



Romare Bearden, The Block, 1971

Introduction to Community & Environmental Sociology

Community & Environmental Sociology 140 – Fall 2017

Class Meets:

MW 3:30-4:20

Biochemistry 1120

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by appointment is best (sign up
using Canvas Scheduler)

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What this course is about. This course is an introduction to Sociology that focuses on the study of how we live in community and how we relate to the natural world. It is organized around a set of questions about how power structures these relationships and about the possibilities for organizing them differently. We will explore how new forms of global connection are changing the way we live in communities and relate to our environment. This will lead us to tackle some of today's most pressing social and environmental conflicts and crises. Some key questions that we will discuss are: "Which kinds of problems can be solved at the individual level and which require 'community' solutions?" "Is economic growth necessary for well-being?" "Can projects organized at the community level survive and thrive in a global economy?" and "How does a complex society resolve problems of distribution and inequality?" A key theme of the course will be the interconnectedness of events and processes unfolding in different parts of the world.

Course goals include:

- Understand how social science arguments are constructed and evaluated.
- Learn and practice core elements of sociological reasoning, including making connections between a social phenomenon and its larger context; evaluating the “situated” nature of knowledge; and recognizing the paradigms, or knowledge frameworks, that structure our thinking about social issues.
- Gain experience critically evaluating various sources of knowledge and data about social issues.
- Become familiar with key concepts such as: “community,” “development,” “growth,” “economic security,” “environmental justice,” “sustainability,” “globalization,” and “neoliberalism;” learn how these concepts are involved in contemporary debates about what is fair, just, and desirable for the places where we live and the world as a whole.
- Become familiar with important actors in the social processes that affect our communities and environment, including government, corporations, transnational institutions and social movements; also learn about historical shifts in the relationships among these actors.
- Develop skills and frameworks for analyzing how social processes disparately affect different groups of people.
- Make connections between sociological theories and concepts and your own experiences.

Course Organization. To accomplish these goals, the course is divided into four sections. In the first section on the “sociological imagination,” we will discuss sociology’s basic logic and tools. The next two sections, on “community” and “environmental sustainability” discuss how sociologists approach those two topics—how they conceptualize and study community and environment. The remainder of the course focuses on “challenges to sustainable community,” examining contemporary cases of communities responding to economic globalization and environmental change, including: movements for food security and sovereignty; environmental justice campaigns; responses to climate change; attempts to create local economic integration; responses to changing labor markets; and the challenges posed by migration.

Participation. The quality of our collective experience in this course depends on your participation. Participation means ATTENDING class, as well as keeping up with the readings and being able to discuss them thoughtfully in class. I will not post lecture notes on-line (although I will post power-point slides); the material covered in the lecture is not the same as what you will find in the readings. You will not be able to get a passing grade in this course if you do not attend lectures. **You are required to attend your discussion section.** If you miss more than 2 discussion section meetings, you will lose points (four points per session missed). Students will not lose points when they are absent to observe religious holidays, or have a doctor’s excuse. While this is a large class, I encourage debate based on careful reading of materials and we will work to cultivate an environment of respect for one another’s views.

Books/Readings:

1. Schor, Juliet, *True Wealth*.
2. Miraftab, Faranak, *Global Heartland*.

Books are available at University Bookstore and other locations.

3. Course reserve readings are available on CANVAS.

Academic Honesty: UW takes academic honesty very seriously. If you are found to be cheating on exams or papers, you will receive a grade of F and will be reported to the Dean of Students.

Plagiarism: 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. Whenever you are unsure about quoting and citing, please come to see me (or your TA) to figure out the best strategy. But in general, if you are in doubt, cite! 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>

More information on source citation: www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/Acknowledging_Sources.pdf.

Accommodations: I wish to include fully any students with special needs in this course. The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Faculty and students share responsibility for reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Students should inform me of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. I will work either directly with you, or in coordination with the McBurney Center, to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Suggestions for doing well in this course:

- Keep up with the readings, and do the assigned readings before they are discussed in class.
- 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 or section.
- Attend class. In lecture and in section, be prepared to ask questions or offer comments about the readings, how they relate to lecture material, or current events.
- Take notes. It is not enough to simply copy down the terms and diagrams presented on the board or screen. You need to write down important points from lecture and discussion as well. If you must miss class, get class notes from another student whom you trust to be a good note-taker. There is now considerable empirical evidence that taking notes by hand leads to much greater retention than using a laptop, so you might consider adopting this practice.
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>
- Attend office hours. Both your TA and I are glad to meet with you in our offices outside of class. If you cannot attend scheduled office hours, let us know and we will find another time.
- Form a study group.

