

Environmental Sociology

Fall 2015

SOCI 4365-004

MWF 11-11:50, PKH 113

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Office Hours: MW 9:30-10:30 or by appointment

Course Description

This course is an introduction to environmental sociology and explores the interaction between the environment and human society, with the understanding that the organization of human society has environmental consequences, and environmental problems, in turn, affect human societies. From a sociological perspective, we will look beyond the scientific basis for environmental problems to understand the social roots of environmental issues, asking questions such as how do the technologies, consumption and production patterns, population trends, status systems, religion and culture of societies affect the emergence of, and reactions to, environmental problems? We will also investigate how the risks and harms of environmental problems are distributed across societies to understand the relationship between social systems and environmental inequalities. Lastly, this course will introduce students to a variety of topics in environmental sociology, including how actors such as corporations, the media and social movements affect public opinion and environmental issues, case studies of environmental problems, and new directions in sustainable development.

Learning Outcomes and Course Objectives:

- To apply a sociological perspective to environmental issues by introducing the basic concepts, theories and literature of environmental sociology.
- To examine the causes and consequences of, and potential solutions to, environmental issues, as they relate to human society.
- To introduce students to the wealth of questions posed and researched by environmental sociologists.
- To encourage students to think critically about the subject matter of the course and develop their own questions about human societies and the environment.
- To encourage students to relate the material of this class to everyday life experiences.

Required Texts and Reading Materials

Gould, Kenneth A., and Tammy L. Lewis, eds. 2015. *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*, 2nd edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

Leopold, Aldo. 1949. *A Sand County Almanac: And Sketches Here and There*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Additional reading assignments, announcements and class handouts will be posted on the course Blackboard site, which you can access at: elearn.uta.edu. For help with Blackboard, go to: <http://www.uta.edu/blackboard/students/>

Course Requirements

1. Assignments: There will be three assignments due throughout the semester, worth 40 points each, and total these will constitute 120 points and 40% of your grade. The topics of the assignments are 1) Communities and Sources of Pollution 2) Environmental Autobiography and 3) Reflections on New Directions. I will distribute class handouts for each that describe the assignment in greater detail.

2. Presentation: You will be responsible for presenting on one critical, contemporary environmental problem (e.g. a case study in climate change, threats to biodiversity, waste disposal, water issues, endangered species, etc.). This should be a 15 minute PowerPoint presentation to the class that communicates basic information about the problem and explores the interaction between human societies and the causes and consequences of the environmental problem. The presentation will be worth 50 points.

3. In-class Activities: Class participation includes attending class and being an active participant by listening carefully and joining discussion. Throughout the course, there will be graded activities held in class, which includes occasional quizzes and attendance-taking. In-class work will be worth 30 points total and 10% of your grade.

4. Mid-Term Exam: The mid-term exam will cover material from lectures, videos, class discussions, and the readings. This exam will not be open-book, and you are not allowed to bring notes. The exam will include multiple choice questions and short-answer questions. The mid-term exam will be worth 100 points total and a third of your grade.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Percent of Grade</u>
Assignments	120	40%
Presentation	50	17%
In-class Activities	30	10%
Mid-Term Exam	100	33%

Total	300	100%

Grading scale for course

90-100%	A
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
59% or below	E

Course Policies

As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to amend the syllabus during the semester.

Attendance

Attendance will occasionally be taken and will count toward the class participation grade.

Missed Exam

A make-up exam will be scheduled for students who have talked with the professor before the exam and have an approved absence, or have had a documented illness/family emergency.

Late Work

Late work will be accepted but will drop one letter grade for each day past the due date that the assignment is turned in. For example, an assignment due on Monday that would have received an A if turned in on time on Monday, will receive a B if turned in Tuesday and a C if turned in Wednesday.

Classroom Courtesy and Respectful Discussion

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and to turn off any personal electronic devices (cell phones) during class. During class, students are expected to be respectful by listening carefully to others and not engaging in disruptive or distracting behavior. Every student has the right to disagree with opinions expressed by the professor or other students, however the student must respond in a courteous, respectful way that ensures a safe and tolerant classroom environment. Hostility, intimidation or derogatory comments absolutely will not be tolerated, and students who do not act in a respectful manner will be asked to leave the class.

Environmental and Sustainability Studies Minor

This course counts as part of the Environmental and Sustainability Studies Minor, a minor that is open to students in all majors, in all colleges. For more information about ESS classes, requirements, advising or the FB group see:

[http://www.uta.edu/english/alaimo/For%20ESS%20Minors%20\(Environmental%20and%20Sustainability%20Studies\).html](http://www.uta.edu/english/alaimo/For%20ESS%20Minors%20(Environmental%20and%20Sustainability%20Studies).html)

Course Outline and Schedule

What is Environmental Sociology?

