

## **Environment and Society**

Sociology 1030

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 9:10- 10:00

Calhoun Hall 104

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this course you will learn about environmental sociology – the study of interactions between human social systems and the environment. Before we can begin discussing environmental sociology, however, it is necessary to provide you with a broad introduction to sociology more generally. In addition to sociology, this exploration of environmental sociology will also involve issues from a diversity of disciplines including anthropology, biology, economics, geography, philosophy, and history. Combining these disciplines and perspectives, we will explore how human societies affect the environment, and, in turn, how human societies are shaped by the environment they develop within. Ultimately, we will seek to develop a deeper understanding of our place in the natural world, as well as how it is that we come to recognize and understand changing environmental conditions.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

- ❖ Gould, Kenneth A. and Tammy L. Lewis. 2020. *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*. Oxford University Press. 978-0195371123
- ❖ Dietz, Thomas and Andrew Jorgenson. 2013 *Structural Human Ecology*. Washington State University Press. 978-0874223170

### **COURSE STRUCTURE**

The ongoing pandemic presents us with significant organizational challenges. The primary difficulty is the inability for more than 13 students to be in class on any given day. Compounding this challenge is the unfortunate fact that at any given moment the extent and severity of the pandemic is shrouded in uncertainty, and as a result the current course structure may need to be changed with little notice. To reduce the disruption to our learning in the event that such a change is required I have organized the course as follows.

- 1) **Lectures, prompts, and responses:** Two lectures will be posted to Brightspace every week. The format of the lectures will vary, but they will end with a discussion or activity prompt that you will be required to respond to. These lectures are created in advance and you may engage with, and respond to them on your own time, asynchronously. That said, you must finish all responses and activities by the end of the week unless told otherwise.

- 2) **In class discussions:** Students will be put into groups that attend class in person on either Monday, Wednesday, or Friday. Your group will rotate which day it attends the in-person discussion. This way all groups will have an opportunity to attend discussion each day of the three weekly course days throughout the term. These in-person meetings will function as discussion sections and lab spaces for students to work on assignments throughout the term. No student is required be physically present in these sessions. If, for any reason, you are not able to attend you may participate in the session via Zoom. If it is not possible to attend your assigned discussion session in person or via Zoom, then you may attend another group's session via Zoom.
- 3) **Readings:** As we have a rotating discussion schedule and lectures are asynchronous, it is not necessary that readings be completed by the day which they are listed on. However, it is highly recommended that the readings are completed before you attend discussion session or engage with the weekly lectures. All readings must be completed by Friday at the latest in order for you to successfully participate in the class and submit your weekly reading journals.

## GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

**10 weekly journals (40%):** Throughout this course, you will be asked to keep a weekly journal. In these journals, you will be asked to reflect on the various content explored throughout the course. The journals are due on Fridays at the end of each week by 11:59 PM on Brightspace. You are expected to write about the course readings, class discussions, in class videos, and guest speakers. You may write a journal entry in response to any of the weekly course modules, but you must submit at least 10 journal entries during the course of the term. There is no maximum page length for these journals. You should write as much as you think is necessary. However, to demonstrate that you are actively engaged with the readings journal entries should be at least 300 words. Journals will be graded based on how well they engage with course content and your critical reflections. A strong journal entry will engage critically with readings and other course materials and make connections between the readings, current events, your own life, and/or other course material.

**Participation (15%):** Though daily attendance is not taken, you are expected to be present and active in your learning experience. Class participation is evaluated based on a number of different criteria, including your attentiveness throughout the course, and your participation in synchronous and asynchronous discussions and activities. Video lectures available online will end with a prompt that you are expected to respond to. Most often these prompts will involve participating in a discussion board. You will be expected to contribute your thoughts and questions to this discussion. In order to help facilitate this process the first few minutes of class will be provided for you to discuss the reading and formulate questions with a neighbor. Before the term is over (i.e. no later than December 11<sup>th</sup>, you are required to submit a short, 1-2 paragraph, self-evaluation of your course participation. Your self-evaluation can be submitted by selecting "Participation" in the "Assignments" page on Brightspace.

