



## **Environmental Sociology**

Sociology 3480-090

University of Utah, Summer 2020

Instructor: Karen Xuan Zhang  
Email: [xuan.zhang@soc.utah.edu](mailto:xuan.zhang@soc.utah.edu)  
Teaching assistant: Roger Renteria  
Email: [roger.renteria@soc.utah.edu](mailto:roger.renteria@soc.utah.edu)  
Office Hours: By appointment via Zoom

## **Course Description**

The main goal of this course is to analyze the pressing environmental issue using sociological perspectives. Environmental sociology is a sub-discipline of sociology that focuses on the interrelationships between human systems and the environment. Environmental sociologists examine the extent to which humans influence ecosystems and also influenced by the biophysical world. They catalog the myriad social consequences of anthropogenic (human-induced) environmental change and explore how people are responding to anthropogenic environmental disruptions. Environmental sociology is inherently interdisciplinary, so the course will cover concepts from a diversity of disciplines including anthropology, biology, ecology, economics, geography, history etc.

## **Couse Outcomes**

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. To identify and evaluate the major debates and perspectives within environmental sociology.
2. Evaluate and distinguish the different theories in their applicability to address specific research questions.
3. Apply key concepts to environmental problem cases.
4. Examine the environmental issues critically, and explore the potential solutions through a sociological perspective.

5. Critically understand and analyze the complexities between nature environment and human society in different regions of the world.
6. Develop critical reading, thinking, and analyzing skills.

### **Course Requirements**

*Complete the readings and watch the lecture video prior to weekly discussion.* This class is rooted in reading and group discussion. Class participation is an essential part of the learning process. Students are responsible for their learning and are required to actively participate in all components of the course. Students are expected to complete the readings, videos, and assignments for each module. You should complete the readings before you post your discussion essay, to have reflected critically and analytically on those readings, and to examine and discuss them in groups. Open and critical discussion associated with the course material is welcomed and encouraged at all times.

### **Student Expectations**

The following is expected of all students in this class:

- Students will log in to the course a minimum of 2 times per week.
- To do well in online courses, students must be self-motivated, organized, and willing to stay on top of their schedule. Students should take control of their learning while in this course.
- Students will engage with the course, students, and the instructor in a respectful and professional manner at all times.
- Students will inform the instructor of any university-sanctioned absences (debate, athletic events, etc.) to ensure they can receive appropriate accommodations.
- Students will communicate needs for accommodations due to health and disability in a timely manner.

### **Your final grade will be based on the following criteria:**

1. WEEKLY REFLECTION PAPER/DISCUSSION 50%: Write a weekly reflection paper (200-500 words) to discuss what perspective you learned that week, to what extent do you

agree/disagree with the perspective (make sure to use case/examples to support your arguments), explain something that you found interesting in the reading, and pose a question that the reading raised for you that was not answered in the reading. AND post a thoughtful comment on at least 1 other essays.

The reflection paper is due **every Tuesday**, and the comments/discussion due **every Friday**. Late assignment will be penalized. Please contact the instructor if you have any difficulty in turning in your assignment.

2. EXAM 30%: Students will take two exams on **June 18<sup>th</sup>, Thursday**. Study guides will be provided in advance of the exams to help students prepare. Exams will be based on course readings. The question format will be multiple choice.
3. ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE PROJECT 20%: This project involves you making a change in your lifestyle that reduces your impact on the natural environment or serves to bring about environmentally positive social change. This exercise is intended to be a challenging and educational project whereby you can experience the social structural and cultural factors that constrain and/or facilitate widespread social change along ecologically sensitive lines. You will select what type of change in your life you would like to make. Some examples of changes include becoming a vegetarian or vegan, using public transportation instead of driving, walking/biking instead of driving, purchasing only locally produced products, reducing your use of electricity, giving up single-use plastics, buying only secondhand items, etc. (including some behavior changes related to COVID-19 and environment). Before settling on the topic, do some research on the environmental impact of the change to make sure it will be impactful. You may also engage in some form of environmental activism (such as working with an environmental organization, attending a rally (if the pandemic no longer exists), etc.) related to your behavior change (although this is not required). The length of time you will need to continue with this behavior depends on the difficulty entailed. For some projects, I expect that a few 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). The key point is that the behavior must be a change—i.e., it cannot be something you already do. The project does not

require that you are successful at making the change, only that you make a sincere attempt at it. The requirements for the project are outlined in the rubric.

It might be difficult to attend certain activities during this pandemic. I sincerely hope you stay safe and healthy. DO NOT RISK for your project. Small personal behavior changes are sufficient.

The project should be submitted by Thursday **July 30<sup>th</sup> 11:59 pm.**

Total points: 100

A	100 % to 94.0%
A-	< 94.0 % to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0 % to 87.0%
B	< 87.0 % to 84.0%
B-	< 84.0 % to 80.0%
C+	< 80.0 % to 77.0%
C	< 77.0 % to 74.0%
C-	< 74.0 % to 70.0%
D+	< 70.0 % to 67.0%
D	< 67.0 % to 64.0%
D-	< 64.0 % to 61.0%
F	< 61.0 % to 0.0%

### **Questions, discussion, and getting help**

If you have questions, please email me or TA. The emails will be responded in 48 hours.