- F 8.28.15 Introduction to the course and syllabus
Reading: Kenneth Gould and Tammy Lewis: "An Introduction to Environmental Sociology." In *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*.
- M 8.31.15 *Reading:* Stella Capek, "The Social Construction of Nature." Ch. 1 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*.

Aldo Leopold, "Prairie Birthday" pp. 44-50
- W 9.2.15 *Reading:* Luiz Barbosa, "Theories in Environmental Sociology." Ch. 2 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*.

Environmental Health and Distribution of Environmental Harms

- F 9.4.15 *Reading:* Sabrina McCormick, "The Sociology of Environmental Health." Ch. 11 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*.

Class Handout on Assignment 1: Communities and Sources of Pollution
- M 9.7.15 Holiday: No Class
- W 9.9.15 *Reading:* Michael Mascarenhas, "Environmental Inequality and Environmental Justice." Ch. 10 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*.

Video: TED talk: Majora Carter, "Greening the Ghetto"
- F 9.11.15 *Reading:* Andrew Szasz and Michael Meuser, "Environmental Inequalities"
- M 9.14.15 *Reading:* Daniel Faber, "The Unfair Trade-off: Globalization and the Export of Ecological Hazards."
- W 9.16.15 *Reading:* Nicole Youngman, "Understanding Disaster Vulnerability" Ch. 14 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*.
- F 9.18.15 *Reading:* Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*. (Excerpts)

Video: Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*

Production, Consumption and Materialism

M 9.21.15 *Reading:* Michael Mayerfield Bell, "Consumption and Materialism."

Karl Marx, "The Fetishism of the Commodity and Its Secret."

Assignment 1: Community Sources of Pollution Due

W 9.23.15 *Reading:* Juliet Schor, *The Overspent American*, "Introduction"

F 9.25.15 *Reading:* Allan Schnaiberg, "Labor Productivity and the Environment." Ch. 4 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*.

Video: The Story of Stuff

Submit Topic for Class Presentation

Values and the Environment

M 9.28.15 *Reading:* William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness"

Aldo Leopold, "Marshland Elegy" pp. 95-101

Class Handout on Assignment 2: Environmental Autobiography

W 9.30.15 *Reading:* Thomas Dietz et al., "Environmental Values."

Aldo Leopold, "The Sand Counties" pp. 101-104 and "Illinois Bus Ride"
pp. 117-119

F 10.2.15 *Reading:* Aldo Leopold, "Thinking Like a Mountain" and "Escudilla" pp. 129-137

Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis."

Social Movements

- M 10.5.15 *Reading:* Robert Brulle, "U.S. Environmental Movements." Ch. 16 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*.
- W 10.7.15 *Reading:* Tammy Lewis, "Environmental Movements in the Global South." Ch. 18 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*.
- F 10.9.15 *Reading:* Ramachandra Guha and Juan Martinez-Alier, "The Environmentalism of the Poor."
- M 10.12.15 *Reading:* Brian Obach, "Labor and the Environment." Ch 17 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*.

Assignment 2: Environmental Autobiography Due

- W 10.14.15 Review for Mid-Term Exam
- F 10.16.15 **Mid-Term Exam**

Advertising and Media

- M 10.19.15 *Reading:* Robin Andersen, "Selling 'Mother Earth': Advertising and the Myth of the Natural."
- W 10.21.15 *Reading:* Elizabeth Campbell, "Corporate Power: The Role of the Global Media in Shaping What We Know About the Environment." Ch. 6 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*.
- F 10.23.15 *Video:* Tapped

Environmental Problems: Population, Energy and Climate Change

- M 10.26.15 *Reading:* Diana Bates, "Population, Demography and the Environment." Ch. 8 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*.
- W 10.28.15 *Reading:* Shannon Elizabeth Bell, "Energy, Society and the Environment." Ch. 9 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*.
- F 10.30.15 *Reading:* Jeffrey Sachs, "Global Solutions to Climate Change"

Environmental Problems: Food Production and Waste

- M 11.2.15 *Reading:* Jason Konefal and Maki Hatanaka, "Producing and Consuming Food." Ch. 12 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*.
- W 11.4.15 *Reading:* Adam Driscoll and Bob Edwards, "From Farms to Factories." Ch. 13 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*.
- F 11.6.15 *Video:* Food Inc.

