

Community & Environmental Sociology 248
Environment, Natural Resources, and Society

Spring 2014

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

COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVE

Welcome to the Environment, Natural Resources, and Society! In this course, we will study the interaction between human society and the natural environment. You will see that the natural system is closely knitted with our social system; environmental problems are social problems. This course will introduce key concepts and theories in environmental sociology such as “ecological footprint”, “treadmill of production”, “sustainability”, and “environmental justice”, and use them to study some of the most pressing 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. The course aims to engage real-world challenges and improve student’s skills at inquiry, analysis, and critical thinking to be more 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.

Juliet Schor. 2010. *True Wealth: How and Why Millions of Americans Are Creating a Time-Rich, Ecologically Light, Small-Scale, High-Satisfaction Economy*. New York: Penguin Press. (Previously published as *Plenitude: the new economics of true wealth*)

Make sure you purchase the correct edition of Bell’s textbook. If you do not wish to buy these books, you may read them in the library. *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology* are on reserve at

Steenbock Library. *True Wealth* is available through the Ebook library (EBL) in the UW-Madison library system. Please search for the title "*Plenitude: the new economics of true wealth*" in the library.

Because the inherent interdisciplinary nature of the class, we will read work not only by sociologists, but also by biologists, historians, political scientist, and activists among others. All readings, some lecture materials, and other key information will be available through [Learn@UW](#).

COURSE REQUIREMENT

Grades will be based on class attendance and participation, midterm and final exams, book/film reflections, and "community participation project." The grading scale is as the following.

Attendance	5%
Participation	10%
Short Paper Assignment	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
Community Participation Project	25%

A = 93-100	AB = 86-93	B = 80-86	BC = 75-80
C = 70-74	D = 60-69	F = < 60	

Attendance (5%): Class attendance is extremely important for this course. Attendance record will be 5% of your final grades. I will exercise attendance checks from time to time. You are allowed to be absent without any reason ONCE. Beyond the first absence, you will lose 0.5 out of your 5 points for every absence, until you lose all your 5 attendance points.

Please email me prior to class when you are unable to attend, need to leave early, or be late in the class. When you need walk in and out of the classroom during lecture, please be considerate to your classmates.

Participation (10%): Participation will be 10% of your points. Your grades will reflect the quality of your engagement with the class, including your active and attentive listening. Your participation will not be judged by how often or loud you speak, rather I will evaluate the insights you share.

To do well in this class, you should keep up with the readings, listen attentively, actively join the conversation, and ask critical questions during lectures. The quality of our collective learning experience depends on your participation. Remember that there is no stupid question; even a simple clarifying question could move the conversation forward.

Around midterm, I will provide you with a feedback on your participation grades to date. When I tally up the points at the end of the semester, participation will carry special weight when a student are close to getting the next letter grade up. This is completely up to my discretion.

Short Paper Assignment (20%): In this course, you will write 4 short paper assignment, each account 5% of your final grades. You can choose any 4 of the following assignment topics. You can, and are encouraged to, do all of these assignments. If you write more than 4 assignments, you can drop the lowest ones and keep the highest 4 scores.

- ✧ A book review of *True Wealth*
- ✧ A film reflection of *If a Tree Falls*
- ✧ Personal carbon/ecological footprint analysis
- ✧ Environmental Justice mapping exercise
- ✧ Food diaries exercise

Additional instruction on the short paper assignment will be distributed in class.

Exams (40%): There will be one midterm and one final exam in this course. Both exams will account 20% of your final grades. The midterm exam will take place during the normal class time on March 4 and will cover material from the first half of the course. The final exam will be on April 29 during the normal class time and will cover material from the second half (not cumulative). Exams will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

Community Participation Project (25%): 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: PROPOSAL (5%), COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, PRESENTATION, and FINAL PAPER (20%). The due dates are listed in the following course schedule.

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 essay to illustrate why this particular issue is important to you and your community. Make sure you describe the background in a clear manner. You should also lay out a plan of your community participation activities. 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. This is the PROPOSAL piece of the exercise. 5 points toward your final grades.

After you identify the issue/question, you need to engage in community participation activities to deepen your understanding of the issue. They 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. Choose something of your interest. Be creative and make it fun! The ideal activity is the one that allows multiple participation opportunities throughout the semester. This is the COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT section of this exercise.

Towards the end of the course, you have to make a short PRESENTATION about your issue and action in the class. No powerpoint is needed. You will have 5 minutes talking about your project and 5 more minutes answering questions. This is will be a valuable opportunity to gather useful

feedback to your project. Your presentation performance will be counted in the participation grade.