### **Readings: (All readings will be available on Canvas)**

Week 1 Social Construction of Nature (May 11<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup>)

1. Gould and Lewis. (2015) Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology. Second Edition.  
Chapter 1

#### Week 2 Risk Society (May 18<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>)

1. Auyero, Javier and Deborah Swistun. 2008. "The Social Production of Toxic Uncertainty." *American Sociological Review* 73: 357–79.
2. Carolan, Michael S. 2006. "Risk, Trust and 'The Beyond' of the Environment: A Brief Look at the Recent Case of Mad Cow Disease in the United States." *Environmental Values* 15(2): 233-252.
3. Cordner, Alissa, Vanessa De La Rosa, Laurel Schaidler, Ruthann Rudel, Lauren Richter, and Phil Brown. 2019. "PFAS Drinking Water Guideline Levels: The Role of Scientific Uncertainty, Risk Assessment Decisions, and Social Factors." *Journal of Exposure Science & Environmental Epidemiology* 29: 157-171.

#### Week 3 Treadmill of production (May 25<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>)

1. Gould, Kenneth A., Schnaiberg, Allan, and Weinberg, Adam S. 1995. "Natural Resource Use in a Transnational Treadmill: International Agreements, National Citizenship Practices, & Sustainable Development." *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations* 2(1):61-93.
2. Bell, Shannon Elizabeth and Richard York. 2010. "Community Economic Identity: The Coal Industry and Ideology Construction in West Virginia." *Rural Sociology* 75(1):111-143.

#### Week 4 Ecological Modernization Theory, Environmental Kuznets Curve, and Post-materialist Values (June 1<sup>st</sup>- June 7<sup>th</sup>)

1. Roberts, J. Timmon. and Peter E. Grimes. 1997. "Carbon Intensity and Economic Development 1962–1991: A Brief Exploration of the Environmental Kuznets Curve." *World Development* 25(2):191–98.
2. Spaargaren, Gert and Arthur P. J. Mol. 2013. "Carbon Flows, Carbon Markets, and Low-Carbon Lifestyles: Reflecting on the Role of Markets in Climate governance." *Environmental Politics* 22(1):174–93.
3. Inglehart, Ronald. 1981. "Post-Materialism in an Environment of Insecurity." *The American Political Science Review* 75(4):880–900.

#### Week 5 The Metabolic Rift (June 8<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup>)

1. Clark, Brett and John Bellamy Foster. 2010. "Marx's Ecology in the 21st Century." *World Review of Political Economy* 1(1):142–56.
2. Clausen, Rebecca and Brett Clark. 2005. "The Metabolic Rift and Marine Ecology: An Analysis of the Ocean Crisis within Capitalist Production." *Organization and Environment* 18(4):422–44.
3. Clausen, Rebecca. 2007. "Healing the Rift: Metabolic Restoration in Cuban Agriculture." *Monthly Review* 59(1):40-52.

#### Week 6 Exam Week (June 15<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>)

Exam on June 18<sup>th</sup>

#### Week 7 The World Systems, and Unequal Ecological Exchange (June 22<sup>nd</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>)

1. Bunker, Stephen G. 1984. "Modes of Extraction, Unequal Exchange, and the Progressive Underdevelopment of an Extreme Periphery: The Brazilian Amazon, 1600-1980." *American Journal of Sociology* 89(5):1017-1064.
2. Clark, Brett and John Bellamy Foster. 2009. "Ecological Imperialism and the Global Metabolic Rift: Unequal Exchange and the Guano/Nitrates Trade." *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 50(3–4):311–34.

#### Week 8 The World Polity (June 29<sup>th</sup>-July 5<sup>th</sup>)

1. Shandra, John M. 2007. "The World Polity and Deforestation." *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 48(1):5–27.
2. Meyer, John, David John Frank, Ann Hironaka, Evan Schofer, and Nancy Brandon Tuma. 1997. "The Structuring of a World Environmental Regime, 1870-1990." *International Organization* 51: 623-651.
3. Longhofer, Wesley, and Andrew K. Jorgenson. 2017. "Decoupling Reconsidered: Does World Society Integration Influence the Relationship Between the Environment and Economic Development?" *Social Science Research* 65:17-29.

Week 9 Environmental Justice, Class and Racism (July 6<sup>th</sup>-July 12<sup>th</sup>)

1. Pulido, Laura. 2015. "Geographies of Race and Ethnicity I: White Supremacy vs. White Privilege in Environmental Racism Research." *Progress in Human Geography* 39(6): 809-817.
2. Hoover, Elizabeth. 2018. "Environmental Reproductive Justice: Intersections in an American Indian Community Impacted by Environmental Contamination." *Environmental Sociology* 4(1): 8-21.
3. Stern, Rachel E. 2003. "Air Pollution as a Social Class Issue." *Asian Surveys* 18(4):517–36.

