

Graduate Seminar in Environmental Sociology (CE SOC 948, Fall 2018; 3 credits*)

Meets Wednesdays from 9:15am through 11:45am in Agricultural Hall 301

Course Instructor

Joshua Garoon • [Community & Environmental Sociology](#)
340A Agricultural Hall • University of Wisconsin-Madison
garoon@wisc.edu • (608) 890-0981

Office Hours: <https://garoon.youcanbook.me/> or by appointment

Course Description

Per the [Guide](#), this graduate seminar “examines topics such as theories of environment and society, the treadmill of production, environmental movements, political ecology, environmental justice, consumption, ecological modernization, sustainability, environmental risk, and the sociology of environmental science.” The exact content of this course shifts with term and instructor; the next paragraph summarizes this term’s approach.

The demands of dealing with environmental change – whether via mitigation or adaptation; geoengineering or deindustrialization; localism or post-cosmopolitanism; or perhaps most likely, some *bricolage* of all of the above – grow ever more pressing. How do we (namely, sociologists and their interlocutors in science and technology studies, anthropology, geography, political science, *et al.*) analyze the social logics of the forms of environmental governance that are emerging in response to those demands? In particular, how do we assess what (and whom) such forms of governance are good for? This course engages with a range of scholars (and a poet) as they work to provide answers to those questions. Readings have been selected for their diverse approaches to the course’s motivating questions; they focus on the 21st century, while covering multiple geographies and scales (from the community to the planetary).

**[Credit hour policy standard](#): This class meets for one 150-minute class period each week over the fall term and carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, session preparation, writing) for approximately 3 hours out of the classroom for every session. That totals to 5.5 hours of work per week. This syllabus includes more information about expectations for sessions and student work.*

Course Learning Outcomes

This course has four [learning outcomes](#) for its students:

- (1) Identify and relate issues and concepts of sociological importance and controversy within the scholarship on global environmental governance, including ideas of social organization and mobilization, the state, forms of citizenship, and inequality. (Understanding; Analysis)
- (2) Appraise, critique, and defend sociological arguments regarding prioritization and praxis in global environmental governance. (Analysis; Evaluation)
- (3) Develop skills in engaging groups in sociological discussions of global environmental governance, via class facilitation and individual presentation. (Analysis; Evaluation; Creativity)
- (4) Construct novel arguments on selected sociological issues and concepts of global environmental governance via authorship of a final paper, based on primary and/or secondary social-science data and literature. (Analysis; Evaluation; Creativity)

Course Logistics

Texts. There's one book assigned for each of the seminar sessions (except the last; more on that in the final paragraph below). Each of you is expected to read the book assigned before each session.

Reading for discussion. The course is structured such that you should be able to space out your reading and thus be fully prepared for each class session. Please start reading early. Attempting to conquer a text in the 12 hours leading up to a session is likely to leave you an unhappy session participant, and that will likely make your classmates and me unhappy. Plus it won't allow you to send in a discussion question (see below) in a timely manner.

As you read, please take notes. These could track especially (un)satisfactory arguments; confusing, concerning, or controversial claims; questions unanswered; and connections to other texts we've covered, as well as to materials you've encountered outside the course. These notes should help you feel prepared to discuss the text in session. If you feel you're not getting everything you want out of the readings and discussions, please do email me and attend office hours, so we can talk things over.

Facilitating discussion. In all but the first two sessions (Weeks One and Two, September 5 and 12), you'll be facilitating class discussion. During the first session, I'll provide a course overview, including introductions and expectations, and lead a creative discussion of Olstein's book. You'll also choose your two sessions for facilitation during this initial session. Given current course enrollment and the fact that there are nine other facilitated sessions, this will likely mean co-facilitation: *i.e.*, you'll need to work with one other student to plan and lead your sessions.

During the second session, I'll model facilitation as we discuss Tsing's *Mushroom at the End of the World*. We'll then have a week off, so there'll be plenty of time to get up to speed for Week Four.

