> , Chapters 12-13 (26 pps)
41	4-May		Hochschild. <i>Strangers in Their Own Land</i> , Chapters 14-16 (36 pps)