

# Environment, Natural Resources, and Society

Community & Environmental Sociology 248

Tuesday/Thursday 4:00-5:15

1420 Microbial Sciences

Spring 2012

## Instructor

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Office Hours: By appointment

*This syllabus may change throughout the course of the semester. Readings may be added or removed, and due dates could shift. Changes will be announced in class and via email.*

## Course Description

We are living arguably in the Anthropocene, an era where humans have become a geophysical force on a planetary scale. Phenomena such as climate, biodiversity, nature can no longer be thought of as something ‘out there,’ to be managed, protected, or harvested; they are now on ‘this side’ of the social space. In other words, matters of environment cannot be conceived of separately from matters of society, and vice-versa.

This introductory course brings sociological perspectives to shed light on the myriad relationships between environment and society. Through readings and discussions about patterns of natural resource extraction and consumption, population growth, food production, environmentalisms, sustainability and environmental justice, we will explore societal interactions with environments at local and global scales.

## Required Texts

- Bell, Michael Mayerfeld. 2012. *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

The text-book is available at Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative. 426 West Gilman Street, Madison, (608) 257-6050, [www.rainbowbookstore.org](http://www.rainbowbookstore.org). It is also on reserve at the Steenbock Library.

- Additional course readings are available electronically through Learn@UW.

## Course Requirements and Evaluation

**Pop Quizzes (15%).** Fourteen pop quizzes on the readings will be administered throughout the course of the semester. They will consist of multiple choice and/or short-answer questions and will be graded on a 5-point scale. They may cover any of the class readings or films since the previous pop quiz. If you have done the readings, these quizzes should not be difficult. Quizzes could occur during any class, including days with films. They may also occur on two consecutive class days. Any missed quizzes will receive a grade of zero. Anyone coming to take the quiz and

leaving immediately afterwards will also receive a zero. When calculating your final grade, I will automatically drop your two lowest quiz scores, leaving only your twelve best scores. The reason I drop the lowest two quiz scores is so that you can be absent from class without being penalized. Make-up quizzes are therefore not offered except in cases of prolonged illness. If you are thinking of skipping class early in the semester, remember that you may get sick later on and already have used up your two bad quiz scores on unnecessary absences.

**Reflection Papers (15%).** You will be required to write 3 reflection papers that address one or more of the assigned readings or films for that part of the course. Reflection papers are due on February 12, March 12, and April 30. Each reflection paper should be 1 to 1.5 double-spaced pages (no more than 1.5 pages) and must include the following four sections (clearly labeled):

- a. *Argument:* briefly describe a central argument made in the reading or film.
- b. *Evidence:* describe and evaluate the kind of evidence used by the author(s) to support the argument.
- c. *Connection:* connect this reading or film to other readings, films, or lectures from class.
- d. *Evaluation:* express your reasoned opinion about the reading or film.

Your reflection paper will be evaluated on a 20-point scale. In case you are not satisfied with your grades on the first three, you will be allowed to write one more reflection paper on an assigned reading or film from a different part of the course of your choice. You are required to turn in both a physical and an electronic copy of each reflection paper. On the day that it is due, the physical copy must be handed in at the start of class and the electronic copy must be uploaded to the online dropbox at Learn@UW **before** the start of class. The File name of your document should have the following format: 'YourNameTheAuthor'sName.doc'.

**Term Paper (30%).** You are asked to write a paper that offers the chance for you to explore course concepts and arguments that you find most engaging. The paper should be 3-3.5 pages double-spaced (no more than 3.5 pages), and will be evaluated on a 120-point scale. I welcome any topic area you choose so long as it fits in the realm of environmental sociology by examining environmental problems, their social origins and interrelations, and potential solutions. Your paper should engage with course concepts, readings/films, and class discussions. You are required to turn in both a physical and a digital copy of your term paper. The physical copy must be handed in at the start of class on Thursday, May 9 and the digital copy must be uploaded to the online dropbox at Learn@UW **before** class starts on Thursday, May 9.