Facilitating discussion doesn't mean talking the entire session. Rather, it means opening up the text for critical analysis: locating it in space, time, and literature; highlighting its key questions and its central claims; assessing those claims and questions they left unanswered; and bringing up and in anything else that you, as facilitator(s), feel will lead to engaged and productive exchange.

Submitting questions for discussion (when not facilitating). By 8pm before each session that you're not facilitating (including Weeks One and Two), you'll email at least one question you have about the reading to the facilitators, copying me. The questions might or might not come up explicitly the next day, but they will give the facilitators (and me) an idea of where you stand with the text. (This also helps avoid cramming in the reading last-minute – which, again, is in nobody's best interest.)

Final paper and presentation. Throughout the term, you'll work on a final paper of approximately 20-30 double-spaced pages (with standard fonts and margins and such). The paper should engage conceptually with at least two of the assigned texts. I'll be available to discuss your topic and approach in office hours, and if the class agrees, we can also set aside class time to talk about prospects and progress. In the final session (Week 15, December 12), you'll each have approximately 10-12 minutes to present your paper topic, and its connections to the course material, to the class.

Course Grade Components*

Seminar participation & discussion questions:	30%
Seminar facilitation (two sessions):	20%
Final paper topic presentation (Week 15):	10%
Final paper (due December 19):	40%

Participation, discussion questions, and facilitation

These will be graded on the criterion of “mindfulness.” That is, if you’re being mindful about contributing and facilitating in good faith, with respect to other students, me, and the texts, you’ll be get full credit. Assessing a lack of mindfulness is inescapably subjective, so if I’m concerned about it, I’ll be in touch with you to discuss privately. And if you’re concerned about your own or other students’ mindfulness (or mine!), please don’t hesitate to email or speak to me in person.

Final paper (and topic presentation)

Rubrics for the final paper and presentation will be circulated later in the term. The final presentation will include a small (2.5%) peer component (with qualitative feedback).

Grade Distribution

Grades will be assigned according to the following cutoffs:

A	= 94.0 and above
AB	= 89.9 – 93.9
B	= 83.0 – 89.9
BC	= 77.0 – 82.9
C	= 70.0 – 76.9
D	= 60.0 – 69.9
F	= 60.0 and below

Grade Disagreements

If you have questions about your final grade or any component of it, please speak to me first. If we can’t settle the issue, please speak with [Gary Green](#), the current chair of the Department of Community & Environmental Sociology. He will attempt to resolve the issue, and in the absence of such resolution will inform you of the grade appeal procedure.

Instructional Accommodations

(Adapted from <https://mcburney.wisc.edu/instructor/>; go to <https://mcburney.wisc.edu/> for more information)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute 36.12, and UW-Madison Faculty Document 1071 all require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison accommodation policies are designed to support the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. Faculty and students share responsibilities for reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

I fully support these accommodation policies and practices. Please inform me (via email, or in person) of any needs you have for instructional accommodations as soon as possible, and no later than Friday, September 21. We’ll then work together to meet your needs, either directly or with the mediation of the [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#). Please contact me and/or a member of the McBurney staff if you have any further questions or concerns.

Required Course Materials

There are 11 books required for the course, each of which you'll read in its entirety, per the weekly schedule in the next and final section of the syllabus. (In this section, the books are listed alphabetically for convenience – please don't read them in alphabetical order!)

I've priced the books out online. (Unfortunately, there's no longer a great local option for ordering course texts in Madison.) You should be able to buy physical copies in decent condition (mostly paperback) for between \$200-275 total, including shipping. Digital versions are available for all but the Nixon book, and adding in a physical copy of *Slow Violence*, that total would run \$180 or so.

I recommend purchasing each book in non-digital form, if possible, but I understand if you prefer to acquire them in alternative form or fashion. Regardless, if cost poses a barrier to you, please don't hesitate to let me know (via email or phone before the term begins, and/or in person once the course starts), so we can work together to figure things out.

