

# Environment, Natural Resources, & Society

## Syllabus

Instructor: Todd Flournoy  
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Office: 308E Agricultural Hall

Classroom: 10 Agricultural Hall  
Lecture: T/R 9:30-10:45am  
Office Hours: T 11-1pm, and by appointment

This course introduces undergraduate students to the study of contemporary relationships that we have with the non-human world around us. The literature we use is multidisciplinary, although I bring a sociological perspective to discussion. Given our time limitations and the nature of my own research, the course also has more of a domestic rather than international focus. Students do not need to have previous coursework in sociology or environment-related fields to enjoy the course or succeed in it. That being said, you certainly are welcome, however, to contribute your knowledge from other fields and disciplines. Diversity in perspectives is appreciated and beneficial.

Readings focus on three primary themes:

- 1) environmental problems and the market, particularly around climate change;
- 2) environmental racism and environmental justice; and
- 3) natural resource conflict and collaboration in the U.S.

Obviously these are but three of many topics that would be appropriate for the course. Rather than surveying a new issue each week, we will spend more time trying to understand the roots of some of these foundational issues and their implications for the future.

Class assignments are structured to provide many thinking and writing opportunities spread over the semester. Class participation is an important part of the overall experience and grade.

I welcome you to C&E Soc 248!

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Naomi Klein. 2014. *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*. Simon & Schuster.

Dorceta Taylor. 2014. *Toxic Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution, and Residential Mobility*. NYU Press.

Justin Farrell. 2015. *The Battle for Yellowstone: Morality and the Sacred Roots of Environmental Conflict*. Princeton University Press.

Free copies of Taylor's and of Farrell's book *currently* are available electronically through the UW-Madison libraries. I recommend that you download PDFs of the relevant chapters (see "Course Schedule" below) and retain these copies for your own highlighting, note taking and in-class use. Links to the downloads are available on the course website. There you also will find copies of required journal articles. The Klein book may be purchased at the University Bookstore or online.

## STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

1. Learn concepts and general theories on 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

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

### Weekly discussion prompts (35%)

Notice that these short weekly writing exercises cumulatively make up the largest 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. On 10 of the 15 weeks of the semester, you will submit a weekly discussion prompt. I do not ask for prompts on weeks when reflection papers (described below) are due, nor during the first or last week of the course. Each of the 10 prompts will be worth 3.5% of your final course grade and will be due by 6pm on the evening before that particular reading is scheduled for discussion. On weeks when we have readings to discuss on Tuesday and Thursday, it is your choice which one (asterisked) reading you will engage with a written prompt. Submitted prompts will consist of less than 400 words and demonstrate your reading by:

- 1) Summarizing in five sentences (rarely, less) the main arguments of the reading
- 2) Explaining one finding or concept you found novel, challenging or poorly supported
- 3) Raising at least one *thoughtful* question prompted by your reading

Your written answers will follow this 3-part format, with each item number taking a separate paragraph. I will read these prompts the night before our discussion, to get an idea of what concepts and issues need to be clarified in lecture. Please come to discussion with your prompt in mind; I will call on individuals to summarize the reading, discuss a concept, or pose a question for the class. Being prepared with your prompt, you see, also benefits your class participation.

### Exams (30%)

There will be three multiple-choice exams during the semester. Each will count for 10% of your overall course grade and will cover lectures, discussions, readings and in-class films. There is no final exam for the course.

### Reflection papers (15%)

Drawing from our cumulative readings, you will write two short reflection papers responding to specific questions that I provide. Each reflection will be worth 7.5% of your final course grade. Papers will engage more than one course reading and are limited to 1500 words, before citations.

## Participation (15%)

Participation in this course entails regular and on-time attendance, attentive listening to others, and active contribution to our discussions. Class attendance is critical. 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 of one of the 15 total percentage points. At the end of the semester, I will consider a student's active contribution if a student is close to earning the next letter grade up. Please bring copies of the readings to class. Often during discussions we will refer back to a text.

## Briefing / Oral presentation (5%)

In our second class (Thursday, January 19), each student will sign up to present a specific reading from the syllabus to the class. These brief (7-8 minute) presentations will introduce the main points from the reading and begin class discussion with some initial questions for your classmates. Again, your familiarity with writing 'prompts' will help you with this course component as well.

