Community and Environmental Sociology (CES) 248:
Environment, Natural Resources, and Society
Fall 2020

"Isn't this the purpose of education, to learn the nature of your own gifts
and how to use them for good in the world?" ~Robin Wall Kimmerer

YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Laura Hanson Schlachter, Lecturer, http://lauraschlachter.com

I am a researcher and teacher of community & environmental sociology at UW-Madison. I have a BA in Peace and Conflict Studies, a Master in Public Affairs, and will be completing my PhD in sociology this fall. I led cooperative economic development initiatives in the U.S. and Rwanda prior to graduate school and currently research strategies to make our economy more inclusive and move our society to rise to the challenge of the climate crisis. In my free time, I volunteer with 350 Madison, analyze civic engagement data for the Corporation for National and Community Service, and spend time outside with my family.

The department nominated me for an Early Excellence in Teaching Award for my service as a TA and we'll be reading excerpts from the 6th edition of *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, a textbook I had the opportunity to coauthor with Mike Bell, Loka Ashwood, and Ike Leslie that is forthcoming in October. I'm excited to get to know you and co-create our online learning community for this course together. A special thanks to Kathryn Anderson, who developed this course for an online format and generously shared her materials.

Communicating with Me

Preferred Method of Communication
- Please ask general course-related questions through the discussion board Course Questions? Chances are if you have a question, others do too!
- For private matters, I'd prefer to receive your message through Canvas.
  - Click on Inbox in the far left panel ➔ Compose a new message icon (pencil) ➔ Select Course ➔ C&ESOC248 FA20 ➔ Type my name (Laura Schlachter) in the "To" field ➔ Write your subject and body (use the paper clip icon to include an attachment if needed) ➔ Click send
- You can also email me directly at lhanson4@wisc.edu
- You can expect to hear back from me within two business days. I do not typically log in over the weekend.

Virtual Office Hours
- To be fair to all students, I do not hold set office hours. I am eager to meet with you, however, so please message me in Canvas to set up a time. I generally have the most availability between noon and 4pm Monday through Thursday.
- I hold virtual office hours using BBCollaborate Ultra, which accommodates both video and phone-only.

Course Announcements
- Each day when you log into class, check the [Announcements](#) tab for the latest course announcements.
- I will also periodically contact you via Canvas. Please be sure to check your Canvas inbox regularly.

COURSE OVERVIEW

Welcome to Environment, Natural Resources, and Society!

I'm so glad you enrolled in this course. Please make it your own and ask me when you need help using this course to learn the nature of your own gifts.

This is an asynchronous online course, meaning that we will not meet virtually together as a group, but rather proceed individually together with ample opportunities for other forms of interaction along the way.

Canvas Course URL: https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/216616

The purpose of this course is to introduce sociological theories that seek to explain our changing relationships with the environment, what UW-Madison Professor Mike Bell calls "the biggest community of all." It provides a foundational (basic) level of understanding for students pursuing social science degrees and adds a uniquely social understanding of environmental issues for students engaged in programs that focus on conservation, natural science, health, and engineering, among others.

In our sociological study of environmental issues, we will learn how problems we are all familiar with (climate change, pollution, biodiversity loss, disproportionate vulnerability to COVID19, toxic exposure, fisheries collapse, etc.) 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 implications.

You 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 yourself and 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 constructively in contemporary debates concerning environmental issues.

Catalog Details

Introduces the concerns and principles of sociology through examination of human interaction with the natural environment. Places environmental issues such as resource depletion, population growth, food production, environmental regulation, and sustainability in national and global perspectives. Requisites: None. Breadth: Social Science. Level: Elementary. L&S Credit – Counts as Liberal Arts and Science credit in L&S. 3 Credits

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Student Learning Goals

Students should emerge from this course able to do the following:
- Explain various ways that social systems contribute to the emergence of environmental problems and solutions.
- Apply these key theories to a variety of contemporary environmental problems.
- Practice skills in creative learning, collaboration, critical thinking, efficient reading, and effective writing, digital, oral, and creative communication skills.
- Reflect on and articulate your own perspective on controversial issues.
- Become informed and capable citizen decision-makers, with leadership skills!

Big Ideas & Essential Questions

If you and I meet up and have a conversation in five years, these are the big ideas I hope you remember from this course:
- Social structures bequeathed by colonialism, slavery, patriarchy, and capitalism are important factors behind our ongoing failure to curtail environmental destruction.
- The impacts of environmental destruction fall disproportionately on the disadvantaged and marginalized, and this is unjust.
- Social and environmental injustice are hard to root out using the instruments of our democracy because social and environmental injustice are institutionalized within it.
- Narrative, discourse, institutions, and social construction are important means through which enduring social structures operate on the environment.