Environmental Problems: Presentations

- M 11.9.15 Class presentations
- W 11.11.15 Class presentations
- F 11.13.15 Class presentations

Social Responses to Environmental Problems and Future Directions

- M 11.16.15 *Reading:* Kari Marie Norgaard, "Normalizing the Unthinkable." Ch. 15 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*.
- Class Handout on Assignment 3: Reflections on New Directions*
- W 11.18.15 *Reading:* J. Timmons Roberts, "Climate Change: Why the Old Approaches Aren't Working."
- F 11.20.15 *Reading:* Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (Excerpts)
- M 11.23.15 *Reading:* Daniella Martin, *Edible* (Chapter 1)
- W 11.25.15 *Reading:* Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic" pp. 201-226
- F 11.27.15 Holiday: No Class
- M 11.30.15 *Reading:* Jared Diamond, *Collapse* (Excerpts)
- Video:* TED talk: Jared Diamond, "Why Societies Collapse"
- W 12.2.15 *Reading:* Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons."

F 12.4.15 *Reading:* Juliet Schor, *True Wealth* (Chapter 5)

Video: The Plenitude Economy

M 12.7.15 *Reading:* Kenneth Gould and Tammy, “The Paradoxes of Sustainable Development. Ch. 20 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*.

W 12.9.15 *Reading:* Kenneth Gould and Tammy Lewis, “Conclusion: Unanswered Questions and the Future of Environmental Sociology.” in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*.

Assignment 3: Reflections on New Directions Due

No Final Exam

Course Bibliography

- Andersen, Robin. 2009. "Selling 'Mother Earth': Advertising and the Myth of the Natural." In Leslie King and Deborah McCarthy (eds) *Environmental Sociology: From Analysis to Action*. Lanham Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Bell, Michael Mayerfeld. 2009. "Consumption and Materialism." Pp. 33-53 in *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- Carson, Rachel. 1962. *Silent Spring*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Cronon, William. 1996. "The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature." *Environmental History* 1(1): 7-28.
- Diamond, Jared. 2005. *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*. London: Penguin Books.
- Dietz, Thomas, Amy Fitzgerald and Rachael Shwom. 2005. "Environmental Values." *Annual Review of Environmental Resources* 30: 335-372.
- Faber, Daniel. 2009. "The Unfair Trade-off: Globalization and the Export of Ecological Hazards." In Leslie King and Deborah McCarthy (eds) *Environmental Sociology: From Analysis to Action*. Lanham Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Guha, Ramachandra and Juan Martinez-Alier, "The Environmentalism of the Poor." In *Varieties of Environmentalism: Essays North and South*. London: Earthscan.
- Hardin, Garrett. 1968. "The Tragedy of the Commons." *Science* 162: 1243-48.
- Leopold, Aldo. 1949. *A Sand County Almanac*. New York: Oxford
- Martin, Daniella. 2014. *Edible*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Marx, Karl. 2000 [1867]. "The Fetishism of the Commodity and Its Secret." Pp. 331-42 in *The Consumer Society Reader*, edited by Juliet B. Schor and Douglas B. Holt. New York: New Press.
- Pollan, Michael. 2006. *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Sachs, Jeffrey. 2008. "Global Solutions to Climate Change." Pp. 85-114 in *Common Wealth: Economics for a Crowded Planet*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Schor, Juliet B. 2010. *True Wealth*. New York: Penguin Press.

Schor, Juliet B. 1998. *The Overspent American*. New York: HarperCollins.

Szasz, Andrew and Michael Meuser. 1997. "Environmental Inequalities: Literature Review and Proposals for New Directions in Research and Theory." *Current Sociology* 45(3): 99-120.

Timmons Roberts, J. 2009. "Climate Change: Why the Old Approaches Aren't Working." Pp. 191-208 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

White, Lynn, Jr. 1967. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis." *Science* 155:1203-07.

Additional Course Information:

Drop Policy: Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://web.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

Disability Accommodations: UT Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, *The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA)*, and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a letter certified by the

Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting:

The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD) www.uta.edu/disability or calling 817-272-3364.

Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS) www.uta.edu/caps/ or calling 817-272-3671.

Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

Title IX: *The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its*

educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit uta.edu/eos. For information regarding Title IX, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX.

Academic Integrity: Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.

I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

Electronic Communication: UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as "lecture," "seminar," or "laboratory" shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

Final Review Week: A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

Emergency Exit Procedures: Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells.

Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

Student Support Services: UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at <http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php>

<p>Emergency Phone Numbers: In case of an on-campus emergency, call the UT Arlington Police Department at 817-272-3003 (non-campus phone), 2-3003 (campus phone). You may also dial 911. Non-emergency number 817-272-3381</p>
