

FALL 2012

SOCIOLOGY 150 T
Environment and Society # 77442 (3 units)
T Th 2-3:15pm SA 153

CSU FRESNO

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Office: Social Science, Room 221
Hours: MWF 10 - 11 am, T Th 1-2 pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to a variety of research traditions and debates within the field of environmental sociology. We will explore the ways in which historical and contemporary patterns of human evolution have created ecological problems; why harmful effects of pollution disproportionately impact disadvantaged groups; and what kinds of social movements have mobilized to protect ecosystems and human communities from environmental degradation. Through this exploration we will address a number of important questions. What impact has the rise of giant corporations had on the environment here and around the world? Can environmental movements stem the tide of environmental degradation? What is environmental racism and what can be done about it? What are governments doing (or not doing) about global climate change, deforestation, and pollution? Why do we consume so much “stuff”? Why do we recycle? Is it possible to build communities and social systems that are ecologically “sustainable”? What are the links between globalization and environmental protection? What is “nature” anyhow? In addressing these topics, the course will make linkages between local, national, and global processes.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the course is to provide students a relatively comprehensive introduction to the field of environmental sociology, an area of inquiry that focuses on the relationship between society and the physical environment, including its historical development and several important contemporary topics and debates. Specifically, this course focuses on the 'natural' environment, rather than the 'built' environment. What this course is not about: This course is not about learning to be an environmentalist, nor is it about learning which groups to 'blame' for our changing environment. What this course is about: The primary goal of this course is to use our sociological imaginations to understand how the environment affects, and is affected by, our values, beliefs and social institutions. We will explore how our views have changed over time and the social forces driving current views of the environment.

Myth, Science and Theory

- Theory is working model that organizes our concepts of the world in a systematic way, to help us guide further research and analyze the findings. The strength of a theory is the skill in which it arranges information that can explain complex phenomena in manageable form.
- Myth is a non-rational and sacred or intact folk explanation for the origins or creation of natural, supernatural, or cultural phenomena. These explanations are a matter of faith and not subjected to scientific or empirical inquiry. They have no place in this course.
- Social Science is that application of the scientific method to the interactions of people and society. The systematic pursuit of knowledge by recognizing a problem, and formulating the question in a way that can be verified or rejected.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

This course will be conducted as part lecture and part seminar, and students are expected to be prepared to discuss the weekly reading assignments in depth. The success of this method of instruction depends upon all participants STUDYING all of the readings before our weekly class meetings. I expect you to be motivated and hard working. The course structure will be the following: Mondays will be devoted to lecture presentation, introducing some key points about the theoretical perspective or issue being addressed for that week's readings; Wednesdays will be student-group led discussions on specific readings.

REQUIRED TEXTS

This course has three required texts, listed below, and they are available in the campus bookstore.

Michael Mayerfeld Bell. *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*. 4th Ed. Pine Forge Press

Andrew Jorgenson and Edward Kick. *Globalization and the Environment*. Haymarket Books

Craig R. Humphrey, Tammy L. Lewis and Frederick H. Buttel. *Environment, Energy, and Society: A New Synthesis*. Wadsworth

Any additional required reading materials, handouts, announcements, etc., will be posted on Blackboard (BB) and noted in the Lectures and Readings schedule in the syllabus. This course assumes a working knowledge of Blackboard, the Internet, and computers. Please access the resources on the Blackboard site, if you lack these skills, prior to asking for assistance. "Learn by doing" should be your mantra as a college student. Accessing Blackboard for PC users is done most efficiently through Firefox. Do not use Internet Explorer to access documents, as Blackboard has compatibility issues with the IE web browser.