COURSE WORKLOAD

Understand the Time Requirements for this Online Course

For most of you, online classes are a new learning environment. I want you to have a rich and successful experience and will offer strategies to help you succeed in this course.

This is an online course in the midst of a global pandemic. Both of these add challenges beyond typical university classes. If you are organized and work hard, you will do well. You simply cannot fall behind or neglect to anticipate deadlines and future work, however, if you want to succeed. Online learning can be very fun and rewarding but it requires learning both new material and new (online) learning skills.

Per university policy, this class is worth 3 credit hours equivalent to the learning that takes place in a total of 135 hours of course activities over the course of 15 weeks. Here's an approximation of how your time will be distributed during the semester.

Learning Activity	Hours per Week	Weeks	Total
Reading content in Canvas	0.5	14	7
Videos or other media	1.5	10	15
Readings – textbooks, articles, etc.*	3	14	42
Interactive activities (discussions, debates, etc.)	2	14	28
Writing assignments	4	6	24
Group project	2	7	14
Quizzes	0.5	10	5
		Grand Total	**135**

* I have calculated weekly reading time using average reading length:
https://www.readinglength.com/

This means you should plan to spend at least 9 hours reading, writing, and completing activities related to the course each week for the duration of the semester. That works out to 2 hours 15 minutes being actively engaged in this class four days per week.

Where will you find these 9 hours each week?

We all wear multiple hats and juggle varying roles and responsibilities at home, work, and in the community. Your role as a student is vital but comes with its own requirements and daily demands. To manage these responsibilities, you'll need a well-considered plan. One of the keys to successfully completing this course is having a plan that will serve as a guide for your time management.

To help you visualize this, create a study schedule to stay on track. Download this [Learning Calendar Template](), and create a schedule for when you will devote time to this course. Here is an example.

My CES248 Learning Calendar

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
8:00							
9:00							
10:00		Check Canvas inbox and announcements	Check Canvas inbox and announcements	Check Canvas inbox and announcements	Check Canvas inbox and announcements		
11:00		Review Module Overview / Absorb activities (reading, etc.)	Absorb activities (watch lectures, etc.)	Absorb activities (listen to podcasts, etc.)	Absorb activities (watch documentaries, etc.)		
12:00			Connect activities (discussion posts, etc.) / Do weekly assignment	Do weekly assignment	Connect activities (discussion posts, etc.) / Submit weekly assignment		
1:00	Catch up as needed					Catch up as needed	
2:00	Catch up as needed					Catch up as needed	
3:00							
4:00							
5:00							
6:00							
7:00							

As you develop your calendar, consider the following:
- Estimate the time requirements for your multiple roles—learning, work, leisure.
- How will you establish a workspace? This typically includes an internet connection, a device, a comfortable space, and quiet.
- How will your role as a learner affect the time you have available for your job and other interests?
- How will you explain your role as a learner to others e.g., family, co-workers, and friends?
- To fulfill your learning role, do you need to alter your other roles? If so, in what ways? What is needed to resolve them?
- What opportunities emerge as a result of your new role?

Once you have developed a typical weekly schedule, it will be helpful to discuss your learning plan and the time commitment with others in your life. This includes people you share space, bandwidth, and devices with. The learning calendar helps to make this commitment concrete. You'll need to have the support of these other people.

Additionally, you can take the "How to Be Successful in an Online Course" quiz. This quiz will not only test your knowledge of what it takes to succeed in an online course but also give you helpful tips you can use right away in the course.

What will you do during these 9 hours each week?

Online courses require you to more actively guide your own learning.

You should plan on logging into Canvas and completing several hours of reading and active learning activities at least four days every week. As you'll see from the Schedule, this course is set up for you to log in and complete your coursework on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

- Each day when you log into Canvas, check the Announcements tab for reflections from me on the previous day's work, upcoming deadlines and activities, and other course announcements.
- Each module involves three kinds of activities:
  - Absorbing material through reading, watching a film, etc.
  - Doing an assignment to synthesize or reinforce what you've absorbed such as an essay or working on a longer-term project.
  - Connecting to the material personally, often through a discussion post or quiz to help you reflect on your growth and understanding.
- On a typical week, each module details materials to absorb (readings, films, etc.) on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
- A connect activity (discussion post, quiz, etc.) is due every Tuesday and Thursday at 11:59pm Central.
- An assignment (essay, project proposal, etc.) is due most Sundays at 11:59pm Central. You are always welcome (and encouraged!) to submit assignments early, but this will allow you to catch up on Friday and over the weekend as needed.

