

Environment, Natural Resources, & Society

Syllabus

Instructor: Kathryn Anderson
Email: kganderson@wisc.edu
Office: 308G Agricultural Hall

Classroom: Ag Hall Room 10
Lecture: 9/6 - 12/11. T/R 9:30-10:45
Office Hours: By appointment

This course introduces undergraduate students to the sociological study of environmental issues. We learn how problems we are all familiar with (climate change, pollution, wilderness destruction, toxic exposure, fisheries collapse) relate to social factors like race, class, gender, power, capitalism, political institutions, culture, identity, and technology. We will look beyond technical and scientific aspects of contemporary ecological issues to their social roots and social implications. Students do not need to have previous coursework in sociology or environment-related fields to succeed in this course, only a willingness to read carefully, think deeply, and challenge themselves and their fellow students in class discussion. The overall goal of this course is not merely to accumulate facts and abstract ideas, but to be able to follow and participate in contemporary debates concerning environmental issues.

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

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

1. Learn concepts and theories of 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 a habit of following the news, especially related to the environment.
5. Develop written and oral communication skills for the social sciences.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The assigned readings constitute the bulk of the work you will have to do for this course. Your primary task is to master those readings and participate in class regularly. You are expected to complete the readings before class; if you do not prepare, you will not benefit fully from class. During class, I will often ask for your questions and feedback about the readings. I may call on students who have raised their hand, or I may call on lucky students at random. Often during discussions, we will refer to the reading; you will benefit more if you bring the reading to class. The course reader is printed on 3-hole paper, so you can keep it in your own 3-ring binder and bring to class only that day's reading (and leave the rest at home). Links to most readings are also available on the course website. For each reading, I encourage you to set aside time both to complete the reading and to critically reflect on it. (What are the main arguments and what do

they imply? How does this material relate to previous readings? To your life? To current events?)

Required Texts

1. Course Reader (available at University Book Store for about \$25).
2. Juliet Schor. 2010. *True Wealth*. Penguin (This book *may* also be available as an e-book through the UW library under the title *Plenitude*.)
3. Naomi Klein. 2014. *This Changes Everything: Capitalism and the Climate*. Simon and Schuster.
4. Arlie Hochschild. 2016. *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. The New Press.

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

Assignment	% of grade
Reading reflections	32
Oral presentations	3
Exams	33
2 Essays	20
Participation	10
In-class activity	2

Final grades will be based on the following scale:

A = 93% + , AB = 88-92% , B = 83-87% , BC = 78-82% , C = 70-77% , D = 60-69% , F = <60%

This class is worth 3 credit hours: 1 credit hour for the 3 hours of class time over 15 weeks, and 2 credit hours for 6-12 hours of reading and writing per week for 15 weeks.

Group Learning – your environmental sociology troupe

Small-group active learning has been found to be more effective than lecture. Students retain information better, become more articulate at forming and expressing their thoughts, appreciate different viewpoints better, like the subject more, learn more, and learn to get along with people better – all of which are essential for professional success and civic efficacy. It's also been shown that sticking with the same group yields better results than shifting groups each class. So, you will be assigned to a troupe the first day of class and you will sit together throughout the semester, do group quizzes, critique class material together, etc.

Reading reflections (32%)

For one reading per week, you will submit a reading reflection as a prompt for class discussion. Notice that these short weekly writing exercises cumulatively make up a large 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. Each of the reflections will be due to Canvas by midnight on the evening before that particular reading is scheduled for discussion. Submitted reflections will be between 350-450 words and will demonstrate your understanding by:

- 1) Summarizing the main arguments of the reading
- 2) Explaining one finding or concept you found novel, challenging, or poorly supported
- 3) Listing (but not defining here) important vocabulary words you did not fully understand (conceptual are more important, like ‘commodification’)
- 4) Raising at least one *thoughtful* question prompted by your reading. Elaborate on the question. Why is the question you’re raising important? How did it arise from your reading? etc.

Be sure to specify which reading you are responding to at the top. Your written answers will follow this 4-part format, with each item number taking a separate paragraph labeled with the number. Use the key concepts (e.g., transnational corporation; a legal “person”) from the reading; these will help you avoid more general statements. There is no need to write in terms of what was “personally interesting.” what you choose to highlight already shows what you’ve found interesting. Please instead elaborate on why this was interesting to you, and be specific.

I will read these reflections in the morning before our class discussion, to get an idea of what concepts and issues need to be clarified in lecture. Please come to discussion with your reflection in mind; I will call on individuals to summarize the reading, discuss a concept, or pose a question for the class.