**Environmental lifestyle change paper (20%):** The individual project for this class involves you making some change in your lifestyle that reduces your impact on the natural environment or serves to bring about environmentally positive social change. This is intended to be a

challenging and educational project whereby you can experience the social structural and cultural factors that constrain widespread social change along ecologically sensitive lines. You will select what type of change in your lifestyle you would like to make. Some examples of changes include becoming a vegetarian or vegan, giving up driving a car, purchasing only locally produced products, and not using electricity. You may also choose to engage in some form of environmental activism. The length of time you will need to continue with this behavior depends of the difficulty entailed. I expect that two weeks will typically be a sufficient amount of time for most types of lifestyle changes, although some may be much shorter (for example, giving up electricity for one or two days would probably be sufficient, if not too much). The key point is that the behavior must be a change – i.e., not something you do already. The project does not require that you are successful at making the change, only that you make a sincere attempt at it. You will be required to make a short proposal (0.5 – 1 page) of what you intend to do (basically laying out the ground rules and duration of time you think appropriate) and explaining briefly why it is important for the environment. I may require that you make some modifications to the plan (for example, choose a different activity or change the duration of time). The proposal is due September 18<sup>th</sup>, at 11:59pm, on Brightspace. Once I have approved the proposal you should implement the change and keep a journal of your experiences (note that you are not required to turn in this journal). You may find the change quite difficult and you may be confronted with failure at certain points – that is part of the learning experience. The final product should be 5 double-spaced typed pages that explain (1) the details of the lifestyle modification you made, (2) the environmental significance of the lifestyle modification (including citation of appropriate sources to back up your claims), and (3) what you learned from the experience. You will be graded on how creative you are in developing and implementing your project and how well you research and write your paper. I will provide more details on this project in class and you should speak to me (or send me an email) to seek clarification if you are uncertain how to proceed or just want to discuss any options you are considering. Your Environmental Lifestyle Change paper is due in Brightspace on Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, at 11:59pm.

**Final Paper (25%):** The final project is a 5-page double-spaced paper documenting and discussing the environmental and social impact of the production, distribution, and disposal of a product you use regularly. The goal of this project is to begin considering the socio-environmental impacts of those goods we rely on most often from “the cradle to the grave”. Though I encourage students to explore during this project, production and distribution chains can be incredibly complex and have manifold socio-environmental repercussions- many of which we are not yet aware of. Considering as much, in this research essay I suggest that you commit roughly half of your writing to understanding the social impacts and outcomes that are a result of the product in question’s production, distribution, and disposal, and the other half to the environmental impacts of these activities. Of course, one lesson of this course is that social and environmental outcomes are not always easily disentangled, so you will need to consider how it is that particular social, and/or environmental outcomes impact one another. For instance, does environmental destruction in one area lead to social good there, or does it burden the community with environmental hazards? If so, which populations do benefit? The final paper is due by in Brightspace on Wednesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, at 11:59pm. Throughout the term there will also be various assignments to help you formulate and write your final research project. Collectively, these assignments are worth 5% of the final paper. Thus, the final paper, itself, will account for 20% of your final grade in the course. The assignments you will complete on the way to finishing your paper are as follows: 1) a final research paper proposal- a 250 to 500-word

document proposing your final paper (2% of final paper grade); and 2) a peer review of the introduction and bibliography of your final research paper (3% of final paper grade). More information about each of these can be found below, or on the class website.