Week 10 Environmental Justice, Gender, and Children (July 13<sup>th</sup> -July 19<sup>th</sup>)

1. Vinyeta, Kirsten, Kyle Powys Whyte, and Kathy Lynn. 2015. *Climate Change Through an Intersectional Lens: Gendered Vulnerability and Resilience in Indigenous Communities in the United States*. General Technical Report for the United States Department of Agriculture (PNW-GTR-923).
2. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Climate Change and Children: [http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Climate\\_Change\\_and\\_Children.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Climate_Change_and_Children.pdf)
3. Climate change "impacts women more than men": <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-43294221>

Week 11 Environmental movements (July 20<sup>th</sup>-July 26<sup>th</sup>)

1. Ladd, Anthony E. and Bob Edwards. 2002. "Swine Before Pearls: Environmental Justice and Public Opposition to Corporate Pork Production in North Carolina." *Social Justice*, 29(3): 26-46.
2. Adams, Alison E. and Thomas E. Shriver. 2011. "Collective Identity and Gendered Activism in the Czech Environmental Movement: The South Bohemian Mothers' Struggle Against Nuclear Power." *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts, and Change* 32: 163-189.
3. Norgaard, Kari Marie. 2006. 'We Don't Really Want to Know' The Social Experience of Global Warming: Dimensions of Denial and Environmental Justice." *Organization & Environment* 19(3): 347-470.

Week 12 (July 27<sup>th</sup>-July 31<sup>st</sup>)

Environmental project is due on July 30<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm.

### **University Policies**

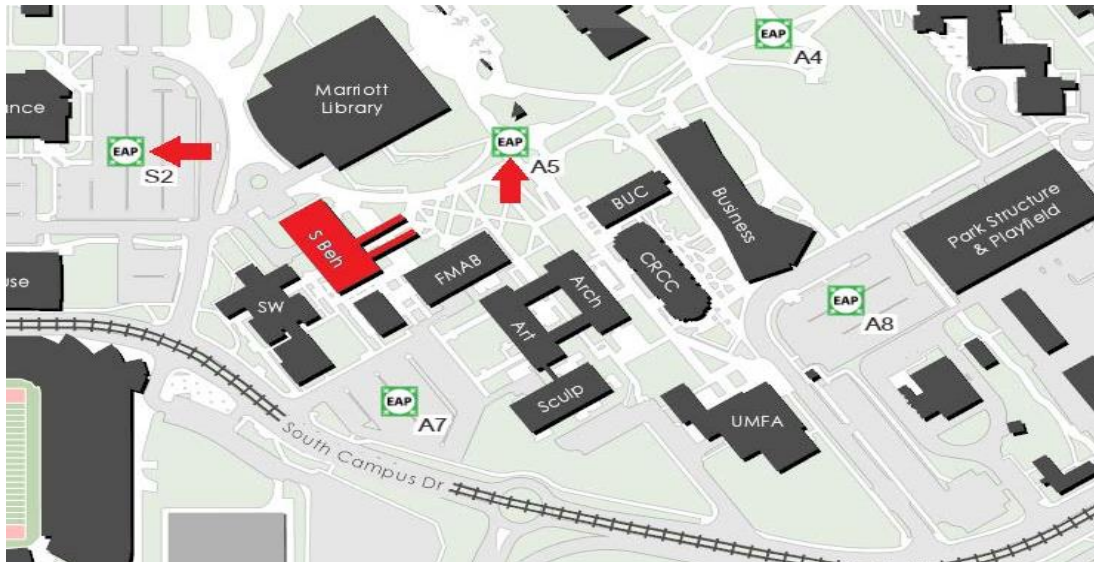
***The Americans with Disabilities Act.*** The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability & Access, 162 Olpin Union Building, (801) 581-5020. CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability & Access.

***Sexual Misconduct.*** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

***Wellness Statement.*** Your personal health and wellness are essential to your success as a student. Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive in this course and at the University of Utah. Please speak with the instructor or TA before issues become problems. And, for helpful resources, contact the Center for Student Wellness at [www.wellness.utah.edu](http://www.wellness.utah.edu) or 801-581-7776.



# CSBS EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN



## BUILDING EVACUATION

EAP (Emergency Assembly Point) – When you receive a notification to evacuate the building either by campus text alert system or by building fire alarm, please follow your instructor in an orderly fashion to the EAP marked on the map below. Once everyone is at the EAP, you will receive further instructions from Emergency Management personnel. You can also look up the EAP for any building you may be in on campus at <http://emergencymanagement.utah.edu/eap>.



## CAMPUS RESOURCES

**U HeadsUp App:** There's an app for that. Download the app on your smartphone at [alert.utah.edu/headsup](http://alert.utah.edu/headsup) to access the following resources:

- **Emergency Response Guide:** Provides instructions on how to handle any type of emergency, such as earthquake, utility failure, fire, active shooter, etc. Flip charts with this information are also available around campus.
- **See Something, Say Something:** Report unsafe or hazardous conditions on campus. If you see a life threatening or emergency situation, please call 911!

**Safety Escorts:** For students who are on campus at night or past business hours and would like an escort to your car, please call 801-585-2677. You can call 24/7 and a security officer will be sent to walk with you or give you a ride to your desired on-campus location.