Reflections will be graded on a 10-point scale. A 10 will be earned by a solid grasp of the material and its implications, an inquisitive engagement with the material, concise and clear language, and correct spelling and grammar.

Current Events (ungraded but important)

Pursuant to learning goal #4 (develop a habit of following the news, especially related to the environment), for the first 5-15 minutes of each class students will discuss the news and current events related to the environment. I know that as a student it’s hard to find time to stay informed, but it doesn’t get any easier after college (until you retire), so it’s important to develop efficient habits now. Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit can be valuable sources, but it’s vital also to incorporate a dedicated news source with high journalistic standards and a commitment to the public interest into your daily routine. For environmental news, among many others, I recommend exploring Grist.org, New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Financial Times, LA Times, The Economist, The New Yorker, Le Monde Diplomatique, BBC, NPR, PBS, Al Jazeera, Democracy Now, The Nation, Truthout.org, The Atlantic, Mother Jones, and The Guardian.

Oral presentation (3%)

During our first class, each student will sign up to present one 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. For the most part, students will present in pairs; use your creativity to figure out how best to do this.

Exams (33%)

There will be three multiple-choice exams during the semester. Each will count for 11% of your overall course grade and will cover lectures, guest lectures, discussions, readings, and in-class films. They are not cumulative. There is no final exam for the course. 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.

Critical essays (20%)

Two short essays (1200-1500 words, or about 5 pages) give you the opportunity to practice and get feedback on your writing skills, and to delve more deeply and critically into the material we have covered in the readings and class discussions. I highly recommend finishing early and taking your draft to the writing center. More details will be included in separate assignments.

Participation (10%)

The quality of this class will depend on your active participation. This entails coming to class having completed and reflected on the readings (even when you do not complete a reading reflection) as well as regular and on-time attendance, attentive listening to others, and active contribution to our discussions. 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 point from your 10 total participation points.

Class attendance is critical. The exams will include material not in the readings. I will post power-point slides after class, but they will not be nearly sufficient to do well on the exams. If you are unable to attend class, please work with another student to go over their class notes.

Class discussion and debate is essential to understanding and integrating class material. Without debate, the complexity of the material is hard to grasp and you are more likely to forget what you have read/heard. Quality is as important as quantity, so please be aware if you are contributing in a way that might interfere with others' contributions. We will work to cultivate an environment of respect for one another's views. This is by no means saying that disagreement is discouraged! On the contrary, debate and discovery is the heart of this course. An environment of respect means taking each other's contributions seriously, collaborating to advance all of our knowledge and understanding, and expressing disagreement in a gracious, humble, and friendly way.

In-class activity (2%)

To be announced in class.

Submission of written work

All written work will be submitted through Canvas. 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. Please format your citations following ASA guidelines: http://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/quick_tips_for_asa_style.pdf. When citing course readings or lectures, just use in-line citations in the form (Ostrom 1990), (Ostrom 1990:16) where 16 is the page number, or (Anderson, class lecture, 9-15-17). A reference section is needed only if you cite non-course sources, and that section does not count against your word limit. Heed each assignment's word limit. Word limits force you to prioritize your claims and to use words carefully. Any submission that exceeds the word limit will not be graded and therefore will not receive any credit.

There will NOT be any re-writes.

You are always welcome to submit an assignment *in advance* of a deadline. Critical essays submitted after a deadline will be docked 10% for each day (up to 24 hours) the assignment is late. **Reading reflections must be submitted by the deadline or will receive no credit at all.**

Classroom etiquette

Please be on time to class. If you need to arrive late or leave early, please let me know ahead of time and please enter/exit quietly, taking a seat near the door. Please hold side-conversations until after class. **Please turn cell phones off or place in airplane mode during class, and keep out of your sight (not just my sight). Use of cell phones, tablets, laptops or other devices during the class is NOT allowed. Students who violate this class rule will lose participation points.**

Communication

I will communicate with you often using your Wisc.edu addresses; please make sure you check your Wisc.edu addresses. Please communicate with me via email (kganderson@wisc.edu) rather than through Canvas.

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. 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.

