

Sociology/Envs 138
Sociology of the Environment

TR 12:00-1:15 AM, Spring 2008
250 AMD

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This is an introductory course on environmental sociology: the study of human society, the natural environment, and their mutual interactions. In this course we will examine environmental sociology on several levels, from the micro level of individual communities to the meso level of government policies to macro theoretical considerations. Several questions will focus the course: What is the environment? How does it affect society? What is society? How does society effect the environment? What problems are there and how might they be addressed? Most importantly, this course will ask you to take a careful look at the assumptions behind our social system and examine our society and nature with a critical eye.

There will be no exams. Instead, students will be given the opportunity to explore ideas and issues in a series of response papers: The emphasis of this course is on rigorous examination of the ideas and issues involved. The course will be in both lecture and discussion format in order to facilitate this focus. Traditionally the classroom is a place where the professor produces or reports knowledge and the students consume this knowledge (and regurgitate it in exams). This course will be different: students are expected to be active participants in the production and interpretation of knowledge and ideas. This will occur through reading, reflection, discussion, and research. The emphasis is on critical thinking and rigorous engagement with the ideas of the course. Thus, there will be no exams. Instead, you are expected to keep up with the readings and participate vigorously in discussion. Students will be evaluated based on several short paper assignments and written lecture responses, as per the outline below.

There is 1 required text (Hornet Bookstore), and one required reader (WebCT). A copy of the text will also be on reserve at University Library. **Students are expected to keep up on the readings and come to lecture**, where we will discuss the readings. There will be no exams. Instead, students will be given the opportunity to explore ideas and issues in a series of response papers: The emphasis of the course is on ideas.

I am available outside of the office hours above—email me to set up an appointment. ***Please use my office hours!*** The more that people come to raise issues and to ask clarifying questions, the better I can improve the quality of the course. ***Your best bet for a quick response is to email me.*** I check this regularly (usually several times a day).

Required Texts:

Course reader (WebCT).

Environment, Energy and Society: A New Synthesis. Humphrey et al. 2002.

Igniting a Revolution: voices in defense of the earth. Best and Nocella. 2006

1. **intro**
“road to ruin,” “battlefield earth”
humphrey text: 1-33
2. **theory**
humphrey text: 34-68, best text: 103-36
“footprints on the earth”
3. **history**
cronon, hitt, best text: 137-86

LOCAL PROBLEMS?

4. **movements**
humphrey text: 175-219, begin best text:
271-404
5. **toxics/race/justice**
szasz, bullard, “fire this time”,
best text: 271-404 (continued)
6. **recycling**
tierney, schnaiberg
7. **autos/sprawl**
tierney, kolbert, bradsher, “pump
dreams”
8. **sprawl/autos**
bullard, “paving our way,”
**FIRST ESSAY ASSIGNMENT DUE BY
TODAY.**

GLOBAL PROBLEMS?

9. **energy**
humphrey text: 136-174, “peak oil”
10. **global climate**
“thinking about climate change”
11. **global governance?**
“leasing the rain,” “violence and
environment”
12. **population**
humphrey text: 69-106 “mamdani”
13. **hunger/development**
humphrey text: 107-135 “breakfast,”
“stolen harvest,” “foodshed”
14. **sustainable development?**
humphrey text: 220-264
“world-system,” “greater good”
**SECOND ESSAY ASSIGNMENT DUE BY
TODAY**
15. Toward a “conclusion”
humphrey text: 265-305

COURSEWORK COMPONENTS AND FINAL GRADES

There are 3 distinct components of coursework for this class:

28 IN-CLASS COMMENT CARDS (one per lecture with one week off)

7 TWO-PAGE RESPONSE ASSIGNMENTS (one every other week with one week off)

2 EIGHT-TEN PAGE (TYPED DOUBLE SPACED) ESSAY ASSIGNMENTS

These coursework components are designed to give you credit for attending lecture, reading, thinking critically about the content of lectures and readings, and writing down your ideas on the content of lectures and readings. The point is to engage with the ideas in the class. The IN-CLASS RESPONSE PAPERS are to be a thoughtful response to the lecture that critical engages with the substantive material of the course. The TWO-PAGE RESPONSE PAPERS are designed to engage the readings for the week. The ESSAY ASSIGNMENTS give you a chance to engage with an entire section of the course: readings, lectures, and outside material. All assignments will be assessed as “PASS” or “NO PASS.” *It is difficult to get a “no pass” on an assignment, unless you clearly do not engage with the readings/lecture, or plagiarize.*