Assignments

I. Response papers (5).

100 points

There are **FIVE 200-word** response papers. Each paper is worth 20 points for a total of 100 points. Response papers are due in-class on the day assigned. These papers are opportunities to develop your “sociological imagination” by applying class concepts to your own realm of experience. While there will be specific grading rubrics for each paper, in general they will be evaluated based on: 1) clarity and originality of ideas; 2) use of concepts and themes from readings; 3) logic and argument; 4) writing style and technical aspects of presentation (such as grammar, citations, spelling).

Response paper due dates: September 18, October 4, October 23, November 6, November 29.

For general information on good writing see the **UW Writing Center** website (www.wisc.edu/writing) or visit the Writing Center in 6171 Helen C. White (also satellite locations).

Late Papers. If you have an emergency and are unable to complete your assignment on time, please let me know immediately and I will consider an extension. Otherwise you will lose points (5 per day) for lateness.

II. Exams

Midterm 1 (Oct 11, in class)

100 points

Midterm 2 (Nov 15, in class)

100 points

Midterm 3 (non-cumulative, during exam period)

100 points

Make-up Exam Policy

If you have a compelling emergency and if you make a request before the exam in writing, I will attempt to find a time for a make-up exam.

Total value of all assignments:

400 points

Grading Scale

368-400 points = A; 348-367 = A/B; 328-347 = B; 308-327 = B/C; 288-307 = C; 240-287 = D; below 240 = F

Grade Complaints: If you have questions about a grade, speak to your TA or to me first. If the question is not resolved, speak with the Chair of Community & Environmental Sociology, Gary Green, who will attempt to resolve the issue and inform you of the appeals procedure if no resolution is reached.

Course Schedule

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS AND READING QUESTIONS
Sep 6	Introduction to Course	<i>What is Community and Environmental Sociology? Course goals. Concepts and approaches.</i>
PART 1		WHAT IS THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION?
Sep 11	Developing a Sociological Toolkit	<p>C. Wright Mills, "The Promise" Emile Durkheim, "What is a Social Fact?" "The Politics of Knowledge (Some Perspectives)" Tania Lombrozo, "What is a Paradigm Shift Anyway?" http://www.npr.org/sections/13.7/2016/07/18/486487713/what-is-a-paradigm-shift-anyway</p> <p><i>What exactly is the sociological imagination? What factors does it connect? What is a social fact? Does the fact that knowledge is situated and contested mean that we can't really "know" anything? What is a paradigm shift and how is it different from "normal science"?</i></p>
Sep 13	Evaluating Knowledge: How Do We Know Fake News When We See It?	<p>UW, Undergraduate Research Guide: Fake News, http://researchguides.library.wisc.edu/c.php?g=640444&p=4485002 Stanford History Education Group, "Source Criticism"</p> <p><i>What is the difference between fake news and bias? What factors can give us greater confidence in a source? How can we tell if a web source is a legitimate news outlet?</i></p>
PART II		WHAT DO WE MEAN BY COMMUNITY?
Sep 18	Defining Community	<p>Cornelia Flora and Jan Flora, "The Concept of Community" OECD, "What is Social Capital?" Alexis de Tocqueville, "How the Americans Combat Individualism"</p>

		<p><i>How is the meaning of community changing? What is social capital? What kinds of activities do we still organize communally? What communities are you part of?</i></p> <p>First essay due.</p>
Sep 20	Community and the Persistence of Inequality	<p>Judith Shklar, Introduction to <i>American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion</i>. Eduardo Bonilla Silva, "The Central Frames of Color-Blind Racism" Michael Omi and Howard Winant, "Racial Formation" Institute for Policy Studies, Inequality.org website, "Racial Inequality" http://inequality.org/racial-inequality/</p> <p><i>What are Shklar's four meanings of citizenship? Why does she argue that work is so central to American conceptions of the citizen? What are key features of color-blind racism? What is a racial formation and how does it shape our daily activities?</i></p>
Sep 25	Individual and Community in Competing Explanatory Paradigms	<p>Cornelia Flora and Jan Flora, "Institutional Actors" Charles Derber and Yale Magrass, "The Neoclassical Paradigm," and "The Keynesian Paradigm"</p> <p><i>What are some key examples of neoclassical thinking? Keynesian thinking? Which do you think is dominant today?</i></p>
Sep 27	Community in Global Context	<p>Wolfgang Sachs, "One World" Walden Bello, "The Virtues of Deglobalization"</p> <p><i>What is "cosmopolitan localism?" What institutions and policies is Bello opposing? How does community fit into his vision of deglobalization?</i></p>
	PART III	WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY?
Oct 2	The Challenge of Growth	<p>Juliet Schor, preface and Chapters 1 and 2</p> <p><i>Why does Schor see growth as a problem? What is the difference between intensive and extensive growth? What kinds of solutions does she offer? Why is the idea of limiting growth controversial?</i></p>

