

Soc/CESoc/FWEcol 248: Environment, Natural Resources, & Society

Instructor: Ian Carrillo
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Classroom: Microbial Sciences 1510
Class Time: Tue/Thu 4:00-5:15 pm
Office Hours: Wed. 11:00-1:00, or by appointment

Overview

Welcome to Environment, Natural Resources and Society!

The main task of this course is to study the relationship between human society and the natural environment. We seek to hone our understanding of how our social system is embedded in the natural system, and vice versa. The first half of the course establishes a shared vocabulary for sociological approaches to the environment and introduces the major debates in environmental sociology. For instance, we learn key theories and terms, such as “positional goods”, “treadmill of production,” and “environmental racism.” In the second semester, using the conceptual toolkit developed in the first half of the semester, we examine how the social construction of nature offers promises and challenges for promoting sustainable practices for production and consumption.

We will learn how to use a sociological lens to examine human interaction with the natural environment. This course seeks to strengthen students’ capacities for inquiry, analysis and critical engagement with real world challenges and socio-economic problems. Due to the wide-reaching scope of environmental issues, the course draws its readings not just from sociology, but also from other disciplines in the social and physical sciences, such as biology, economics, geography, history, and agroecology, among others.

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

Required Texts

Juliet Schor. 2011. *True Wealth*. Penguin Books.

Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway. 2012. *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming*. London: Bloomsbury.

Thomas Rogers. 2010. *The Deepest Wounds: a Labor and Environmental History of Sugar in Northeast Brazil*. University of North Carolina Press.

These books are available for purchase at Rainbow Bookstore (426 W. Gilman, off State St.). If you do not wish to buy these books, you may read them in the library. All books are on reserve at Steenbock Library. Other required readings are available on Learn@UW at learnuw.wisc.edu.

Course Requirements

Attendance and Class Participation	100 pts
Short Assignments	100 pts
Mid-Term Exam	250 pts
Short Papers (4*75 pts)	300 pts
Final Paper	250 pts
TOTAL	1,000 pts

- **Attendance and Class Participation:** The quality of our collective experience in this course depends on your participation. Participation means attending class, keeping up with the readings and being able to discuss them thoughtfully in class. The material covered in lecture is not the same as what you will find in the readings, and I will not post lecture notes on-line (although I will post power-point slides). I encourage debate based on careful readings of materials. We will work to cultivate an environment of respect for one another's views.

Attendance is mandatory in this course. Keep in mind that before you can earn points for discussion you must first be present! I will adjust your overall grade for attendance/class participation based on the following scale:

- Full attendance or missed one class = +10 pts (but not to exceed a total of 100 pts)
- Missed two to three classes = No adjustment
- Missed four classes = -10 pts (but not to go below zero)
- Missed five or more classes = adjusted to zero and reported to Dean of Students

At times, I will request that students submit questions for in-class discussion. These questions should: 1) be grounded in the relevant reading assignment, 2) be thoughtfully constructed, and 3) serve as a platform for a greater discussion. Questions should be completed before class and submitted to me before class begins. See page seven of this syllabus for an exemplar discussion question.

- **Short Assignments:** We will complete two short homework assignments. The first will be an exercise in which students calculate their ecological footprint. In the second exercise, students will construct a commodity chain of a commonly used product. These two short assignments seek to personalize students' connection to sustainable consumption efforts.
- **Short Papers**
You need to complete four out of five short paper assignments. The main goal for these short papers is for you to demonstrate your knowledge of the dialogue between course readings, including the connection between theoretical concepts and empirical data.

These papers should be no more than 500 words in length and formatted appropriately (see relevant instruction sheet). On the due date, you should upload your paper to Turnitin.com by 4:00 p.m. and submit a paper copy in class. You may choose to submit all five and have the lowest grade dropped, or submit four and skip any one of your choice.

I will provide a detailed instruction sheet that outlines my expectations and methods for grading evaluation.

- **Mid-Term Exam**

On March 17, we will have the only exam of the semester. This multiple-choice exam will focus heavily on theories and key terms. It will cover material from lectures, class discussions and readings from the beginning of the semester to the day of the exam.

- **Final Paper**

By **5:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 12**, you will turn in to my office the final paper of the course. This final paper will be a summary and review of one of five books that you will read at the end of the semester. The paper should be between 2,500 and 3,000 words (about five to six pages, double-spaced). In this paper, you are expected to situate the book within one or two of the major themes that we covered during the semester. A high-quality paper will use relevant theories, concepts and evidence. I will provide a detailed instruction sheet that outlines my expectations and methods for grading.

I will post a sign-up sheet outside my office where students choose which book to read. There are approximately eight spots per book. Students that do not indicate a preference will be randomly assigned a book. You will choose from (or be assigned) one of the following books:

- William Cronon. 1983. *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England*. Hill and Wang.
- Michael Pollan. 2009. *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto*. Penguin.
- Steve Striffler. 2005. *Chicken: The Dangerous Transformation of America's Favorite Food*. Yale University Press.
- Bill McKibben. 2007. *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*. Holt.
- Joseph Stiglitz and Andrew Charlton. 2007. *Fair Trade for All: How Trade Can Promote Development*. Oxford University Press.

