

Community and Environmental Sociology 500
Capstone Experience
Spring 2019

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The goal of this course is to put a “cap” on your major – to read, reflect, discuss, and write about overarching themes of Community & Environmental Sociology, and to prepare to leave UW. I’ve selected books that bring together the central themes of the major, and, in one case, timed our reading to coincide with the author’s visit to campus.

You will play an active role in the course by bringing in connections to current events, suggesting readings, and leading and participating in discussions. My intention is to give you an opportunity to begin to bring your UW education to the world around you, to develop a stronger “sociological imagination” and consider the roles of “public sociology.” Your engagement in the course is critical to its success.

I would also like the course to help you with the next steps in your career. The writing sample and webpage requirements are part of that goal, but we also will engage in “group thinks” to sharpen our appreciation of the skills and training received. My goals in designing this course are to help you realize and document the skills and knowledge you have acquired, to articulate the value of your education, especially but not exclusively within this major. I want you to push your critical thinking skills, to work on your writing and communication skills, and to have final products of which you will be proud. These goals are reflective of the following learning outcomes.

LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE MAJOR:

1. Understand how social science arguments are constructed and evaluated.
2. Develop ability to assess data quality and understand whether particular data is appropriate to answer specific questions.
3. Learn general theories on basic social processes, especially those related to the relationships between society and the environment and the social organization of communities.
4. Learn communication skills in the social sciences.

LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE:

1. Understand the linkages between theory and practice and, relatedly, the concept and roles of public sociology.
2. Apply and advance critical thinking skills to form perspectives on issues, determine cause and effect, and evaluate solutions.
3. Improve understanding of the relationships between the local and global, between community and environment.
4. Improve communication skills in writing and speaking through development of a webpage, a writing sample, a research presentation, and reflective essays.

CREDIT HOUR EXPECTATIONS:

This class meets for two 75-minute class periods each week over the semester and carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, writing, studying, etc.) for about 3 hours out of classroom for every class period. This syllabus includes more information about meeting times and expectations for student work.

REQUIRED READING: The books can be purchased from A Room of One's Own Bookstore downtown or from a bookseller of your choosing.

- Articles posted on course website.
- *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things: A Guide to Capitalism, Nature, and the Future of the Planet*, by Raj Patel and Jason W. Moore (2017, University of California Press).
- *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life*, by Eric Klinenberg (2018, Crown Publishing).
- *The Death and Life of the Great Lakes*, by Dan Egan. (2017, W.W. Norton) – Go Big Read book.
- *What the Eyes Don't See: A Story of Crisis, Resistance, and Hope in an American City*, by Mona Hanna-Attisha (2018, One World Press).
- *Sites Unseen: Uncovering Hidden Hazards in American Cities*, by Scott Frickel and James R. Elliott (2018, Russel Sage Foundation).

GRADED COMPONENTS:

Written work -- 85% total

- 60%: 5 Sociological reflections on assigned books and readings @ 10 -15% each depending on the length and difficulty of the material
Submit hard copy at the beginning of class, upload WORD file to Canvas by 1:30pm on due date (Due dates and other requirements will be posted on Canvas)
- 15%: Writing sample, each draft evaluated based on improvement and quality; professional presentation
 - 5% first revision – due March 8
 - 5% final revision – due April 19
 - 5% in-class presentation (April 22, 24, 29)
- 10%: Webpage - Due March 25 (final version will include polished writing sample, due May 1)

Class engagement –15%

- 5%: Discussion leader roles
- 10%: Participation in discussions (evidence of having done the reading, thoughtful comments); attendance in class and a few out-of-classroom experiences (additional grade penalty for more than 3 absences); postings to discussion forums; peer reviewing; feedback on presentations

WRITING SAMPLE:

By the end of the semester, you should have a polished writing sample. This should be a revised version of a paper you have written for a previous sociology class. The paper will be graded on improvement *and* final quality. You must meet with me by Feb. 13 to discuss what paper to use and how to begin reworking it. We may engage in peer review to help each other improve the product. Many of you will benefit from the services provided by the Writing Center and I encourage you to take the first draft of the writing sample to them.

Target length (not including bibliography and tables): 10-12 pages.

Everyone will give and provide feedback to others on their 15 minute professional presentations in class during the final 2 weeks of the semester.