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Auyero, Javier & Swistun, Debora Alejandra. 2009. *Flammable: Environmental Suffering in an Argentine Shantytown*. ISBN-13: 978-0195372939

Death, Carl. 2016. *The Green State in Africa*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0300215830

Haraway, Donna J. 2016. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0822362241

Moore, Jason W. 2015. *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital*. London, UK: Verso. ISBN-13: 978-1781689028

Nixon, Rob. 2013. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0674072343

Olstein, Lisa. 2017. *Late Empire*. Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon Press. ISBN-13: 978-1556595189

Petryna, Adriana. 2002/2013. *Life Exposed: Biological Citizens After Chernobyl*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0691151663

Povinelli, Elizabeth A. 2016. *Geontologies: A Requiem to Late Liberalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0822362333

Purdy, Jedediah. 2018. *After Nature: A Politics for the Anthropocene*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0674979864

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. 2015. *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0691178325

West, Paige. 2006. *Conservation is Our Government Now: The Politics of Ecology in Papua New Guinea*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0822337492

Weekly Schedule

- Week 1 (Sept. 5) **Introduction.** Olstein, *Late Empire*
- Week 2 (Sept. 12) **Beginning with the End(s).** Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*
- Week 3 (Sept. 19) **No Class.** [Yom Kippur](#). (Keep reading.)
- Week 4 (Sept. 26) **Considering the Capitalocene.** Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life*
- Week 5 (Oct. 3) **Considering the Chthulucene.** Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*
- Week 6 (Oct. 10) **Environmentalism: What (& Whom) Is It Good For?** Nixon, *Slow Violence*
- Week 7 (Oct. 17) **No Class.** [Instructor fulfilling obligations of citizenship](#). (Keep reading.)
- Week 8 (Oct. 24) **Growth: What (& Whom) Is It Good For?** Auyero & Swistun, *Flammable*
- Week 9 (Oct. 31) **Biodiversity: What (& Whom) Is It Good For?** West, *Conservation Is Our Gov't*
- Week 10 (Nov. 7) **Citizenship: What (& Whom) Is It Good For?** Petryna, *Life Exposed*
- Week 11 (Nov. 14) **The State: What (& Whom) Is It Good For?** Death, *Green State in Africa*
- Week 12 (Nov. 21) **No Class.** (Eat and drink, for the day after [tomorrow](#) we keep reading.)
- Week 13 (Nov. 28) **Quo Vadis? Part One: Anthropolitics.** Purdy, *After Nature*
- Week 14 (Dec. 5) **Quo Vadis? Part Two: Geontopolitics.** Povinelli, *Geontologies*
- Week 15 (Dec. 12) **Final Paper Presentations & Wrap-Up** (No more reading!)

~ Final Papers Due Wednesday, December 19, method of submission TBD ~

Academic Conduct

Your final paper should be **original work**, which entails academic honesty and integrity.

The university's [Writing Center has an excellent page](#) about how to successfully quote and paraphrase texts. Also see [these guidelines about avoiding plagiarism](#). Still, a bit more detail here.

If you choose to using the exact words of some other author(s), you **must**:

- (1) place those words within quotation marks (*e.g.*, "What a good thing Adam had – when he said a good thing he knew nobody had said if before") to indicate that those words are that of the original author(s); **and**
- (2) provide full credit to the other author(s) immediately following the quoted text, in whatever author/year/page format you prefer (*e.g.*, Twain, 1975, p. 368) and in your bibliography, in whatever full-citation format you prefer (*e.g.*, Twain, Mark. 1975. *Mark Twain's Notebooks and Journals: 1855-1873, Volume 1*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press).

Changing a few words of some other author(s) here and there, or switching up a bit of a sentence's word order, is **not** something you should ever do. If you're going to paraphrase some other author(s), make the words your own. Otherwise, please just quote the other author(s) verbatim.