Here's the typical weekly rhythm you can expect:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Typical Week	Weekly Module Begins						Weekly Module Ends
	Required Readings / Lectures / Multimedia Open						
	Connect Activities Open	Connect Activity 1 Due at 11:59pm		Connect Activity 2 Due at 11:59pm			
	Weekly Assignment Open						Weekly Assignment Due at 11:59pm
	Check announcements and Canvas inbox for communications from Laura						
	Communicate with Laura via Canvas or email						

COURSE POLICIES

Grading

Your course grade will reflect performance on the following components, each of which will be weighted as the corresponding percentage of your final grade. You have at least two weekly participation activities, several medium-scope writing assignments, two iterative semester-long projects (one individually and one in groups), and no exams.

Activities	Percent of Course Grade
Participation: Discussion posts, quizzes, peer reviews	30
Two blog essays	20
Individual semester-long project: Picturing Environmental (In)justice	25
Group semester-long project: Green New Deal Day One Proposal	25

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%
- Final course grades will reflect your level of continuous engagement with the course rather than your performance on a few big exams or papers. The best way to get a good grade in the class is to keep up with activities and assignments and ask questions when you need help.
- Avoid missing deadlines. Always just do the best you can and submit your work.
- There is no extra credit or curve in this course.
- The only required synchronous online session in this course will take place via BBCollaborate Ultra on Wednesday, December 16 from 5:05 to 7:05pm Central.

Required Course Materials

You will need to secure access to two books we will read this semester:
- *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer
    - eBook available for purchase from various sellers starting at $9.99
    - Electronic access (Proquest Ebook Central eBooks) also available through UW Library
- *A Planet to Win: Why We Need a Green New Deal* by Kate Aronoff et. al
    - eBook available for purchase from various sellers starting at $9.99
    - Electronic access (two e-books) and physical access (pickup by appointment) also available through UW Library

All other readings and course materials are available through Canvas.

Participation Expectations

The quality of our collective experience in this course depends on your participation, which is why timely and thoughtful engagement in asynchronous "connect" activities (discussion posts, quizzes, etc.), peer reviews, and other small activities throughout the semester is worth 30 percent of your final grade.

Participation activities will be assessed on a complete [1 point] vs. incomplete [0 points] basis. Your final participation grade will be determined through a combination of points accumulated and my subjective assessment of the quality and consistency of your engagement with the course. If things don't seem to be going well for you in this area, I will let you know.

The only required synchronous online session in this course will take place during our assigned final exam slot. Each group will present their live pitch for their Green New Deal Day One proposal via BBCollaborate Ultra, which accommodates both video and phone-only. Attendance will be factored into your final semester-long group project grade. Please save the date: Wednesday, December 16 from 5:05 to 7:05pm Central.

Your Small Learning Group

Research has found small group learning 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 better. All of these things are essential for professional success, civic efficacy, and having fun in this course. There is also evidence that sticking with the same group yields better results than shifting groups frequently.

I have randomly assigned you to a group with whom you will share discussion posts, collaborative activities, and peer reviews. You'll remain in this group for about half of the semester. To find out what group you're in and who's in it, click on "Groups" in the global navigation menu (the red ribbon to the left) and look for your "Discussion Group."

Course Etiquette and Netiquette

Please use proper etiquette and netiquette. See Colorado State University's and UW's netiquette guidelines.

For example:
- Do not share materials outside of this course that might possibly violate copyright.
- Do not engage in any behavior that might compromise the privacy of your classmates or your instructor.

- Remember the Human. Practice the *Golden Rule*: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.
- Please learn to use gender-neutral pronouns when you are unsure of a person's gender or when addressing someone with a mix of gendered characteristics or a person/community who identifies outside the he/she binary. Visit the Writing Center's page on Gender-Neutral Pronouns for helpful information, including how to engage audiences unfamiliar with gender–neutral pronouns and the table below.

THREE COMMON GENDER-NEUTRAL PRONOUNS

Pronouns	Nominative (subject)	Objective (object)	Possessive determiner	Possessive pronoun	Reflexive
they/them/ theirs	*They* write.	I wrote about *them.*	*Their* paper is excellent.	That paper is *theirs.*	They cited *themself.*
ze/hir/hirs	*Ze* writes. ("zee")	I wrote about *hir.* ("heer")	*Hir* paper is excellent.	That paper is *hirs.* ("heers")	Ze cited about *hirself.* ("heerself")
ze/zir/zirs	*Ze* writes. ("zee")	I wrote about *zir.* ("zeer")	*Zir* paper is excellent.	That paper is *zirs.* ("zeers")	Ze cited about *zirself.* ("zeerself")

(Table adapted from the one presented in the Gender Neutral Pronoun Blog.)