ASSIGNMENTS AND REQUIREMENTS

1. Read the assigned materials. You are responsible for reading the assigned materials prior to the week's lectures. Your ability to complete the assignments for this course is contingent upon reading the assigned texts.
2. Participation. You are to engage in class discussion of concepts and issues presented in lecture and the readings.
3. Attend class and take notes. The greatest retention of information comes from reading it, hearing it, and writing it.
4. Writing assignments. During the course of the semester you will be assigned topical essays that will involve thought questions pertaining to concepts and subject matter brought up in class and addressed in course readings. Details for each are delineated in handouts in the assignments folder on Blackboard.
5. Ecological footprint calculation. The ecological footprint is the measurement of the land and area required to sustain a given lifestyle. For example, the ecological footprint for a beef-eating individual would include the grazing land for the cattle, the land involved in transporting the beef, such as energy production lands (e.g., Middle Eastern oil fields), as well as land used for feedlots and packaging plants. Calculating one's individual ecological footprint helps one to understand the impact our daily habits and mundane consumption patterns have on environmental systems, and can serve as a means of acknowledging the ecological limits of the Earth. Details of this assignment will be posted on a forthcoming handout on Blackboard in the assignments folder.
6. Final paper. Details of this assignment will be posted on a forthcoming handout on Blackboard in the assignments folder.

Writing assignment guidelines for typed essays:

1. Always identify by your full name, course number, and date at the upper right hand corner of the front page.

2. Use double spacing (Do NOT press “Return” twice between paragraphs - that’s quadruple spacing).
3. Make sure you’ve included a reference list (This is not needed for the reflection papers).
4. Do not include a cover sheet or any form of binder for type-written papers.
5. Proofread your document thoroughly. Make sure to read through your document prior to submitting it. Ask yourself for each sentence, “Does this sentence make sense?”
6. For quotations: do not alter the material in direct citations unless you indicate that you have done so with ellipses and brackets. Use appropriate punctuation in the quotation. If you want to augment a quotation use ellipses . . . to cut material out of it and use brackets [] to insert material.
7. If you paraphrase you must include an in-text citation, even if you do not directly quote. Students can be accused of plagiarism if they do not cite the original author and/or if they try to pass other peoples’ ideas off as their own. Try to get used to using citations and references in your writing as this is a crucial skill for success in college writing.

GRADING

Grades will be based on the typical academic criteria of demonstrating understanding of the material through application and communication. Grades will be based on the standard university scale: 100 - 90 % = A; 89 - 80 % = B; etc.

NOTE: Class attendance will not be factored into grading. However, you will find it exceedingly difficult to pass the course and understand the material if you don’t come to class. No extra credit assignments will be given. The grade you receive is the grade you’ve earned. Contestation of a grade on either an individual assignment or for the course must be presented to your instructor in writing, with an argument explaining why you think the grade should be changed. A re-examination of course work may result in further deduction of points, as a rigorous analysis may find flaws or mistakes in the course work that might have been missed in the initial grading. Do not assume that contesting a grade will result in gaining additional points or maintaining the existing grade.

CLASS POLICIES

Since we all will have something to say, but may be saying vastly different, even contradictory things, the following guide-lines will be adhered to while in this course:

- Acknowledge that prejudice and discrimination based on race, class, sex, sexual orientation, age, and physical differences exist.
- Acknowledge that all of us have learned misinformation about our own group and about members of other groups, whether we belong to a majority or minority group, from the mass media and other sources.
- Assume that people in this class are doing the best they can do.
- Never demean, devalue, or in any way “put down” people for their experiences, back-grounds, or statements. This does not mean that you can’t disagree, only that you do so with respect.
- Don’t interrupt. Listen before speaking.

The classroom is a special environment in which students and faculty come together to promote learning and intellectual growth. Therefore, the goals of the course will be met, in large part, by giving respect and consideration to all. This means that we will pay full attention to lecture, discussion, or workshop activity during class sessions. Reading and writing irrelevant material, talking about unrelated issues, sleeping, listening to head-sets, making or receiving phone calls, text-messaging on cell phones, web-surfing on a laptop, and any other distracting activities – including eating, gum popping, or chewing tobacco will not be tolerated. **THE USE OF WORD PROCESSING AND/OR TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVICES IN THIS CLASS IS PROHIBITED.** If you require the use of a laptop to take notes, you must provide documentation from Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to me, and then we will discuss the use of the device. Failure to comply with this policy for any

of the above infractions will result in being removed from class for that day and a grade of zero for any assignment due for the week of the infraction.

I encourage you to speak, as class discussion is an effective way of exploring issues in this course, but please direct all your comments to the entire class. To help facilitate a safe and productive learning environment, we will adhere to the following policies:

University policy on cheating and plagiarism will be observed (see the *Catalog* or the *Schedule of Courses* for description of policy).