You are welcome to discuss your reflection paper and final paper ideas with me during office hours, but I will not read any drafts prior to the final. The Writing Center is an excellent resource that you should take advantage of in crafting your papers (6171 Helen White Hall, 608-263-1992, [www.writing.wisc.edu](http://www.writing.wisc.edu)).

**Mid-term Exam (20%).** The mid-term exam will be in an essay format that tests your knowledge of the lectures, readings, films and class discussions up to that point in the course. It will be evaluated on an 80-point scale. Students will be asked to select two questions to answer from a list of four questions that I will upload onto Learn@UW on Wednesday, March 20. An electronic copy of your completed examination must be uploaded to the online dropbox at

Learn@UW by no later than 5 PM on Friday, March 22. The File name of your uploaded document should have the following format: 'Midterm\_YourName.doc'

**Final Exam (20%).** The final exam is non-cumulative and will be in an essay format that tests your synthetic knowledge of the lectures, readings, films and class discussions after Spring Break. Students will be asked to select two questions to answer from a list of four questions that I will upload onto Learn@UW on Wednesday, May 15. It will be evaluated on an 80-point scale. An electronic copy of your completed examination must be uploaded to the online dropbox at Learn@UW by no later than 2:25 PM on Friday, May 17. The File name of your uploaded document should have the following format: 'Final\_YourName.doc'

All written assignments, except of course the in-class pop quizzes, should be formatted with 1-inch margins, 12pt. font (Times New Roman, if possible), and double-spaced. Citations for readings from the syllabus should simply indicate author, date, and page number if relevant [e.g., (Collins 1995: 102)]. Citations for other readings should follow the same format within the text, and also appear in a reference section at the end of the paper.

Extensions for assignments require my permission no less than 48 hours prior to when the assignment is due (except in absolutely horrific circumstances). Otherwise, half-grade penalties will accrue every 24 hours for late assignments. Under no circumstances will I accept reflection papers after the last day of class – any outstanding work will negatively affect the course grade or result in an “Incomplete.”

**Grading Criteria for Written Work.** Grading rubrics for reflection papers, the term paper, and the exams will be posted in the course’s online Learn@UW site.

I am happy to discuss any concerns you might have about how you are evaluated and about your grades. However, I will only make changes to your grades if the grader has made an obvious mistake. My main concern when I evaluate you is to make sure that I am fair to everyone in relation to one another. If somebody comes to see me and “convinces” me to increase his or her grade, this puts those who just accepted their grade without coming to see me at a disadvantage. As a policy I therefore do not change grades.

Grading scale:

A	93-100	AB	88-92	B	83-87	BC	78-82
C	70-77	D	60-69	F	below 60		

**Attendance.** Lecture and in-class discussions give you time to process, question, and reinforce course readings, therefore, it is important for you to attend all sessions, and that you arrive on time and prepared. If you will be absent to participate in scheduled athletic events, please inform me in writing *within the first two weeks of course*. If for some valid reason (illness, death in the family, etc.) you are unable to attend class: 1) please email me prior to class to let me know why you will be unable to attend, 2) make sure you have uploaded to the Learn@UW dropbox and e-mailed me any assignments that are due in class on the day you will be absent. Depending upon the length and timing of the absence, you may be asked to complete an additional writing assignment. Missed classes will hurt your grade through zeros on pop quizzes and poor

performance on the final exam. I have tried to keep the class varied and interesting by scheduling some short films. These are a part of the course content (not an excuse to skip) and will appear on the mid-term and final exams. If you miss class it is *your responsibility* to avail yourself of material you missed.

**In-class participation.** Although this is a large lecture, we will still have class discussions. There is no formal participation grade and no one will be penalized for not talking in class. However, if you are an informed and helpful participant in class discussions, I will take it into account when it comes to your final grade. What this means is that when I tally up the points at the end of the semester, a student who was an avid class participant may receive a small bump if they are close to getting the next letter grade up. This is completely up to my discretion. In order to get the best possible grade you can, you should therefore come to class prepared and eager to take part in the conversation. The more everyone participates in discussions, the more enjoyable and interesting class will be. Remember that there are no stupid questions and that the simplest clarifying question can really move the discussion forward. Also, please try to keep your comments succinct; discussion time is limited and I like to hear as many different voices as possible.