Finally, you need to write up a 5-page FINAL PAPER to reflect on your project. Your paper needs to 1) describe and reflect on your community participation activities 2) engage with course concepts, readings/films, and class discussions. The final paper is due on May 11, 1159pm.

WRITING: All writing assignment should follow the format of 12-pt, Times New Roman, single space, single line spacing between paragraphs, 1-inch margin. Please use spell check to avoid typos. Contents are more important than length.

To become a more effective writer, I highly encourage you to use the resources at university's writing center: <http://www.writing.wisc.edu/>

LATE ASSIGNMENTS POLICY: Please submit your work on time. They are due BEFORE CLASS on a due date. You will lose 20% of your 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 often hinder 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.

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

Week 1: Introduction

January 21

Course Introduction and getting to know each other

January 23

- Read the syllabus carefully
- Michael Maniates. 2001. *Individualization: Plant a tree, buy a bike, save the world?* Read the [shortened version](#)
- *True Wealth*, Chapter 1
- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, Chapter 1

Week 2: Population and Our Footprint

January 28

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, Chapter 4
- *True Wealth*, Chapter 2-3

January 30

Week 3: Consumption and Production

February 4

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, pp.41-83
- Watch [Story of Stuff](#)

February 6

Personal footprint analysis due

Week 4: Debating Green Capitalism

February 11

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, pp.191-194, 294-301
- 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
- *True Wealth*, Chapter 4-5

February 13

Week 5: Environmental Attitudes, Behaviors, and Concerns

February 18

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, chapter 6-7, pp.280-288
- Selections from *Navigating Environmental Attitudes*
- [Global Warming's Six Americas Report](#), summary and overview

February 20

True Wealth book reflection due

Week 6: Social Construction of Nature

February 25

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, chapter 8
- Mike Hulme. 2009. *Why we disagree about climate change: understanding controversy, inaction and opportunity*. Cambridge, UK. Preface and Chapter 1
- William Cronon. 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

February 27

Community Participation Project Proposal due

Week 7: Midterm

March 4

- Midterm Exam

March 6

Workshop on Community Participation Project
Guest Lecture on local food movement

Week 8: Environmental Justice

March 11

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, pp.24-33, 137-145
- Paul Mohai, David Pellow, and J. Timmons Roberts. 2009. Environmental Justice. Annual Review of Environment and Resources Vol. 34: 405-430

March 13

March 15-23 Spring Recess

Week 9: Food and Agriculture

March 25

- *Deep Economy* Chapter 2
 - Branden Born, and Mark Purcell. "Avoiding the local trap scale and food systems in planning research." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 26.2 (2006): 195-207.
 - Jonathan Foley. [Changing the global food narrative](#) Ensia.com November 12, 2013
- Environmental Justice mapping exercise due

March 27

Week 10: Governing the Commons

April 1

- Garrett Hardin. 1968. The Tragedy of the Commons. *Science*. 162(13):1234-48.
- Elinor Ostrom. 1990. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 Reflections on the Commons Pp. 1-28.

April 3

Food diary exercise due

Week 11: Varieties of Environmentalism

April 8

- Guha, Ramachandra. 1989. 'Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique' *Environmental Ethics* 11: 71-83
- Jennifer Clapp and Peter Dauvergne. *Path to a Green World*, Chapter 1
- Ted Nordhaus and Michael Shellenberger. 2004. "[the Death of Environmentalism](#)"

April 10

In-class documentary *If a tree falls*

Week 12: Green Technology

April 15

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, pp.84-94

- Ozzie Zehler. 2012. *Green Illusions: The Dirty Secrets of Clean Energy and the Future of Environmentalism*. Chapter 1. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

April 17

Student Presentation

Film Reflection of *If a tree falls* due

Week 13: Climate Change

April 22

- World Bank. "[Turn Down Heat: Why a 4C Warmer World Must be Avoid](#)" Read the executive summary
- Roberts, J. Timmons, and Bradley C. Parks. 2007 *A climate of injustice: Global inequality, North-South politics, and climate policy*. Chapter 1
- Bill McKibben. [Global Warming's Terrifying New Math](#). Rolling Stone. July 19, 2012
- Naomi Klein. [Capitalism vs. the Climate](#). The Nation. November 9, 2011

April 24

Student Presentation

Week 14: Final Exam & Community Participation Project

April 29

Final Exam

May 1

Student Presentation

Week 15: Community Participation Project and Concluding Remarks

May 6

Student Presentation

May 8

Conclusion Remarks

An Invitation to Environmental Sociology, Chapter 10-11

Final Paper due May 11, 1159pm