- If you have any medical or learning disability that might affect your work in this course, it is your responsibility to inform Dr. Jones and to contact the University's Service to Students with Disabilities in the Library at 278-2811 so that reasonable accommodations can be made.
- University policy on incomplete grades will be observed (see the *General Catalog* or the *Schedule of Courses* for description of policy).
- You are expected to attend all scheduled class sessions. If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to check on announcements made while you were away. Being absent does not excuse you from anything that was discussed or due in class. When you have a serious and compelling medical condition or when a death or serious illness in the immediate family that prevents attending class, you are responsible for contacting Dr. Jones as soon as possible prior to the missed class. You are also responsible for providing documentation of the reason for the absence upon returning to class.
- All assignments must be turned in on time and in paper copy form. Electronic transmission of papers will not be accepted, unless arrangement is made with Dr. Jones. Late assignments will NOT be accepted - no exceptions. You are to have done the assignments well in advance of class time, which means you cannot wait until the last minute to do the work for this class.
- If you need to leave early, please let Dr. Jones know at the beginning of class that you will be doing so. Please do not just get up and leave. Along these lines, please attempt as little disruption as possible if you leave class early. Respect your fellow classmates and instructor.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

(Refer to University Catalog or Schedule of Courses for more information.)

Honor Code: Members of the California State University, Fresno academic community adhere to principles of academic integrity and mutual respect while engaged in university work and related activities. You should:

- a. understand or seek clarification about expectations for academic integrity in this course
- b. neither give nor receive unauthorized aid on examinations or other course work that is used by the instructor as the basis of grading.
- c. take responsibility to monitor academic dishonesty in any form and to report it to the instructor or other appropriate official for action.

Cheating and Plagiarism. Cheating is the actual or attempted practice of fraudulent or deceptive acts for the purpose of improving one's grade or obtaining course credit; such acts also include assisting another student to do so. Plagiarism is a specific form of cheating that consists of the misuse of the published and/or unpublished works of another by misrepresenting the material (i.e., their intellectual property) so used as one's own work? (University Catalog). In other words, do your own writing; when you use another person's ideas or words, reference the material. Possible penalties include but are not limited to failure on the assignment, failure in the course, and/or expulsion from the university. For more information on the University's policy regarding cheating and plagiarism, refer to the Class Schedule (Policy/Legal Statements) or the University Catalog (University policies).

Disabilities. If you have any medical or learning disability that might affect your work in this course, it is your responsibility to inform me and contact the University's Service to Students with Disabilities in the Library at 278-2811 so that reasonable accommodations can be made.

Computers. At California State University, Fresno, computers and communications links to remote resources are recognized as being integral to the education and research experience. Every student is required to have his/her own computer or have other personal access to a workstation (including a modem and a printer) with all the recommended software. Computer labs on campus are available (e.g., SS202, PHS107).

Copyright policy: Copyright laws and fair use policies protect the rights of those who have produced the material. The copy in this course has been provided for private study, scholarship, or research. Other uses may require permission from the copyright holder. The user of this work is responsible for adhering to copyright law of the U.S. (Title 17, U.S. Code). To help you familiarize yourself with copyright and fair use policies, the University encourages you to visit its copyright web page. Digital Campus course web sites contains material protected by copyrights held by the instructor, other individuals or institutions. Such material is used for educational purposes in accord with copyright law and/or with permission given by the owners of the original material. You may download one copy of the materials on any single computer for non-commercial, personal, or educational purposes only, provided that you (1) do not modify it, (2) use it only for the duration of this course, and (3) include both this notice and any copyright notice originally included with the material. Beyond this use, no material from the course web site may be copied, reproduced, re-published, uploaded, posted, transmitted, or distributed in any way without the permission of the original copyright holder. The instructor assumes no responsibility for individuals who improperly use copyrighted material placed on the web site.