### **Final Paper assignments and due dates**

- **Final Research Paper Proposal (2%)**– Due Friday of week 10 (October 30<sup>th</sup>). Submit a 250 - 500-word document that details what you plan to study for your final research paper. This document should identify what object you plan to study, and let us know what social and environmental impacts you plan of focusing on. Please exchange a copy of your proposal with your peer review partner (who can be found by clicking the “Groups” link in the “Assignments and Activities” drop-down menu in Brightspace, and then selecting the “Peer Review Group” link. Within 1 week of the assignment due date, please submit the peer review that you provided your partner.
- **Final Research Paper Introduction and Bibliography Review (2.5%)**–Due Friday of week 13 (November 20<sup>th</sup>). Submit a rough draft of your introduction (or as much as you have complete) and a tentative bibliography for your research paper (including items you plan on reading to complete the research). Please exchange papers with your peer review partner on the due date.
- **Final Research Paper (20%)**– Due Friday, December 9th. Submit your final research paper on Brightspace. Be sure to include a short note (150-200 words at the end of your paper) detailing how you responded to the feedback supplied by your peer as well.

**A note on course assignment formatting:** All course assignments should be submitted in Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, with 1-inch margins unless otherwise specified. You may choose any of the following citation formats, but you must be consistent and accurate in your formatting: 1) ASA (American Sociological Association) format; 2) APA (American Psychological Association) format; 3) MLA (Modern Language Association) format; 4) Chicago/Turabian format. Please feel free to get in touch with any questions about formatting.

**Grading questions, concerns, and disputes:** I will be happy to discuss any concerns about points awarded on your assignments. I have a set of standard expectations for evaluating assignments and am looking for thoroughness, thoughtfulness, and insightfulness. If you would like me to review your points on any assignment, I ask that you put your questions or concerns in writing and attach them to your paper so that I can review both before discussing them with you.

## READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE\*

WEEK	TOPIC	READING	ASSIGNMENT/ACTIVITY
<b>Week 1</b>	An introduction to sociology	Intro ch. 1, 2, & 4	Friday: Journal Entry Due
<b>Week 2</b>	The environmental crisis	Rockström et. al; Foster, Clark, and York	Friday: Journal Entry Due
<b>Week 3</b>	Introduction to environmental sociology	Pellow & Brehm; G&L Intro & Ch. 15	Friday: Journal Entry Due
<b>Week 4</b>	Environmental thought of sociological giants	Foster (skim) Rosa & Richter; Foster & Holleman (skim)	Friday: <b>Project proposal due/</b> Journal Entry Due
<b>Week 5</b>	Theories and perspectives in environmental sociology I	Foster and Clark; Mol & Spaargaren; G&L ch. 2 & 14	Friday: Journal Entry Due
<b>Week 6</b>	Theories and perspectives in environmental sociology II	York and McGee; York G&L ch. 4 & 17	Friday: Journal Entry Due
<b>Week 7</b>	Risk & Uncertainty	D&J ch 3 & 4; D&J ch 5; D&J ch 6 (suggested)	Friday: Journal Entry Due
<b>Week 8</b>	Environmental history	Clark & York; Holleman; G&L ch 16	Friday: Journal Entry Due
<b>Week 9</b>	Political economy of the world-system	G&L ch. 3 & 18;	Friday: <b>Enviro-Change Paper Due/</b> Journal Entry Due
<b>Week 10</b>	Population, development, and the environment	Pellow ch. 1 & 2; G&L ch. 8	Friday: <b>Final Paper Proposal Due/</b> Journal Entry Due
<b>Week 11</b>	Population, development, and the environment	T: G&L ch. 20 Th: D&J ch. 7 & 8	Friday: Journal Entry Due
<b>Week 12</b>	Environmental Justice	Pellow ch. 4 (select 1 case study from each chapter to read); G&L ch. 10	Friday: Journal Entry Due
<b>Week 13</b>	Science, Technology, and Nature	G&L ch. 1; G&L ch. 6 & 7	Friday: <b>Final Paper Intro and Biblio Due/</b> Journal Entry Due
<b>Week 14</b>	Ecological reform	G&L ch. 9 & 13; G&L ch. 12 & Conclusion.	Friday: Journal Entry Due
<b>Finals Week</b>	NO meeting this week. Your final paper is <b>due by 11:59pm on Wednesday (12/9)</b> on Brightspace		

Readings listed for each week should be completed by Friday of that week.