Late Work Policy

The Course Schedule is your one-stop guide to course deadlines. It also has hyperlinks for activities, including readings and multimedia to absorb, assignments to do, and activities to personally connect to the material. You'll still need to review each module for specifics, but I recommend adding it to your favorites bar as a quick reference.

All assignments are due on Sundays at 11:59pm Central via Canvas.
- Medium and semester-long assignments do have firm deadlines. You are always welcome (and encouraged!) to submit an assignment in advance of the deadline.
- To the best of your ability, please plan ahead and avoid submitting assignments at the last minute, as this makes you more vulnerable to unanticipated connection issues.
- If you have an emergency and are unable to complete an assignment on time, please let me know immediately and I will consider an extension. Otherwise, you will lose 10% for each day (up to 24 hours) an assignment is late.

[Participation activities are typically due at 11:59pm Central on Tuesdays and Thursdays via Canvas](#).

- You and your classmates will be missing out if you post to discussions or complete quizzes after we have moved on to other topics.
- The expectation is that you will complete "connect" activities and peer reviews according to the schedule.
- But … since we all need flexibility (and reliable internet) in this season of life, full points may still be allocated for good-faith efforts at late participation.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON POLICIES

Diversity and Inclusion

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. (Source: [https://diversity.wisc.edu/)](https://diversity.wisc.edu/).

Rules, Rights, and Responsibilities

During the global COVID19 pandemic, we must prioritize our collective health and safety to keep ourselves, our campus, and our community safe. As a university community, we must work together to prevent the spread of the virus and to promote the collective health and welfare of our campus and surrounding community. Be aware of the [Undergraduate Guide](#) and the [Badger Pledge](#).

Accommodations

Everyone on campus should continually monitor themselves for COVID19 [symptoms](#) and get [tested](#) for the virus if they have symptoms or have been in close contact with someone with COVID19. Please reach out to me as soon as possible if you become ill or need to isolate or quarantine in order to make alternate plans for how to proceed with the course. Students are strongly encouraged to communicate with their instructor concerning their illness and the anticipated extent of their absence from the course. I will work with you to provide alternative ways to complete the course work.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: 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. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

- The McBurney Center (608-263-2741 or mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu) provides assistance to students who qualify for disability services and provides a formal accommodation request (VISA).
- Students are expected to 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.

Academic Calendar and Religious Observances: See details of the UW policy here: https://secfac.wisc.edu/academic-calendar/#religious-observances

- If you wish to request a scheduling accommodation for religious observance, please email me immediately, stating the date(s) for which you request accommodation.

Anxiety and the Blues: Sometimes things get out of control in one's life. It happens to all of us. Emails unanswered. Deadlines missed. Personal relationships frayed. Stuff starts to swirl into a vortex in which one feels trapped.

- If you are feeling this way and it is interfering with your performance in this class, let me know! Reach out to me privately via Canvas or email. I am here to help you succeed.

Need a Hand?

For technology-related questions:
- Contact the DoIT Help Desk via chat, email, phone, or in person.
- Search the UW KnowledgeBase for technical information and help documents.
- If you prefer to try your classmates or instructor, post your technology-related question to the Course Questions? discussion topic.
- Check DoIT's log of reported Outages on campus.

For writing and research support:
- Check out the UW-Madison Writing Center. You can schedule virtual meetings, participate in live chats, request written feedback, and more.
- Visit the UW Libraries website for information on finding and requesting materials, accessing materials at a distance, and research assistance. You may also "Ask a Librarian" via chat, email, phone, or in person.
- Check out student-led GUTS (Greater University Tutoring Services) or the University Residence Halls Academic Tutoring that offer support for many subjects.

Academic Integrity

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion. (Source: https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/syllabus-statement/)

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. I use an online plagiarism checker, so be sure to cite appropriately. For all relevant assignments in this course, use the American Psychological Association documentation style to cite your sources.

Digital Course Evaluation (AEFIS)

Students will be provided with an opportunity to evaluate this course and your learning experience. Student participation is an integral component of this course, and your feedback is important to me. I strongly encourage you to participate in the course evaluation via an online course evaluation survey tool, AEFIS. In most instances, you will receive an official email two weeks prior to the end of the semester when your course evaluation is available. You will receive a link to log into the course evaluation with your NetID where you can complete the evaluation and submit it, anonymously. Your participation is an integral component of this course, and your feedback is important to me. I strongly encourage you to participate in the course evaluation.