COURSE OUTLINE: LECTURE AND READINGS SCHEDULE

<u>Schedule</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic Outline</u>	<u>Readings/Assignment</u>
Week 1	Aug. 23	<u>Introduction to the Course</u>	Exploring Environmental Sociology, Humphrey, Ch. 1
Week 2	Aug. 28	<u>Overview of environmental issues</u>	Globalization and the Environment, Jorgenson, Ch. 1; Environmental Problems and Society, Bell, Ch. 1
	Aug. 30		
Week 3	Sept. 4 Sept. 6	<u>Social Theory and the Environment</u>	Humphrey, Ch. 2
Week 4	Sept. 11	<u>Ideological constructs of the Environment</u>	Bell, Chs 6 & 7
	Sept. 13	DUE: Social Construction Assignment	
Week 5	Sept. 18 Sept. 20	<u>Ideological constructs (continued)</u>	Bell, Ch. 8

<u>Schedule</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic Outline</u>	<u>Readings/Assignment</u>
Week 6	Sept. 25 Sept. 27	<u>Population issues</u>	Humphrey, Chs 3 & 4; Bell, Chs 4 & 5
Week 7	Oct. 2 Oct. 4	<u>Energy and material conditions</u> DUE: The Material Stuff Assignment	Humphrey, Ch. 5; Bell, Chs 2 & 3
Week 8	Oct. 9 Oct. 11	<u>Risk Society</u>	Bell, Ch. 9
Week 9	Oct. 16 Oct. 18	<u>World System Theory and Ecology</u>	Jorgenson, Ch. 2
Week 10	Oct. 23 Oct. 25	<u>Assessing Causes of Environmental Degradation</u> DUE: Article Review Assignment	Jorgenson, Ch. 12
Week 11	Oct. 30 Nov. 1	<u>Assessing Causes (continued)</u>	Ecology Against Capitalism (BB)
Week 12	Nov. 6 Nov. 8	<u>Human Ecology/Reconciliation Ecology</u> DUE: Ecological Footprint Calculation	Foundations of Human Ecology (BB)
Week 13	Nov. 13 Nov. 15	<u>Environmental Movement</u>	Humphrey, Ch. 6; The Challenge of Environmental Justice (BB); The Environmental Justice Debate (BB)
Week 14	Nov. 20 Nov. 22	<u>Environmental Movement (continued)</u> DUE: Environmental Group Assignment NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Holiday)	
Week 15	Nov. 27 Nov. 29	<u>Environmental movement and sustainability</u>	Bell, Chs 10 & 11

<u>Schedule</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic Outline</u>	<u>Readings/Assignment</u>
Week 16		<u>Environmental sustainability</u>	
	Dec. 4		Humphrey, Chs 7 & 8
	Dec. 6		
Week 17			
	Dec. 11	Last day of instruction DUE: Reflexive Modernization Assignment	
Dec. 13-14		Faculty Consultation Days	
Final Exam		Thursday, Dec. 20 3:30 – 5:30pm FINAL PAPER DUE	

A FINAL NOTE: This syllabus and schedule are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. You are responsible for knowing any minor changes I make in the Lecture and Reading Schedule. If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to check on announcements made while you were absent and acquire missed lecture notes from a classmate. Thus, as stated before, class attendance is critical to your successful completion of the course and to your overall understanding of the content of the course.

This syllabus constitutes a contract between the instructor and the student. By enrolling in the course and reading over this document, you are bound by, and responsible for, its content and for completing all of the course assignments and requirements.

Suggested readings

Marx's Ecology, John B. Foster

Ecology Against Capitalism, John B. Foster

The Triple Helix, Richard Lewontin

The Dialectical Biologist, Richard Lewontin and Richard Levins

Human Adaptability, Emilio F. Moran

Globalization and the Environment, Andrew Jorgenson and Edward Kick (eds.)

Marxism and Ecological Economics, Paul Burkett

Natural Causes, James O'Connor

Beyond Growth: The Economics of Sustainable Development, Herman Daly

Collapse, Jared Diamond

Betrayal of Science and Reason: How Anti-Environmental Rhetoric Threatens Our Future, Ehrlich and Ehrlich

Sociological Theory and the Environment: Classical Foundations, Contemporary Insights, Dunlap, Buttel, Dickens, Gijswijt (eds.)

Environment, Energy, and Society: Exemplary Works, Humphrey, Lewis and Buttel (eds.)

Global Environmental Outlook 3: Past, Present and Future Perspectives, U.N. Environment Programme

America's Environmental Report Card: Are We Making the Grade? Harvey Blatt

Handbook of Environmental Sociology, Riley Dunlap and William Michelson