To receive a passing grade (D-) for this course you must submit (on time) at least half of ALL of the assignments for each of the COURSEWORK COMPONENTS (13 cards, 4 response papers and 1 essay). . I reserve the right to add new assessment tools to this syllabus, including, but not limited to pop quizzes, exams, or reading journals. **Your final grade is then based upon whether you complete the rest of the assignments for each COURSEWORK COMPONENT or not. Therefore,**

To earn a D, you must complete the above PLUS 1 COURSEWORK COMPONENT

To earn a C, you must complete the above PLUS 2 COURSEWORK COMPONENTS

To earn a B, you must complete the above PLUS 3 COURSEWORK COMPONENTS

To earn an A, you must complete ALL coursework components and have your work be CONSISTENTLY OUTSTANDING. This is indicated by a STAR on the returned assignment. This is not difficult to achieve, but requires more effort than simply doing the “busy work.” Grades of C+ or A- (etc.) will be assigned for partial work, partial completion of a component, or for other circumstances. **It is always to your advantage to turn in a partially completed assignment.**

PLEASE NOTE:

- **THERE IS NO NEED TO EXPLAIN YOUR ABSENCE FROM LECTURE.**
- **I DO NOT ACCEPT LATE PAPERS, EMAILED PAPERS, OR ANY OTHER WAY THAN IN LECTURE.**
- **YOU CANNOT TURN IN MULTIPLE PAPERS OF THE SAME COMPONENT AT ONCE.**
- **PLAGIARISM IS A VERY SERIOUS ISSUE AND WILL BE DEALT WITH FIRMLY.**

It is expected that you will turn in your own work. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, quoting or paraphrasing without citation, using another student’s work from this semester or the past, using your own work from another class (either this semester or from the past), or using quotes or full papers from the internet. If you don’t know what plagiarism is, please go to <http://www.csus.edu/admbus/umannual/UMP14150.htm> to educate yourself. Above all, please act with integrity—do not risk your academic career, it’s not worth it.

COURSEWORK COMPONENT GUIDELINES

The coursework components are designed to give you credit for attending lecture, reading, thinking critically about the content of lectures and readings, and writing down your ideas on the content of lectures and readings. The point is to engage with the ideas in the class. All assignments will be assessed as “PASS” or “NO PASS.”

The **IN-CLASS RESPONSE PAPERS** are to be a thoughtful response to the lecture. Write your comments on the normal 3x5 card provided during each lecture. Though they are informal, the cards do need to be thoughtful and insightful. I will accept personal observations or the relating of personal experiences only if they apply directly to the content of the lecture. I will not accept personal experiences if they are banal and relate only tangentially, or if the relation is not clearly stated. For instance, an acceptable response card might read: “Weber’s theory of the iron cage feels real to me. I know that I often feel locked into rational bureaucratic systems that make very little sense.” An unacceptable response card might say “yeah, Weber’s right. The DMV sucks, dude.”

The **TWO-PAGE RESPONSE ASSIGNMENT** is a more in-depth response to **the readings only (NOT LECTURE)**. Though it is in-depth, you are limited to just two pages. This is designed to give you an opportunity for more creative and intelligent comment and analysis of the readings for the week. As with the response card, you should stick to just a few ideas and carefully explain your response to them. Consider this a formal assignment: it should be typed, double-spaced, and copy-edited. You can only turn these in during lectures that you attend.

The **ESSAY ASSIGNMENTS** give you a chance to engage with an entire section of the course: readings, lectures, and outside material. The essay should be typed, double-spaced, and copy-edited. Treat this as a formal essay of about 8-10 pages. It should tie together the readings, lecture, and at least **two** outside academic sources (that is, scholarly journals or books), and it **must** include a bibliography and inter-textual citations. ***Internet sources, newspaper articles, and magazines are not accepted.*** As with any formal essay it should have an introduction, the substance of your argument, and a conclusion.

You may choose any topic that relates to the substantive material of the course. The only requirement is that it builds on the materials from lecture, the readings, your relevant outside sources, and you ***must relate this topic to your own life.*** Sociology is a lived experience, and this paper should show the connections between course material and lived behavior as you have experienced it. Choose one idea or subject that was covered in the readings or discussed in lecture. Think through your approach to the topic: what interests you about it? What do you know already and what do you want to know? Design a question or thesis about the topic, and then search for outside sources. Write up your thoughts on the material you researched in a formal six-page essay. Feel free to use creative forms of presentation—but check with me first.