PROFESSIONAL WEBSITE:

Using the platform of your choice, build a professional website to serve as an e-portfolio for educational works you would like to save, a living resume, and a showcase for your skills. The essential components of the website are: education, experience, skills from coursework, other skills, writing sample, resume. A

nearly final, fully functional, version of your website is due on March 25. Most of your grade will come from the review of this draft. However, you may want to add work from this semester to a final version at us due May 1. Additional details on the components will be provided. Example templates can be found online (e.g. <https://www.wix.com/website/templates/html/portfolio-cv>).

POSSIBLE PENALTIES:

Late papers lose one full letter grade; no papers will be accepted 5 days after the due date.

Failure to show up for a discussion leadership role will result in a 10% deduction from semester final grade.

Failure to attend class research presentations will result in a loss of 5% from semester final grade for every presentation day missed.

EVERYONE should be contributing to discussion EVERY class. Participation will be evaluated and worth 10% of your final grade. Excessive class absences (beyond 3) will lead to a poor participation grade and an additional full-letter grade reduction. If you cannot attend class because of illness or unavoidable schedule issues, please let me know. I will expect you to post your comments on the discussion board if you cannot attend class.

GRADING SCALE:

A	=	93-100%
AB	=	88-92
B	=	83-87
BC	=	78-82
C	=	70-77
D	=	60-69
F	=	<60

RULES, RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES:

Respect must be shown toward each other at all times. We simply cannot have a high quality learning environment without tolerance and respect for each other's views. That said, I expect that your comments will be informed by evidence, and we will privilege research-based evidence over our personal observations, which may reflect our subconscious biases as well as the particular nature of our lives.

Common courtesies and professional conduct are expected. Please remember that the classroom is a place for learning. That means that your CELL PHONE IS TURNED OFF while class is in session and that you do not engage in behaviors that place barriers to your and others' learning. Examples that spring to mind include checking your phone, texting, sleeping, chatting, eating, leaving the room, and other distracting actions. If you have a medical reason to leave the room during class, please let me know so we can figure out how to minimize the disruption to the class.

Please limit your use of laptops or other internet devices including phones and tablets to consulting readings. While computers are a valuable tool for research and study, they are inimical to participation and collegiality in the classroom, creating a "cone of distraction."

See the Guide's [Rules, Rights and Responsibilities](#)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison's community of scholars in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university.

Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/.

Plagiarism sometimes occurs because students do not understand how to correctly acknowledge their sources. The Writing Center provides excellent guidelines that I encourage you to consult: http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/Acknowledging_Sources.pdf
Plagiarism detection software may be used in this course.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

McBurney Disability Resource Center syllabus statement: “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. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [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. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [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.” <http://mcburney.wisc.edu/facstaffother/faculty/syllabus.php>

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION:

Institutional statement on diversity: “Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.” <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>

SCHEDULE:

I will post deadlines for papers and website, as well as the chapter reading schedule for books on the course website. Subscribe to notifications from Canvas so that you are always informed about the deadlines, news, discussions, and additions to content.

Jan. 23 - Welcome & overview

Jan. 28 - Read and discuss C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*, Chapters 1, 7-10

Jan. 30 - Read and discuss Michael Burawoy, “Public Sociology” (2004), Erik Olin Wright “Real Utopias” (2011)

Feb. 4-13 - Read and discuss Patel and Moore’s *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things: A Guide to Capitalism, Nature, and the Future of the Planet*

Feb. 18-27 - Read and discuss Klinenberg's *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life*

Mar. 4 – 13 - Read and discuss Egan's *The Death and Life of the Great Lakes*

Mar. 16-24 - Spring Break!!

Mar. 25- April 3 - Read and discuss Hanna-Attisha's *What the Eyes Don't See: A Story of Crisis, Resistance, and Hope in an American City*

April 8-15 - Read and discuss Frickel and Elliott's *Sites Unseen: Uncovering Hidden Hazards in American Cities*

April 15 - *Author Meets Capstoners*: Q&A with Prof. Jim Elliott

April 22, 24, 29 - Presentations

May 1- Final class

**May 10, Noon - luncheon for CES graduates and their guests at UW Pyle Center, 702 Langdon Street.

Other speakers and events:

CES alumni panel

Kimberley Wright, Executive Director of [Midwest Environmental Advocates](#) (and alumnae of this program)

[Social Cinema](#) Dinner and A Movie night

Sociology graduate student to talk about grad school applications

LET'S HAVE A GREAT SEMESTER!