Office hours

To be fair to all students, I do not hold set office hours. However, I am more than happy to meet with you if you email or talk to me to set up a time. 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

Class	Date		Reading
Week 1	<i>(no reflection due this week)</i>		
1	6-Sep		Introduction to the class Sign up for oral presentations
Week 2			
2	11-Sep		Lesson 1: The Social Construction of Nature: Of Computers, Butterflies, Dogs, and Trucks. Stella M. Capek. In Kenneth Gould and Tammy Lewis, eds. (2015). <i>Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology</i> . Second Edition. (14 pps)
3	13-Sep		Imada, Toshie (2012). Cultural Narratives of Individualism and Collectivism: A Content Analysis of Textbook Stories in the United States and Japan. (16 pps)
Week 3			
4	18-Sep		Kahan et al. (2007). Culture and Identity-Protective Cognition: Explaining the White-Male Effect in Risk Perception. <i>J Empirical Legal Studies</i> <u>and</u> Kahan et al. (2012). The polarizing impact of science literacy and numeracy on perceived climate change risks. <i>Nature Climate Change</i>
5	20-Sep	In-class activity	Rome, Adam (2003). "Give Earth a Chance": The environmental movement and the sixties. <i>J American History</i> <u>and</u> Rome, Adam (2006). 'Political Hermaphrodites': Gender and Environmental Reform in Progressive America, <i>Environmental History</i>

Week 4			
6	25-Sep		Keohane, Nathaniel and Sheila Olmstead. 2007. "Markets and the Environment," pp. 1-6 & 65-83
7	27-Sep		Wright, Erik Olin. 2010. "What is So Bad about Capitalism?" Chapter 3 in <i>Envisioning Real Utopias.</i> P 21-35 (stop before 'Proposition 5. Capitalism is inefficient in certain crucial respects.')
Week 5			
8	2-Oct		Wright, Erik Olin. 2010. "What is So Bad about Capitalism?" Chapter 3 in <i>Envisioning Real Utopias.</i> Pps 35-56.
9	4-Oct	Exam #1	
Week 6			
10	9-Oct		Schor. <i>True Wealth</i> , Ch1: Introduction
11	11-Oct		Schor. <i>True Wealth</i> , Ch2: From Consumer Boom to Ecological Bust Guest speaker: Johanna from FairShare CSA coalition
Week 7			
12	16-Oct		Schor. <i>True Wealth</i> , Ch3: Economics Confronts the Earth Guest speaker: Emily from DNR's Learn to Hunt program
13	18-Oct		Schor. <i>True Wealth</i> , Ch4: Living Rich on a Troubled Planet
Week 8		Paper #1 due by midnight on Sunday	
14	23-Oct		Klein, Naomi. 2016. Introduction, in <i>This Changes Everything: Capitalism and the Climate</i> (29 pps) *In-class movie
15	25-Oct		Klein. "The Right is Right." Chapter 1 in <i>This Changes Everything</i> (33 pps) *In-class movie
Week 9			
16	30-Oct		Klein. "Hot Money." Chapter 2 in <i>This Changes Everything</i> (32 pps)
17	1-Nov		Klein. "Public and Paid For." Chapter 3 in <i>This Changes Everything</i> (24 pps)
Week 10			
18	6-Nov	Exam #2	
19	8-Nov		Wade and Ferree (2015). Inequality – Men and Masculinity. Ch6 in <i>Gender</i>
Week 11			
20	13-Nov		Bell, Shannon and Richard York. 2010. "Community Economic Identity: The Coal Industry and Ideology Construction in West Virginia." <i>Rural Sociology</i> <u>and</u> Bell, Shannon and Yvonne Braun. 2010. Coal, identity, and the gendering of environmental justice activism in central Appalachia. <i>Gender & Society</i>
21	15-Nov		Brough et al. (2016). Is Eco-Friendly Unmanly? The Green-Feminine Stereotype and Its Effect on Sustainable Consumption. <i>J Consumer Research</i> .
Week 12			

22	20-Nov		Desmond and Emirbayer. 2009. What is Racial Domination?
<i>Thanksgiving break. 22-Nov. No class.</i>			
Week 13			
23	27-Nov		Lesson 3: The State and Policy: Imperialism, Exclusion, and Ecological Violence as State Policy. David Naguib Pellow <u>and</u> Lesson 10: Environmental Inequality and Environmental Justice. Michael Mascarenhas
24	29-Nov		Lesson 5: Corporate Power: The Role of the Global Media in Shaping What We Know About the Environment. Elizabeth Campbell (16 pps)
Week 14			
25	4-Dec	Exam #3	
26	6-Dec		Hochschild. <i>Strangers in Their Own Land</i> . Preface, Chapter 1-8, and Appendix A
Week 15			
27	11-Dec		Hochschild. <i>Strangers in Their Own Land</i> . Chapter 9-16 and Appendix C
	17-Dec	Paper #2 due by midnight on Monday	