Course Information

- **Grading Scale**

A: 93-100 AB: 87-92.99 B: 83-86.99 BC: 77-82.99
C: 70-76.99 D: 60-69.99 F: 0-59.99

- **Late Policy:** If you submit your work after the due date, your score will be penalized by 10% for each day after the due date. You are required to turn in both hard copies and electronic copies before they are due. Requests for extension may not be approved. No re-writes. The due date for the final paper is non-negotiable.
- **Exam Policy:** A make-up exam will be given only if you provide the instructor, in writing, an acceptable excuse from an accredited professional regarding the situation. You should

submit the written notice before the day of the exam. The make-up exam will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for all students that miss the exam, but no later than two weeks after the scheduled exam. No re-takes.

- **Lecture Slides:** I will post lecture slides on Learn@UW after class. These slides alone do not provide a sufficient basis for you to answer exam questions.
- **Classroom Etiquette:** One of my responsibilities is to ensure that the environment in the classroom is conducive to learning. If you are late, you should find a seat in the back of the classroom. If you need to leave early, please let me know in advance and sit where it will be easy to quietly leave the room. Turn off all cell phones and put away newspapers before class begins. Please hold side-conversations and discussions until after class.

Although computers are a valuable tool for research and study, they are inimical to participation and collegiality in the classroom. The use of laptops or other electronic devices for note-taking or other purposes in class, therefore, will NOT be permitted.

- **Office Hours:** Office hours are 2:00-4:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, or by appointment. My office is Room 308D in Agricultural Hall. Office hours will NOT be devoted to tutorial for materials that students miss when not attending class.
- **Readings:** It is extremely important for you to keep up with the required readings for each session. I lecture with the assumption that you have read all pieces before class. I normally do not lecture from the readings, but try to build on them. You may also bring along your questions about specific readings to class.
- **Communication:** I will make an effort to timely announce any changes to the syllabus via email, on Learn@UW, and in class. Please make sure you check your wisc.edu emails, and let me know if you have trouble receiving emails sent to the class list.

You are welcome to communicate with me via email. Please expect a reply within 48 hours. However, I will NOT respond to questions if answers can be found in this syllabus. Nor will I respond to questions that have been addressed in class. Try to ask questions of clarification in class so your fellow classmates can also benefit from the exchange.

- **Academic Honesty:** All work that you submit for this class must be your own. You must precisely and explicitly acknowledge the sources you used to prepare your work. Academic dishonesty is a serious matter, which may require reporting students to the University for punishment. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, come and talk with me or consult the Writing Center (www.writing.wisc.edu, 608-263-1992).

Cheating on the exam and/or writings will not be tolerated. Students caught cheating will receive a grade of F for the entire course, and the case will be reported to the Dean of

Students. NO EXCEPTIONS. You should familiarize yourself with UW rules regarding academic honesty at <http://students.wisc.edu/doso/acadintegrity.html>.

- **Accommodation:** I wish to include fully any students with special needs in this course. Please let me know (the earlier the better) if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or evaluation procedures in order to enable you to participate fully. The McBurney Center (www.mcburney.wisc.edu, 702 W. Johnson Street, 608-263-2741) can provide useful assistance and documentation.

If English is not your first language, you may have an additional thirty minutes for the exam. If this applies to you, please come and talk with me at your earliest convenience. The Great University Tutoring Service (GUTS, guts.studentorg.wisc.edu, 608-263-5666) can provide additional assistance with language and other academic skills.

- **Nighttime Safety:** The University has two transportation and walking escort service - SAFERide and SAFEwalk - to help you stay safe while getting around campus and the nearby areas after dark: <http://transportation.wisc.edu/transportation/safeservices.aspx>.

Class Schedule

DATE	READINGS	HOMEWORK DUE
Jan. 19	Syllabus	
Jan. 21	Bell & Ashwood, pp. 49-62 (stop at "...seem more beautiful."); pp. 74 (start at heading "The Treadmill of Production")-77; pp. 78-106	
Sustainable Consumption		
Jan. 26	Schor, Ch. 1 (pp. 1-23)	
Jan. 28	Schor, Ch. 2 (pp. 25-65)	Due: Personal Carbon Footprint Analysis
Feb. 2	Schor, Ch. 3 (pp. 67-97); Guest lecture by Professor Lydia Zepeda	
Feb. 4	Schor, Ch. 4 (pp. 99-143)	
Feb. 9	Schor, Ch. 5 (pp. 145-184)	Short Paper #1 Due: Sustainable Consumption
Information and Climate Change		
Feb. 11	Bell & Ashwood, pp. 107-130; Oreskes & Conway, Introduction (pp. 1-9)	
Feb. 16	Oreskes & Conway, Ch. 1 (pp. 10-35)	
Feb. 18	In-Class Film - Merchants of Doubt	
Feb. 23	Oreskes & Conway, Ch. 6 (pp. 169-215)	
Feb. 25	Oreskes & Conway, Ch. 7 (pp. 216-239)	Short Paper #2 Due: Information and Climate Change
Race and Environment		
Mar. 1	Golash-Boza, Ch. 12 from <i>Race and Racisms</i>	
Mar. 3	Reskin, "The Race Discrimination System"	
Mar. 8	Taylor, "Toxic Exposure"	