If you are using an idea you obtained from some other author(s), you **must still** cite the author(s) as above, even if you did not quote directly. So if I were to write, "Adam and Eve were the only humans who could be certain that their utterances were wholly original," and I'd taken that idea from Twain, I'd cite Twain even though I'm not directly quoting him. And even if I were coining my own version – say, "Paradise is the certainty that you're the first to write what you've written" – if I'd derived that idea from reading Twain, I'd have to cite that as above.

In short: even distinct paraphrasing of other authors does not mean you don't have to cite them.

The set of ideas you must cite includes those obtained from any Internet source. That includes Wikipedia, though I strongly suggest you not rely on Wikipedia as a source. (If you must, try to track down the upstream sources through Wikipedia.) You can always cite the URL of a web page or site, if that's the original source, or no other source is readily ascertainable.

Please remember that the Internet makes it very easy to plagiarize (whether intentionally or no). It also makes it easy to identify plagiarized texts. Develop a plan to document your sources and ensure you use best citation practices. Don't allow yourself to get sloppy and forget when and where you drew your ideas from other sources!

Per [Chapter UWS 14 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code](#), academic misconduct occurs when students:

- seek to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- use unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- forge or falsify academic documents or records
- intentionally impede or damage the academic work of others;
- engage in conduct aimed at making false representation of [...] academic performance;
- assist other students in any of these acts.

Evidence of academic misconduct in the final paper or any other course component will result in an automatic grade of zero for that component (and thus possible automatic failure of the course). I may also report the misconduct to the [Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards](#), following a meeting with the student(s) involved.

Non-Academic Conduct

(Adapted from <https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/nonacademic-misconduct/>; follow that link for more information)

All members of the University of Wisconsin-Madison community have the right to expect to conduct their academic and social lives in an environment free from threats, danger, or harassment. This includes ensuring that all teaching, learning, research, and service activities occur in living and learning environments that are safe and free from violence, harassment, fraud, theft, disruption, or intimidation. Student conduct policies are an integral part of the educational mission and goals of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The student nonacademic misconduct process is one of many tools that the university can use to foster the personal and academic development of its students. Additionally, the disciplinary process may also be an appropriate means for the university to ensure the safety of our community. Students are encouraged to fully review [Chapter UWS 17](#) to understand their rights if they are participating in the misconduct process. When a student is involved in the misconduct process, the university strives to ensure that each student receives due process, consistent with constitutional law. Individuals should experience a process where the university consistently follows the established procedures of Chapter UWS 17.

Student Grievances

(Adapted from <https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/grievances-and-appeals/>; follow that link for more information)

If a student feels unfairly treated or aggrieved by faculty, staff, or another student, the university offers several avenues to resolve the grievance. Students' concerns about unfair treatment are best handled directly with the person responsible for the objectionable action. If students are uncomfortable making direct contact with the individual(s) involved, they should contact the advisor or the person in charge of the unit where the action occurred (program or department chair, section chair, lab manager, *etc.*). All graduate programs, departments and schools/colleges have established specific procedures for handling such situations; check their web pages and published handbooks for information. If such procedures exist at the local level, these should be investigated first.

Seeking Assistance

Coursework's important to everyone engaged in it: both substantively and in terms of our careers. But nothing's more important (to me, and I hope to each of you) than health and well-being. Chapter 10 of the university's [2018-2019 Graduate Student Life publication](#) is titled "Living Well," and observes, "For graduate students, living well means being able to balance your academics with your physical, emotional, and social needs. While you are in grad school, it is important to eat healthily, exercise, rest, find effective ways to deal with stress, and feel connected with your community" (p. 103). If at any point this course (or your academic workload more broadly) prevents you from maintaining a healthy work-life balance, or impinges on either your physical or mental well-being, then please seek assistance, whether from within your social networks or the university. The "Living Well" chapter mentioned above identifies a range of campus resources, and especially those offered by [University Health Services](#) (333 East Campus Mall; 608-265-5600). UHS features counseling services specifically for graduate students, including groups for dissertators, women, students of color, and students who have experienced sexual assault and/or harassment.