

Community & Environmental Sociology 140
Introduction to Community & Environmental Sociology

Fall 2013

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Classroom: 214 Ingraham
Lectures: Tuesday/Thursday 9:30am-10:45am
Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 11am-12pm
or by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVE

Welcome to the introduction to community and environmental sociology! The course is roughly divided into two sections—“community and development” and “environment and society.” In the first section, we will look at the structures of everyday life in communities and the possibilities for organizing everyday life differently. In the later half, we will examine the linkages between the social world and the natural world. As you will soon discover, the two sections are tightly knitted to each other. In both sections, the course will introduce key sociological concepts and theories such as “social capital”, “development”, “globalization”, and “environmental justice”, and use them to study some of the most pressing social and environmental problems of our time.

My goal is not to present a series of objective ‘facts’ for students to memorize, but instead, to help students learn to analyze socio-environmental problems with a sharp sociological lens. It is a “thinking-intensive” class. The course aims to engage real-world challenges and improve student’s skills at inquiry, analysis, and critical thinking to be more compassionate and engaged citizens.

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

COURSE READINGS

Michael Bell. 2012. *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*. 4th Edition. Los Angeles, CA: Sage-Pine Forge Press.

Bill McKibben. 2007. *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*. New York: Times Books.

Ozzie Zehler. 2012. *Green Illusions: The Dirty Secrets of Clean Energy and the Future of Environmentalism*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

These books are available at the University Bookstore. If you decide to buy online, make sure you order the correct edition. If you do not wish to buy these books, you may read them in the library. *Deep Economy* and *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology* are on reserve at Steenbock Library. Additional copies of the McKibben book are on reserve at College Library. *Green Illusions* is available through the Ebook library (EBL) in the UW-Madison library system.

All other readings, some lecture materials, and other key information will be available through Learn@UW at <https://learnuw.wisc.edu/>

COURSE REQUIREMENT

Grades will be based on class attendance and participation, midterm and final exams, book/film reflections, and “social action studies.” The grading scale is as the following.

Attendance and Participation	15%
Reading/Film Reflections	15%
Midterm Exam (10/22)	25%
Final Exam (12/12)	25%
Social Action Studies	20%

A = 94% +
AB = 89-93%
B = 83-88%
BC = 77-82%
C = 70-76%
D = 60-69%
F =< 60%

Attendance and Participation (15%): Class attendance is extremely important for this course. Coming to class prepared and participating in the discussion will enhance your ability to learn the material presented in class. The quality of our collective experience in this course depends on your participation. This means that you should be able to keep up with the readings, discuss them in class, and ask critical questions during lectures.

Attendance will be 5% of your final grades. I will exercise attendance checks from time to time. You are allowed to be absent from the class without any reason ONCE. Beyond the first absence, you will lose 1 out of your 5 points for every absence, until you lose all your 5 attendance points. Participation, 10% of your points, will be judged by the instructor according to your contribution to the classroom. You can easily do well by raising good questions and joining constructively in the classroom discussion. There will be opportunities to earn EXTRA points when you voluntarily lead some course exercises.

Book/Film Reflection (15%): In this course, you will write TWO book reflection and ONE film reflection, each account 5% of your final grades.

For the book reflection, you will write up a one-page single-space essay to reflect on both *Deep Economy* and *Green Illusions*. This is meant to be an exercise to help you going through the class reading. You should engage critically with the book. Writing instructions and useful reference resources will be available on Learn@UW. The due dates of book reflection papers are Oct 3 and Dec 10.

For the film reflection, you will write up a one-page single-space essay to reflect on either *Cool it* OR *Greening of the Southie*, which we will watch together on November 19 and 26. You can also write your film reflection on a different documentary related to community and environmental sociology, such as *Food Inc.*, *King Corn*, *If a Tree Falls*, etc. If you choose to NOT write on the films that we watch together in class, your film selection has to be approved via email communication with the instructor.

Documentaries usually analyze and propose solutions to certain social and environmental problems. As an engaged citizen, you may or may not agree with the director. You have to be a social-environmental analyst and a film critic in this exercise. Make sure that you use the theories and concepts that you learned in the class to reflect on your documentary. The due date of the film reflection paper is Dec 3.