Oct 4	Measuring What Matters	<p>Schor, Chapter 3 Jon Gertner, "The Rise and Fall of GDP"</p> <p><i>What is GDP? Do conventional economic measurements account for resource depletion and environmental harm? What valuable resources do they fail to measure? What alternatives are there?</i></p> <p>Second Essay Due</p>
Oct 9	Defining the Good Life	<p>Schor, Chapters 4 and 5</p> <p><i>How is the trade-off between growth and environmental sustainability different for poor countries than for rich ones? Are there ways for poor countries to reduce poverty and improve the standard of living without adopting a "western" pattern of growth? How are plenitude and sustainability related? What kinds of changes does Schor recommend? What other possibilities for change are there?</i></p>
Oct 11		Midterm 1
	PART IV	CASE STUDIES -- CHALLENGES FOR BUILDING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY
Oct 16	Food and Community	<p>Bill McKibben, ch. 2 Judith Carney, "Memory Dishes of the African Diaspora" Kari Marie Norgaard, Ron Reed, and Carolina Van Horn, "A Continuing Legacy: Institutional Racism, Hunger, and Nutritional Justice on the Klamath" Menzel, Peter, and D'Aluizio, Faith, "What the World Eats" http://time.com/8515/hungry-planet-what-the-world-eats/</p> <p><i>Why is food more than just calories? According to McKibben, what are some benefits of sourcing food locally? What are the obstacles for some communities in doing so? How is globalization changing "local" diets?</i></p>
Oct 18	What Does Our Food System Look Like?	<p>Dan Mitchell, "Calculating the Hidden Costs of Industrial Farming," http://civileats.com/2016/07/20/this-study-could-help-us-numbers-on-the-true-cost-of-food/ William Heffernan, "Consolidation in the Food and Agricultural</p>

		<p>System” Chart: Food Industry Consolidation Natural Resources Defense Council, “Food Miles”</p> <p><i>What is a food mile? What does it mean to say that the food industry is becoming more ‘consolidated’? Why do increasing food miles and consolidation matter?</i></p>
Oct 23	Food Security, Food Sovereignty, Food Justice	<p>Dorceta Taylor and Kerry Ard, “Food Availability and the Food Desert Frame in Detroit” Monica White, “D-Town Farm” Antonio Roman-Alcalá, “From Food Security to Food Sovereignty”</p> <p><i>What is a food desert? What are some problems with the concept? What are the differences between food security, food sovereignty, and food justice? How are these goals pursued at D-Town Farm?</i></p> <p>Third Essay Due</p>
Oct 25	Is There a Right to Water?	<p>Karen Bakker, “Protesting Privatization: Transnational Struggles over the Human Right to Water”</p> <p><i>What are the arguments for and against the idea that water is a basic human right? What are some of the main threats to water access for communities in the global north and south? How are communities organizing to reclaim water rights?</i></p>
Oct 30	Why is Climate Change So Contentious?	<p>National Geographic Society, “Five Reasons We Need to Act Now on Climate Change” http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/12/151204-climate-paris-disease-antarctic-arctic-ice-melt-acidification-fish-co2/ Naomi Klein, “The Right is Right: The Revolutionary Power of Climate Change” Lynn McDonald, “Climate Change, Sociological Theory, and Paradigm Shift”</p> <p><i>How does Klein argue that society as a whole will change as a result of addressing climate change issues? Why does she say the “right is right”? Do the changes Klein is calling for represent a paradigm shift?</i></p>