*\*Disclaimer: We will try to stick to this syllabus and reading schedule. However, I reserve the right to make changes. Students will be notified in class in advance. (I am not responsible for those absent from class).*

## DISCUSSION GROUP SCHEDULE

<b>WEEK</b>	<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b>
<b>Week 1</b>	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<b>Week 2</b>	Group 2	Group 3	Group 1
<b>Week 3</b>	Group 3	Group 1	Group 2
<b>Week 4</b>	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<b>Week 5</b>	Group 2	Group 3	Group 1
<b>Week 6</b>	Group 3	Group 1	Group 2
<b>Week 7</b>	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<b>Week 8</b>	Group 2	Group 3	Group 1
<b>Week 9</b>	Group 3	Group 1	Group 2
<b>Week 10</b>	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<b>Week 11</b>	Group 2	Group 3	Group 1
<b>Week 12</b>	Group 3	Group 1	Group 2
<b>Week 13</b>	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<b>Week 14</b>	Group 2	Group 3	Group 1

## CLASSROOM POLICIES

**Academic Etiquette:** Please be respectful to all members of the class. Please arrive in class on time and do not leave early, or pack up to leave early, or log out of Zoom early. Both arriving late and leaving early can be very disruptive, even on Zoom. There are often extenuating circumstances in digital settings, so the following is not a hard and fast rule, however, unless there is a compelling reason, you should have your Zoom camera on. If you have such a reason (e.g. caring for a loved one who does not wish to be on camera, low bandwidth, no camera access, or any such circumstance) then please do let me know. Seeing each other's faces is an important part of building our small community. In addition, please do not talk while I am lecturing and do not interrupt other members of the class when they are talking (to the extent this is possible on Zoom). To this end, your microphone should be muted until you are ready to speak. Of course, you should always feel free to raise your hand if you'd like to ask a question or make a comment, and you should talk freely and openly on discussion days.

**Participation:** Success in this class depends largely on your level of participation in online discussion forums, completion of graded and ungraded activities, and participation in in-person and Zoom discussion sections. While I realize that not all students feel comfortable speaking in class (especially when the class is partially mediated through Zoom), my hope is that we can make this an atmosphere in which everyone will feel that they can participate. Each student is responsible for attending class, being prepared for class, and contributing to the activities in class. We will frequently discuss the topics and readings covered in this course, some of which may be controversial. I hope that discussions will be lively and interesting. The beginning of synchronous class sections will typically consist of an open discussion of the readings from the last few days. You will be expected to contribute your thoughts and questions to this discussion. In order to help facilitate this process the first few minutes of class will be provided for you to discuss the reading and formulate questions with a neighbor, or partner on Zoom. I encourage, and expect, everyone to engage meaningfully in these discussions and those that take place in the course of class lectures. I also want to ensure that we are all working to make our classroom a safe environment in which all students are able to feel comfortable. To ensure that our discussions will be productive, it is essential that at all times you are respectful to other members of the class. Disrespectful interactions with other members of the classroom community will result in you being asked to leave for the remainder of the class section.

**Attendance:** I expect you to be in class physically or otherwise, although I will not typically take attendance. Each of you will be responsible for any material, announcements, assignments, and/or schedule changes presented during class time- though I will of course make sure that each section, or attendance group has the opportunity to hear announcements in their allotted time. However, If you miss a class you will need to ask another student for details of what was covered, or attend another attendance group's discussion through Zoom. I will not repeat information in class for those who have missed classes.

