

Introduction to Community & Environmental Sociology

Community & Environmental Sociology 140

Spring 2020

Class Meets:

MW 4:00-5:15pm
Van Hise, 104
Final Exam: Sunday,
5/03/20 @ 7:25pm

Professor:

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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:

- Connect individual and seemingly isolated lives to a broader social and historical context.
- Understand how social science arguments are constructed and evaluated.
- Learn and practice the 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," "environmental justice," "sustainability," "globalization," and "neoliberalism;" learn how these concepts are involved in contemporary debates about what is just and desirable for the places where we live and the world as a whole.

- Become familiar with actors in the social practices, processes, and institutions that affect our communities and the environment, including government, corporations, transnational institutions and social movements.
- Develop skills and frameworks for analyzing how social processes affect disparately 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 three sections. In the first section on the “sociological imagination,” we will discuss sociology’s basic logic and tools. The next section, on “community” and “the environment,” we discuss how social scientists approach these topics—how they conceptualize and study both. In the final section, the course focuses on the global community, specifically globalization and environmental justice. We also examine social movements for food security and sovereignty, responses to climate change, and the challenges posed by migration.

Participation. The quality of your 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 and section. Remember that the material covered in the lecture is not the same as what you will find in the readings. You will not be able to do well in this course unless you attend lectures AND do readings. **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. We will work to cultivate an environment of respect for one another’s views.

Books/Readings:

1. *Sze, Julie. 2007. *Noxious New York: The Racial Politics of Urban Health and Environmental Justice*. MIT Press.

2. *Shiva, Vandana. 2015. *Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply*. University Press of Kentucky.

* Books are available at University Bookstore and other locations. You can also borrow a copy from the Steenbock Library Course reserve located at the Service Desk on 2nd floor near the library entrance.

3. Other assigned 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 of the lecture by hand. 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. If you cannot attend scheduled office hours, let us know and we will find another time.
- Form a study group.

Grade Appeals:

If you wish to appeal a grade on a paper, quiz, or exercise in this course you must take the steps below. Depending on the evidence, an appeal may result in a lower grade, the same grade, or a higher grade.

- 1) Wait one week after receiving the grade to make an appeal.
- 2) Present a written argument explaining the strengths of your work in fulfilling the assignment.
- 3) Meet with the grader to discuss the appeal.

If you wish to appeal your final grade in this course you must take the steps below. Depending on the evidence, an appeal may result in a lower grade, the same grade, or a higher grade.

- 1) Gather together all of your written work in the course.
- 2) Submit a written request explaining in detail which part of the grade you are contesting. If you are contesting the grade on an exam or a paper, you must present written

evidence and argument explaining how your paper or exam answered the assigned question or fulfilled the aims of the assignment.

You may **not**

- 1) Request a higher grade through an e-mail message
- 2) Make a personal appeal during office hours before you have collected your written work and submitted a written request for a grade change.
- 3) Present new evidence after your initial written request.

Assignments

I. Response papers (4).

100 points

There are **FOUR 400-word** response papers. Each paper is worth 25 points for a total of 100 points. Response papers are due in-class on the day assigned. Writing tutoring is available on a drop-in bases and by appointment at the **UW Writing Center located at** 6171 Helen C. White (and other satellite locations). Prompts will be provided one week in advance.

Response paper due dates: Feb 5, Feb 19, Mar 4, Apr 22

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. Community Mapping Project: Due Date April 8

100 points

Connect the changing social and environmental conditions to the larger social structures and institutions of a community in a 1500 words paper. More details provided on Canvas.

III. Exams

Midterm 1 (March 11)

100 points

Final Exam (Sunday, 5/03 @ 7:25pm)

100 points

Make-up Exam Policy

If you have a compelling emergency and if you make a request before the exam, 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

Extra Credit will be available and will be announced in class.

Course Schedule

DATE	TOPIC	READING Assignments
Week 1 Jan 22	Part I Introduction	
Week 2 01/27	What is the sociological imagination?	C. Wright Mills, "The Promise" Emile Durkheim, "What is a Social Fact?"
Week 3 2/03	What are the basic tools and concepts to name social patterns?	Eduardo Bonilla Silva (2002). "The linguistics of Color-blind Racism: How to Talk Nasty about Blacks without Sounding "Racist" Lipsitz, George (2011). Introduction "Race, Place, and Power"
Week 4 2/10	Part II What do we mean by community?	Sze, Julie. 2007. Noxious New York: The Racial Politics of Urban Health and Environmental Justice. Introduction & Chapter 1.
Week 5 2/17	Transportation, Food Deserts, and Health	Noxious New York: Chapter 2 and Chapter 5
Week 6 2/24	What do we mean by environment? Drought, Fires, and Natural Disasters	Noxious New York: Chapter 6
Week 7 3/2	<i>People, Places, and Knowledge:</i> Indigenous Communities	Deborah McGregor. "Indigenous Environmental Justice, Knowledge, and law." In <i>Kalfou</i> . Kari Marie Norgaard, Ron Reed, and Carolina Van Horn. "Continuing Legacy: Institutional Racism, Hunger, and Nutritional Justice on the Klamath"
Week 8 3/9	Coastal Communities	MBARI: "Climate Change and the Ocean: A Triple Threat and the Ocean" --web link: https://www.mbari.org/climate-change/ EPA: Climate Impacts on Local Communities

		<p>--web link: https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/climate-impacts/climate-impacts-coastal-areas_.html</p> <p>Executive Summary: “Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate” --web link: https://www.ipcc.ch/srocc/chapter/chapter-1-framing-and-context-of-the-report/</p>
3/14-3/22	<i>Spring Break</i>	
Week 9 3/23	Part III Think global, Act local	Vandana Shiva’s book Introduction Chapter 1, Chapter 2 and 3
Week 10 3/30	Climate Change	Vandana Shiva Chapter 4 and 5
Week 11 4/06	Labor Markets	Vandana Shiva Chapter 6, and 7
Week 12 4/13	Women & Globalization	“The Zombie Commodity: Hair and the Politics of its Globalization”—Ester R. Berry.
Week 13 4/20	Social Movements	Vicki L. Ruiz “Citizen Restaurant: American Imaginaries, American Communities” Monica White “D Town Farms”
Week 14 4/27	Food justice and Food sovereignty	Roman Alcala “From Food Security to Food Sovereignty” Daniel Jaffee “A More Perfect Commodity” Bottled Water, Global Accumulation, and Local Contestation”
Sunday May 3, 2020	Final Exam Date	