You are always encouraged to turn assignments in early to relieve your burden on the exams.

Exams (50%): There will be one midterm and one final exam in this course. Both exams will account 25% of your final grades. The midterm exam will take place during the normal class time on Oct 22 and will cover material from the first half of the course. The final exam will be on Dec 12 during the normal class time and will cover material from the second half (not cumulative). Exams will consist of multiple choice question, and possibly short answer questions.

Social Action Studies (20%): In this course, we strive to engage in social and environmental challenges in the real world. This special exercise seeks to be the bridge between our classroom and your community. There are 4 components in this exercise: ISSUE, ENGAGEMENT, ANALYSIS, and PRESENTATION. The due dates of each exercise are listed in the following course schedule. Social action studies are 20 points towards your final grades, and you earn 5 points by doing each component.

In early weeks of the course, I will ask you to identify one socio-environmental issue in your community that is of your interest. You will need to write a one-page single-space essay to illustrate why this particular issue is important to you and your community. Make sure you describe the socio-environmental issue in a clear manner. This is the ISSUE piece of the exercise. You are required to come to my office hour to discuss your choice of issue and potential engagement activity with me. This is a necessary step to ensure that you can complete the following assignments.

After you identify the issue/question, you need to do a mini “community engagement” exercise to deepen your understanding of the issue. This can be an observation in the farmer’s market, a tour to the Willy Street Co-op, a short interview to your family or friends, attending town hall meetings, volunteering for community events, etc. Be creative! Choose something of your interest! You will write up a one-page single-space essay to reflect on your community engagement experience. This is the ENGAGEMENT piece of the exercise.

Towards the end of the course, you need to write up a one-page single-space essay to show how the course materials help to analyze the issue. If you have ideas, propose how social changes can be made. This is the ANALYSIS piece of the exercise.

Finally, you have to make a short PRESENTATION about your issue and action in the class. No powerpoint is needed. You will stand up and speak to the class for 5 minutes in the classroom. Presentations will be made during the lectures in the second half of the course.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS POLICY: Please submit your work on time. These are due BEFORE THE CLASS on the due date. You will lose 20% of the point for the particular assignment for one late-day. Please submit through the appropriate “dropbox” in the Learn@UW site for this class.

OFFICE HOUR: If you need to meet up with me in times other than my regular office hours, you can make an appointment. It is usually easiest if you do so by email. Office hours will not be devoted to tutorial for materials that students miss when not attending class. Also, please strive to ask routine questions of clarification during the lecture.

LECTURE NOTE: Lecture slides will be posted on Learn@UW before each class. These slides are meant to provide a general outline and do NOT provide a sufficient basis for your exam questions.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: All of the work that you submit for this class must be your own work, and you are required to quote and cite all references properly. Although this appears straightforward, it can sometimes be confusing. Wherever you are unsure about quoting and citing, please come see me to figure out the best strategy. If you use a web-based source, you can always cite the URL. For information about plagiarism policy:

<http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html#points>

Please take some time to read through this short introduction to “Acknowledging, Paraphrasing, and Quoting Sources”: www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/Acknowledging_Sources.pdf

The University takes academic honesty very seriously. If you are found to be cheating on exams or papers, you will be reported to the Dean of Students.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTES: 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 in a location where it

will be easy to quietly leave the room. Please hold side-conversations and discussions until after class.

No use of Laptops, Tablets, Phones, or Other Electronic Devices. 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. If I identify you doing so, or if your cell phone rings, you may trigger a pop quiz for the class.

ACCOMODATIONS: I wish to include any students with special needs in this course. In order to enable you to participate fully, please let me know (the earlier the better) if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction or evaluation procedures. The McBurney Disability Resource Center (<http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>) will provide useful assistance and documentation.