Nov 1	Climate Change: Why is Response So Difficult?	<p>Elinor Ostrom, et al., Revisiting the Commons: Local Lessons, Global Challenges”</p> <p>Katha Pollitt, “Climate Change is the Tragedy of the Global Commons,” https://www.thenation.com/article/climate-change-tragedy-global-commons/</p> <p>David Kestenbaum, “Climate Change is Victim of the Tragedy of the Commons” http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=120883813</p> <p><i>Why do some people argue that climate change is a “tragedy of the commons”-type problem? What does Ostrom say is particularly difficult about such “common property” problems and what possible solutions does her work offer?</i></p>
Nov 6	Environmental Justice and Place	<p>Center for Health, Environment & Justice, “Love Canal”</p> <p>Temma Kaplan, “Suburban Blight and Situation Comedy at Love Canal”</p> <p><i>What obstacles do communities face in organizing against contamination of their homes and workplaces? How did residents of Love Canal meet those challenges?</i></p> <p>Fourth Essay Due</p>
Nov 8	Environmental Justice & Race/Poverty	<p>U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, “What is Environmental Justice?”</p> <p>Exchange Project, “Afton, North Carolina”</p> <p>Temma Kaplan, “When It Rains, I Get Mad and Scared”</p> <p><i>Why does exposure to environmental risk vary by race and class? How do environmental justice campaigns build on legacies of the civil rights movement?</i></p>
Nov 13	Jobs and Community: The Case of Walmart	<p>Gary Gereffi and Michele Christian, “The Impacts of Wal-Mart”</p> <p>Ed Pilkington, “What Happened when Walmart Left” https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jul/09/what-happened-when-walmart-left</p> <p>Jessica Bruder, “What is Amazon Really Delivering?” http://blogs.reuters.com/great-debate/2015/06/17/with-6000-new-warehouse-jobs-what-is-amazon-really-delivering/</p> <p><i>How does Walmart differ, as a template for business, from the model provided by General Motors at mid-20th century? What</i></p>

		<i>innovations gave Walmart its market power? How is Walmart's growth linked to poverty in U.S. communities and abroad? How dependent have local economies become on Walmart?</i>
Nov 15		Midterm 2
Nov 20	What is a Good Job?	Arne Kalleberg, "Job Quality in the U.S." David Leonhardt, "The Great Wage Slowdown of the 21 st Century" <i>Have wages kept pace with economic growth, profits, and productivity? What forces are responsible for declining wages and job quality?</i>
Nov 22	How is Work Changing?	Jacob Hacker, "The New Economic Insecurity" Jodi Kantor, "Working Anything but 9-5" Natasha Singer, "In the Sharing Economy, Workers Find Both Freedom and Uncertainty" <i>How does Hacker argue that the risks Americans face are changing? What is causing these changes? How does the growth of the "gig economy" change our expectations about work/jobs?</i>
Nov 27	Work & Migration	Khalid Koser, "Why Migration Matters" Louis Uchitelle, "NAFTA Should Have Stopped Illegal Immigration, Right?" http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/18/weekinreview/18uchitelle.html Douglas Massey, "Immigration and the Great Recession" <i>How are global migration patterns changing? How did the North American Free Trade Agreement affect migration patterns? How did the great recession change this picture?</i>
Nov 29	Migration & Community	Faranouk Miraftab, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2 <i>How has the ethnic make-up of Beardstown changed over the past few decades? What does the author mean when she says Beardstown was, until recently, a "sundown town?" What were the author's research methods?</i>

Dec 4	Displacement	<p>Miraftab, Chapters 3, 4, and 5</p> <p><i>What jobs do immigrants from Mexico and Togo have in the Cargill factory? How does these jobs differ from those held by U.S. citizens who moved to Beardstown from Detroit? What motivated each of these groups of individuals to move to Beardstown? How do different groups of newcomers fit into the Beardstown community?</i></p>
Dec 6	Global Restructuring and Social Reproduction	<p>Miraftab, Chapter 6</p> <p><i>What is social reproduction? What does Miraftab mean when she says social reproduction has been restructured on a global basis? What does it mean to say that migrant life cycles have been “re-spatialized?”</i></p> <p>Fifth Essay Due</p>
Dec 11	Globalization and Community Revisited	<p>Miraftab, Chapters 7, 8, and Conclusion</p> <p><i>How has migration changed Beardstown? How is the town’s experience, in Miraftab’s view, different from the classic “melting pot” model? Does the book make you feel optimistic or pessimistic about the capacity of local places to cope with challenges of globalization?</i></p>
Dec 13	The Sociological Imagination and Paradigm Shifts	<p><i>A structured open discussion of how paradigms for understanding society (whether used by scholars, the media, or the public in general) may be shifting or need to shift.</i></p>
	Final Exam (non-cumulative)	<p>Time and location TBA</p>