**Electronic devices.** No cell phones are allowed in class. Please turn them off or silence them when you walk in the door. Looking at cell phones while in class is very disrespectful to your professor (and much more obvious than you think). Laptops, i-pads, and other electronic devices are also not permitted in class. Generally, any slides that I show during class-time will be posted to the course website at Learn@UW, so you will not need to write down what is on each slide. Exceptions to this rule will be made for students who require a laptop for accessibility reasons and for students who feel that a laptop or cell phone is an absolutely essential part of their work process. These students will have to convince me that they require the electronic device and will only use it for class-related purposes, and they will register with me as a laptop/cell phone user. The reason for this rule is that students who are looking at Facebook or checking email in class make for poor class participants and distract and annoy the people sitting behind them. It is also inconsiderate (and much more obvious than you think).

**Emailing.** You can also contact me by email at any point during the semester. I will do my best to reply promptly, but you should allow 24-72 hours for my replies (particularly on weekends). So please don't wait until the last minute to ask important clarifying questions on assignments. When you write, please put the words "CES 248" at the beginning of the subject line. Email tone should be informal but professional. Include a greeting, be sure to sign your name, and avoid internet speak – this is not a text message. Finally before you email me, please thoroughly search the syllabus and Learn@UW for an answer to your question!

**Mid-term evaluation.** Just as I will evaluate student performance throughout the semester to encourage improvement and identify particular challenges, you will also have an opportunity to evaluate my performance, well before the end of the semester (when changes can only make a difference to future classes). Before Spring Break, you will be asked to complete an anonymous mid-term course evaluation to tell me what aspects of course organization, teaching style, and class format have been the most helpful, and also to provide any constructive criticism.

**Academic Integrity.** Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Minor violations will receive a warning. Major or repeat violations will result in a failing grade for the course. If questions arise in your mind during the semester about plagiarism, appropriate citation of sources, or permitted collaboration on assignments, please initiate a discussion with me. **Submitting partial or entire papers from a previous class will be considered plagiarism.** For the University's policy on academic integrity, visit [www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/academic\\_misconduct.html](http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/academic_misconduct.html).

**Accommodations.** If you have a disability that could affect your participation and/or performance in this course, please contact me as soon as possible in order to discuss appropriate and helpful accommodations.

## Course Outline and Readings

### I. Setting the stage

*Jan. 22:* Course overview (No readings)

*Jan. 24:* Bell, Chapter 1, Environmental Problems and Society, p. 1-38.

### II. First Principles

*Jan. 29:* Bell, Chapter 6, The Ideology of Environmental Domination, p. 148-168.

*Jan. 31:* Bell, Chapter 7, The Ideology of Environmental Concern, p. 169-200.

*Feb. 5:* Documentary Film: *Grizzly Man* directed by Werner Herzog

*Feb. 7:* Cronon, William. 1995. 'The Trouble with Wilderness, or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature' In *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature*, William Cronon (ed), pp. 69-90. New York: W.W. Norton.

*Feb. 12:* Bell, Chapter 8, The Human Nature of Nature, p. 201-226.

### **Reflection paper #1 due**

### III. Treadmills of Consumption and Production

*Feb. 14:* Bell, Chapter 2, Consumption and Materialism, p. 40-64.

*Feb. 19:* Bell, Chapter 3, Money and Machines, p. 65-94.

### IV. Technology and Politics

*Feb. 21:* Case Study: Hydrofracking Technology

Documentary Film: *Gasland* directed by Joshua Fox  
"The Truth about 'Gasland'" <http://www.anga.us/TruthAboutGasland>

Feb. 26: Winner, Langdon. 1986. 'Do Artifacts Have Politics?' in *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in an Age of High Technology*, pp. 19-39. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

V. The Population Bomb?

Feb. 28: Bell, Chapter 4, Population and Development, p. 95-122.