**Electronic recording:** You do not have permission to record classes. Classrooms are protected spaces where learning occurs. "To record classroom interactions without the knowledge or consent of others in the classroom violates the principles of honesty and civility, and threatens the principle of scholarship. To use recordings for purposes beyond enhancing personal learning may constitute theft (of intellectual property), undermines the collaborative pursuit of scholarship, and is inconsistent with the principle of civility."

**Academic Honesty:** Vanderbilt's Honor Code governs all work in this course. In general:

- (1) You may discuss research, test preparation, and homework with other students, but you must do the work yourself (e.g., literature searches, reading and writing for homework, preparation for oral presentations, etc.); and
- (2) You must properly document all sources that you use in your research project using ASA bibliographic style.
- (3) You do not need to reference readings for the homework assignments unless it is to an article that is not part of the assignment.

More information on the Honor Code is available here:  
[www.vanderbilt.edu/student\\_handbook/chapter2.html](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/student_handbook/chapter2.html)  
[studentorgs.vanderbilt.edu/HonorCouncil/infostud.php](http://studentorgs.vanderbilt.edu/HonorCouncil/infostud.php).

If you have any questions, please ask me, not another student, for clarification. Uncertainty about the application of the Honor Code does not excuse a violation.

Student-teacher relationships are built on trust. Students must trust that teachers have made appropriate decisions about the structure and content of a course, and teachers must trust that the assignments students turn in are their own. Acts that violate this trust undermine the educational enterprise. There are several types of academic dishonesty that you should be aware of for this course:

1. Copying your assignment answers from another student. You may discuss the readings with your classmates, but you should do the readings on your own, write them up on your own, and be ready to discuss them in class. Violations will be turned over to the Honor Council.
2. Copying another source in a writing assignment, such as an article or another student's assignment, including from a previous time the course was offered, without using quotation marks and citing the reference. If the plagiarism is substantial (more than one sentence), your case may be turned over to the Honor Council.
3. Copying minor quotations of a phrase or half sentence or using the ideas of others without attribution. This is known as "patchwork plagiarism" and "theft of ideas." I tend to treat this problem with a warning at the beginning, but if it continues, your case may be turned over to the Honor Council. When in doubt, add a footnote and a reference even for an idea that you are referencing (that is, even if you do not quote directly the source).
4. Adding to the attendance sheet the name of a student who is not in attendance, or writing offensive or derogatory comments on the attendance sheet.
5. Posting yours or others' lectures notes or making them more generally available in any way to anyone who is not part of the course (emailing, file sharing, print files, etc.), or making unauthorized recordings in any medium of the lectures. Note the sole exception: If you have been absent, you may copy the notes of another student for your personal use, or you may let another student in the class copy your notes for personal use. Your lecture notes contain the ideas of your instructor and of other students. They are the instructor's intellectual property, and sometimes they include ideas that have not yet been published. As a result, replication should only occur with permission from the instructor. If you wish to use ideas from lectures in any publications (including electronic ones), you should first get permission from the instructor and then cite the material properly

If I find that you have distributed lecture notes without my permission (except as permitted above), either during the semester or afterwards, I may report the case to the Honor Council.



**Gender Fair Language:** Students in this course are expected to use gender fair language in their writing and speaking. Every time you use a masculine-oriented word to refer to people in general, the implicit effect, even if unintended, is to whisper: *women and gender non-conforming individuals don't count*. Classroom assignments that do not use gender fair language may be returned with a request that you rewrite them. The best way to do this is to use plural nouns and pronouns, such as they and them, and you (which can be used plurally, in fact).

**Students with Special Needs:** The course requirements will be adjusted to serve the needs and capabilities of students with special needs. You are invited to notify me about your particular situation; you should also be in contact with the Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disability Services Department (EAD). Please do so as soon as possible. In general, we expect all students in the course to devote from seven to nine hours a week to course assignments in addition to the time spent in class. You may also be encouraged to attend additional sessions with the teaching assistant so you can draw comparable value from the course. Lectures will be posted for all students.