## Submission of written work

All written work will be submitted through Learn@UW. 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 single line-spacing. *Only* provide your student ID number – not your name – in the header of each page; grading will be done anonymously.

You will stay on top of the course workload and be better prepared for class discussion by submitting these assignments on time. Remember: You are always welcome to submit an assignment *in advance* of a deadline. If you submit work after a deadline, there will be a 10% penalty for each "day" (up to 24 hours) the assignment is late. There is one important exception to this policy. Intended to promote your preparation for and participation in class, **discussion prompts must be submitted by the deadline or will receive no credit at all.** On most weeks you are given two dates, and therefore your choice of two deadlines, for submitting your prompt.

## Exam policy

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.

## 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. This may be the case if English is your second language, you have a travel schedule from student athletics, or you experience a physical or psychological condition that makes it difficult to complete assignments without modification of those tasks. 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.

## Classroom etiquette

Please be on time to class. Repeated or disruptive tardiness will impact the attendance portion of your final course grade.

I understand that some students prefer to take notes electronically or prefer to read electronic files instead of printed ones. *Provisionally*, I will allow use of laptops or tablets only – never any cell phones – as long as their in-class use is for course purposes only. Do not abuse this consideration. If at any point during the semester I sense that these permitted devices are being used for other purposes, I may disallow any future use in the course *for all students*. Trust me – you will not want to be the student who causes all of your classmates to lose this (conditional) privilege.

## Office hours

I am happy to meet with you during office hours or 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

Beginning Week 2, discussion prompts are due *weekly* for those weeks with asterisked (\*) readings below. For each of these weeks, you may write on any *one* asterisked-reading of your choosing. Weekly due dates for prompts will vary, based on your choices.

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### Week 1    **Individuals, society and the environment** (no prompt)

1/17    Introduction to the course and to each other  
*Reading: Syllabus*

1/19    Individual action and environmental problems  
*Reading: Maniates, Michael F. 2001. "Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World?" Global Environmental Politics.*

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**Week 2 Environmental problems and the market** (prompt #1 due)

- 1/24 The classic environmental problem and neoclassical economic thinking  
 \**Reading 1*: Hardin, Garrett. 1968. "The Tragedy of the Commons." *Science*.  
 \**Reading 2*: Keohane, Nathaniel and Sheila Olmstead. 2007. Pp. 1-6 & 65-83 in  
*Markets and the Environment*.  
*Reading 3*: Fullerton, Don & Robert Stavins. 1998. "How Economists See the  
 Environment." *Nature*.
- 1/26 Bringing nature into the market?  
 \**Reading 1*: Robertson, Morgan. 2011. "Measurement and Alienation: Making a  
 World of Ecosystem Services." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*.  
*Reading 2*: Matulis, Brett. 2014. "The Economic Valuation of Nature: A Question of  
 Justice?" *Ecological Economics*.

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**Week 3 Going beyond the (naturalized) market** (prompt #2 due)

- 1/31 Recognizing the importance of institutions  
 \**Reading*: Ostrom, Elinor. 1990. "Reflections on the Commons." Pp. 1-25 in  
*Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*.
- 2/2 Sociological approaches to nature and environmental degradation  
 \**Reading*: Goldman, Michael and Rachel Schurman. 2000. "Closing the 'Great  
 Divide': New Social Theory on Society and Nature." *Annual Review of Sociology*.

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**Week 4 Establishing environmental problems** (no prompt)

- 2/7 *Reading*: Taylor, Peter and Frederick Buttel. 1992. "How Do We Know We Have  
 Global Environmental Problems? Science and the Globalization of  
 Environmental Discourse." *Geoforum*.  
*Film* (in class): *Merchants of Doubt*. 2014. Sony Pictures Classics.
- 2/9 How did we get here?  
*Reading*: *This Changes Everything*, Chapter 1 & pp. 64-83 of Chapter 2.
- 2/11 *Assignment*: *Reflection paper #1 due by 6 pm*

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**Week 5 Environmental problems and capitalism: climate change** (prompt #3 due)