Mar. 10	No reading; Guest lecture by Yifei Li	
Mar. 15	White, "D-Town Farm"	Short Paper #3 Due: Environment and Race
Mar. 17	Mid-Term Exam	
Mar. 22	Spring Break	
Mar. 24	Spring Break	
Ecology, Work and Culture		
Mar. 29	Rogers, Introduction (pp. 1-18) and Ch. 1 (pp. 21-44)	
Mar. 31	Rogers, Ch. 2 (pp. 45-69)	
Apr. 5	Rogers, Ch. 3 (pp. 71-96)	Due: Commodity Chain Sketch
Apr. 7	Rogers, Ch. 4 (pp. 99-124)	
Apr. 12	Rogers, Ch. 5 (pp. 125-154)	Short Paper #4 Due: Ecology, Work and Culture
Social Construction of Nature		
Apr. 14	Bell & Ashwood, pp. 252-282	
Apr. 19	Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness"	
Apr. 21	Bourdieu, excerpts from <i>Distinction</i> (pp. 372-385)	
Apr. 26	Anderson, "Me, Myself and the Others"	Short Paper #5 Due: Social Construction of Nature
Final Book Project		
Apr. 28	Striffler, pp. 1-31; Pollan, pp. 1-39; Cronon, pp. 3-33 McKibbon, pp. 1-45; Stiglitz & Charlton, pp. 1-40	
May 3	Striffler, pp. 32-90; Pollan, pp. 40-82; Cronon, pp. 34-81; McKibbon, pp. 46-94; Stiglitz & Charlton, pp. 41-86	
May 5	Striffler, pp. 90-134; Pollan, pp. 83-136; Cronon, pp. 82-126; McKibbon, pp. 95-128; Stiglitz & Charlton, 87-132	
May 12		Final Paper Due

Course Bibliography

- Anderson, E.N. 2014. *Everyone Eats: Understanding Food and Culture*. NYU Press.
- Bell, Michael and Loka Ashwood. 2016. *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*. 5th Edition. Sage Publications.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction*. Harvard University Press.
- Cronon, William. 1983. *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England*. Hill and Wang.
- Golash-Boza, Tanya. 2014. *Race and Racisms: A Critical Approach*. Oxford University Press.
- McKibbon, Bill. 2007. *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*. Holt.
- Oreskes, Naomi and Erik Conway. 2012. *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Pollan, Michael. 2009. *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto*. Penguin.
- Reskin, Barbara. 2012. "The Race Discrimination System." *Annual Review of Sociology* 38: 17-35.
- Rogers, Thomas. 2010. *The Deepest Wounds: a Labor and Environmental History of Sugar in Northeast Brazil*. University of North Carolina Press.
- Schor, Juliet. 2011. *True Wealth*. Penguin Books.

- Stiglitz, Joseph and Andrew Charlton. 2007. *Fair Trade for All: How Trade Can Promote Development*. Oxford University Press.
- Striffler, Steve. 2005. *Chicken: The Dangerous Transformation of America's Favorite Food*. Yale University Press.
- Taylor, Dorceta. 2014. *Toxic Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution and Residential Mobility*. NYU Press.
- White, Monica. 2011. "D-Town Farm: African American Resistance to Food Security and the Transformation of Detroit." *Environmental Practice* 13(4): 406-417.

Additional Information

- **Suggestions for doing well in this course:**
 1. Keep up with the readings and do the assigned readings before they are discussed in class.
 2. Take notes while you read. Afterwards, write a few sentences about the main point(s) of the piece. Jot down any questions you have about the readings and bring these to class.
 3. Attend class. Be prepared to ask questions or offer comments about the readings, how they relate to lecture material or current events.
 4. Take notes. It is not enough to simply copy down the terms and diagrams presented on the board or screen. If you miss class, get class notes from another student whom you trust to be a good note-taker.
 5. Attend office hours. If you cannot attend scheduled office hours, let me know and I will find another time.
 6. Form a study group.
- **An Exemplar Discussion Question:** *This question was submitted by a former student in this class in response to Chapter 6 (*The Denial of Global Warming*) of *Merchants of Doubt*.

It appears that a major problem with scientific research is that it is not effectively distributed and communicated with the general public. The large majority of journal articles are too technical and scientific for most Americans to understand and they are generally not accessible without paid subscriptions. How can we communicate this information in ways that the general population can understand and have access to?