VI. Varieties of Environmentalism

Mar. 5: Guha, Ramachandra and Martinez-Alier, Joan. 1997. 'The Environmentalism of the Poor' In *Varieties of Environmentalism: Essays North and South*. Earthscan Publications.

Mar. 7: Guha, Ramachandra. 1989. 'Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique' *Environmental Ethics* 11: 71-83.

Mar. 12: Shellenberger, Michael and Nordhaus, Ted. 2005. 'The Death of Environmentalism: Global warming Politics in a Post-Environmental World' *Social Policy* 35(3): 19-30.

**Reflection Paper #2 Due**

VII. Environment, Health, Justice

Mar. 14: Bell, Chapter 5, Body and Health, p. 123-145.

Mar. 19: Bullard, Robert D. 1993. "Anatomy of Environmental Racism and the Environmental Justice Movement." in *Confronting Environmental Racism: Voices from the Grassroots*, edited by R.D. Bullard and B. Chavis, pp. 15-40. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Mar. 21: Mid-term Review

**Mar. 22: Mid-term Exam Due Online in Learn@UW Drop-box**

Mar. 23-31

**SPRING BREAK**

VIII. Risk Society

Apr. 2: Bell, Chapter 9, The Rationality of Risk, p. 227-252.

Apr. 4: Frickel, Scott and Vincent, M.B. 2007. 'Hurricane Katrina, contamination, and the unintended organization of ignorance,' *Technology in Society*, 29: 181-188.

Levidow, Les. 2002. 'Ignorance-based Risk Assessment? Scientific Controversy Over GM Food Safety,' *Science as Culture*, 11: 61-67.

Hoffmann-Riem, H. and Wynne, B. 2002. 'In Risk Assessment One Has to Admit

Ignorance,' *Nature* 416:123.

IX. Food, Agriculture, Sustainability

*Apr. 9:* Bell, Michael Mayerfeld. 2004. 'Economy and Security' In *Farming For Us All: Practical Agriculture and the Cultivation of Sustainability* pp. 29-55. Pennsylvania State University Press.

*Apr. 11:* Kirschenmann, Fred et al. 2008. 'Why Worry About the Agriculture of the Middle?' In *Food and the Mid-level Farm: Renewing an Agriculture of the Middle* Thomas A. Lyson, G.W. Stevenson and Rick Welsh (eds), pp. 3-22. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

*Apr. 16:* Petersen, Melody 'As Beef Cattle Become Behemoths, Who are Animal Scientists Serving?' *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 15, 2012. (18 pages)

*Apr. 18:* Hesterman, Oran. 2011. 'A Fair Food System' in *Fair Food: Growing a Healthy, Sustainable Food System for All*, pp. 47-76. New York, NY: Public Affairs.

Case Study: Colony Collapse Disorder

*Apr. 23:* Documentary Film: *Vanishing of the Bees*, directed by George Langworthy and Maryam Henein.

*Apr. 25:* Pollan, Michael. 2007. 'Our Decrepit Food Factories' *New York times*, December 16.

Hackenberg, Dave. 2007. 'Letter to growers', 4 pages.

Ratnieks, F. and Carreck, N. 2010. 'Clarity on Honey Bee Collapse?', *Science* 327: 152-153.

Stokstad, Erik. 2012. 'Field Research on Bees Raises Concerns About Low-Dose Pesticides', *Science* 335: 1555.

Bayer CropScience. 2010. 'Bee Safety and Colony Collapse Disorder', 3 pages.

*Apr. 30:* Guest lecture by Yifei Li, Doctoral Student, Depts. of Sociology, Community & Environmental Sociology, UW-Madison

**Reflection Paper #3 Due**

X. Becoming ecological

*May 2:* Bell, Chapter 10, Mobilizing the Ecological Society, p. 254-278.

*May 7:* Bell, Chapter 11, Governing the Ecological Society, p. 279-304.

*May 9:* Final Review; **Term Paper Due**