- 2/14 Free market fundamentalism  
 \**Reading*: *This Changes Everything*, pp.83-95 (remainder) of Chapter 2, & Chapter 3
- 2/16 Working the market: Big business and big green  
 \**Reading*: *This Changes Everything*, Chapter 6
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**Week 6 Race and class influencing environmental attitudes** (prompt #4 due)

2/21 **EXAM #1**

- 2/23 \**Reading 1*: Mayer, Adam, and E. Keith Smith. "Rethinking Economic Conditions and Environmental Attitudes: Macroeconomic Effects, Individual Experiences, and Subjectivity." *Social Currents*.  
 \**Reading 2*: Clements, John, Aaron McCright, and Chenyand Xiao. 2014. "Green Christians? An Empirical Examination of Environmental Concern Within the U.S. General Public." *Organization & Environment*.

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**Week 7 Environmental racism and environmental justice** (prompt #5 due)

- 2/28 Understanding environmental justice through cases  
 \**Reading: Toxic Communities*, "Introduction: Environmental Justice Claims" & Chapter 1
- 3/2 Disproportionate siting, and Native American communities  
 \**Reading: Toxic Communities*, Chapters 2 & 3

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**Week 8 Racial zoning and residential segregation** (no prompt)

- 3/7 *Reading: Toxic Communities*, Chapter 4
- 3/9 *Reading: Toxic Communities*, Chapter 7
- 3/11 *Assignment: Reflection paper #2 due by 6 pm*

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**Week 9 Environmental privilege** (no prompt)

- 3/14 *Reading: Sun-Hee Park, Lisa and David Pellow. 2011. "Introduction: Environmental Privilege in the Rocky Mountains." Pp. 1-27 in The Slums of Aspen: Immigrants vs. the Environment in America's Eden.*
- 3/16 **EXAM #2**

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~ **SPRING BREAK** ~

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**Week 10 Resource dependence** (prompt #6 due)

- 3/28 \**Reading 1*: Stedman, Richard. 2013. "Resource Dependence and Rural Development." Pp. 77-91 in *Handbook of Rural Development*.  
 \* *Reading 2*: Freudenburg, William. 1992. "Addictive Economies: Extractive Industries and Vulnerable Localities in a Changing World Economy." *Rural Sociology*.

**Week 10 (continued)**

- 3/30 \*Reading: Bell, Shannon and Richard York. 2010. "Community Economic Identity: The Coal Industry and Ideology Construction in West Virginia." *Rural Sociology*.

**Week 11 Identities and other attachments to the environment** (prompt #7 due)

- 4/4 \*Reading: Alkon, Alison and Michael Traugot. 2008. "Place Matters, But How? Rural Identity, Environmental Decision Making, and the Social Construction of Place." *City & Community*.
- 4/6 \*Reading: *The Battle for Yellowstone*, "Introduction: Bringing Moral Culture into the Fray"

**Week 12 Meanings and ideologies around place** (prompt #8 due)

- 4/11 \*Reading: *The Battle for Yellowstone*, Chapter 1
- 4/13 \*Reading: *The Battle for Yellowstone*, Chapter 2

**Week 13 Environmental mobilization** (prompt #9 due)

- 4/18 \*Reading: McCarthy, James. 2002. "First World Political Ecology: Lessons from the Wise Use Movement." *Environment and Planning A*.
- 4/20 \*Reading: Shriver, Thomas, Alison Adams, and Chris Messer. 2014. "Power, Quiescence, and Pollution: The Suppression of Environmental Grievances." *Social Currents*.

**Week 14 Environmental mobilization** (prompt #10 due)

- 4/25 \*Reading: Bell, Shannon and Yvonne Braun. 2010. "Coal, Identity, and the Gendering of Environmental Justice Activism in Central Appalachia." *Gender & Society*.
- 4/27 \*Reading: Ashwood, Loka, Noelle Harden, Michael Bell, and William Bland. 2014. "Linked and Situated: Grounded Knowledge." *Rural Sociology*.

**Week 15 Getting beyond confrontation** (no prompt)

- 5/2 **EXAM #3**
- 5/4 LAST DAY OF CLASS  
*Film* (in class): *Resolving Community Conflicts*. 2015. Patrice O'Neill.