COURSE SCHEDULE

September 3 Introduction

September 5 A sociological lens

- Michael Maniates. 2001. *Individualization: Plant a tree, buy a bike, save the world?* Read the [abridged version](#)
- Everyday Sociology Blog: [How to Think Like a Sociologist](#), [Thinking Like a Sociologist: Beyond "That's Just the Way it is"](#)

COMMUNITY AND DEVELOPMENT

September 10 Setting the stage

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, Chapter 1
- *Path to a Green World*, Chapter 1

September 12 Growth

- Jon Gertner. 2010. "[The Rise and Fall of the G.D.P.](#)" New York Times Magazine, May 16, pp. 60-71.
- *Deep Economy*, Chapter 1

September 17 Development

- Amartya Sen. 1999. *Development as freedom*. Introduction and Chapter 1

September 19 Community

(ISSUE piece due)

- *Deep Economy* Chapter 3 and 4
- Use [America FactFinder](#) to learn about your communities

September 24 Social Capital

- Robert Putnam. 2000. *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*, Chapter 1
- *Deep Economy* Chapter 5

September 26 Eating Locally

- *Deep Economy* Chapter 2
- Pierre Desrochers and Hiroko Shimizu. 2012. "[Why Locavorism Doesn't Make Us Happier, Healthier, or Safer](#)", The Daily Beast, July 1st

October 1 Globalization

- Anthony Giddens. 2000. *Runaway world: How globalization is reshaping our lives*. Chapter 5
- Dollars & Sense Collective, "[The ABC's of the Global Economy](#)"

October 3 Population
(BOOK REFLECTION DUE)

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, Chapter 4
- Play with the website "Gapminder": <http://www.gapminder.org/>

October 8 Ecological Footprint

- Richard York, Eugene A. Rosa and Thomas Dietz. 2003. *Footprints on the earth: The environmental consequences of modernity*, American Sociological Review, Vol. 68, No. 2, pp. 279-300
- Tim Jackson. 2009. *Prosperity Without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet*. Chapters 5
- Play with a website that calculate your ecological/carbon footprint

October 10 Consumption

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, Chapter 2

October 15 Production
(ENGAGEMENT piece due)

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, Chapter 3

October 17 Green Capitalism

An Invitation to Environmental Sociology, pp.191-194

Fred Magdoff & John Bellamy Foster. 2011. *What every environmentalist needs to know about capitalism: A citizen's guide to capitalism and the environment*. Chapter 5

October 22 Midterm Exam

ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY

October 24 Environmental Domination

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, chapter 6

October 29 Environmental Concern

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, Chapter 7
- [Global Warming's Six Americas Report](#), summary and overview

October 31 Linking Environmental Concern to Action

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology* pp.280-288
- Anja Kollmuss and Julian Agyeman. 2002. "Mind the gap: why do people act environmentally and what are the barriers to pro-environmental behavior?." *Environmental education research* 8, no. 3: 239-260.

November 5 Environmental Justice: an American history

- Review *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, pp.24-33
- Mascarenhas, Michael. 2009. "Environmental Inequality and Environmental Justice." In *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*, pp.127-139.
- Browse EPA's Environmental Justice Website: <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/>

November 7 Environmental Justice: an international perspective
(ANALYSIS piece due)

- David Pellow. 2007. *Resisting global toxics: Transnational movements for environmental justice*. Chapter 6
- Browse: China's E-Waste:
<http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1870162,00.html>

November 12 Green Technology

- *Green Illusions*. Introduction and Chapter 1-5

November 14 More than Technological Fix

➤ *Green Illusions*. Chapter 8-9

November 19 In-class documentary: *Cool it*

November 21 All about Climate Change

- Roberts, J. Timmons, and Bradley C. Parks. 2007 *A climate of injustice: Global inequality, North-South politics, and climate policy*. Chapter 1
- World Bank. "[Turn Down Heat: Why a 4C Warmer World Must be Avoid](#)" Read the executive summary
- Browse the [Stern Review](#)
- Browse [IPCC Assessment Report](#)

November 26 In-class documentary: *the Greening of Southie*

November 28 HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

December 3 Environmental Movement
(FILM REFLECTION DUE)

- Ozzie Zehler. 2010. *Green Illusions*. Chapter 10-14
- Ted Nordhaus and Michael Shellenberger. 2004. "[the Death of Environmentalism](#)", 2011. "[The Long Death of Environmentalism](#)"

December 5 Moving forward

- Bell, Michael. 2012. *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, Chapter 10 & 11

December 10 Summary and Review
(BOOK REFLECTION DUE)

December 12 Final Exam