



Environmental Sociology

Sociology 3480-090

University of Utah, Summer 2021

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Office Hours: By appointment via Zoom

Course Description

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 interdisciplinary, and we will discuss environmental issues related to globalization, class, race, gender issues etc.

Course Outcomes

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

1. Identify the major perspectives within environmental sociology.
2. Apply key concepts to specific environmental cases.
3. Examine the environmental issues critically, and explore the potential solutions through a sociological perspective.
4. Critically understand and analyze the complexities between nature environment and human society in different regions of the world.
5. 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. INTRODUCTION 5% (30 points): Use the Self-Introduction Discussion page available on Canvas to introduce yourself to the class. This has to be accomplished within the first week. Please introduce: Who are you? What do you study? Where have you traveled to or where is your dream place to visit? What impressed you about the place? And say hi to at least two of your classmates.
2. Bonus Points (5 points): Complete a quiz after reading the syllabus.
3. WEEKLY REFLECTION PAPER/DISCUSSION 40% (12*20=240 points): 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 cases/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 as not answered in the reading. AND post a thoughtful comment on at least 2 other essays in your group (5 points).

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

All students will be randomly assigned into groups. Please post your reflection and comments on your group discussion board.

4. EXAM 20% (120 points): Students will take an exam on **Week 8 (Available from Friday, March 12th to Sunday, March 14th)**. Study guide of the exam will be provided in advance to help students prepare. The exam is based on course readings. The question format will be multiple choice.
5. ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE PROJECT PROPOSAL 5% (30 points): Propose what you plan to do for your final project. Briefly state the environmental significance of your choice, and why you choose to make this change. **The proposal is due by March 14th. (No more than one page)**
6. ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE PROJECT 30% (180 points): 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 if there is any potential environmental consequences). 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 (only 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 your health.

The project should be submitted by **May 2nd 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 Introduction and Syllabus Review

Week 1 Social Construction of Nature

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

Week 2 Risk Society

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 Ecological Modernization Theory, Environmental Kuznets Curve, and Post-materialist Values

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. Du, Gang, Shuzhan Liu, Ni Lei, and Yong Huang. 2018. "A Test of Environmental Kuznets Curve for Haze Pollution in China: Evidence from the Penal Data of 27 Capital Cities." *Journal of Cleaner Production* 205:821–27.
3. 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.
4. Inglehart, Ronald. 1995. "Public Support for Environmental Protection: Objective Problems and Subjective Values in 43 Societies." *Political Science and Politics*, 28(1): 57-72.

Week 4 Treadmill of production

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 5 Human Ecology

1. Catton, William R. Jr. 1994. "Foundations of Human Ecology." *Sociological Perspectives* 37: 75-95.
2. Dietz, Thomas, Eugene A. Rosa, and Richard York. 2007. "Driving the Human Ecological Footprint." *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 5: 13-18.
3. Adua, Lazarus, Richard York, and Beth Anne Schuelke-Leech. 2016. "The Human Dimensions of Climate Change: A Micro-Level Assessment of Views from the Ecological Modernization, Political Economy and Human Ecology Perspectives." *Social Science Research* 56:26–43.

Week 6 Energy, Society, and the Environment

1. York, Richard and Shannon Elizabeth Bell. 2019. "Energy Transitions or Additions? Why a Transition from Fossil Fuels Requires More than the Growth of Renewable Energy." *Energy Research and Social Science* 51(November 2018):40–43.
2. Adua, Lazarus. 2020. "Reviewing the Complexity of Energy Behavior: Technologies, Analytical Traditions, and Household Energy Consumption Data in the United States." *Energy Research and Social Science* 59(September).
3. Foster, John Bellamy, Brett Clark, and Richard York. 2010. "Capitalism and the Curse of Energy Efficiency: The Return of the Jevons Paradox." *Monthly Review* 62(6): 1-12.
4. York, Richard. 2010. "Three Lessons from Trends in CO2 Emissions and Energy Use in the United States." *Society and Natural Resources* 23(12): 1244-1252.

Week 7 Mid-term Exam and Project Proposal (March 8th - 14th)

Mid-term Exam will be available from March 12th to March 14th.

Project proposal is due by March 14th.

Week 8 The Metabolic Rift

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 9 The World Systems, and Unequal Ecological Exchange

1. Austin, Kelly. 2010. "The 'Hamburger Connection' as Ecologically Unequal Exchange: A Cross-National Investigation of Beef Exports and Deforestation in Less-Developed Countries." *Rural Sociology* 75(2):270–99.
2. Rice, James. 2007. "Ecological Unequal Exchange: Consumption, Equity, and Unsustainable Structural Relationships within the Global Economy." *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 48(1):43–72.
3. 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 10 The World Polity (March 29th-April 4th)

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 11-1 Environmental Justice, Class, and Race

1. Gould and Lewis. (2015) *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*. Second Edition. Chapter 10 Environmental Inequality and Environmental Injustice.
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 11-2 Environmental Justice, Gender, and Children

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
3. Climate change "impacts women more than men": <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-43294221>

Week 12 Social Responses to Environmental Issues

1. Gould and Lewis. (2015) *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*. Second Edition. Chapter 16 U.S. Environmental Movements
2. Gould and Lewis. (2015) *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*. Second Edition. Chapter 18 Environmental Movements in the global South

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 15 (April 26th – May 2nd) Final project

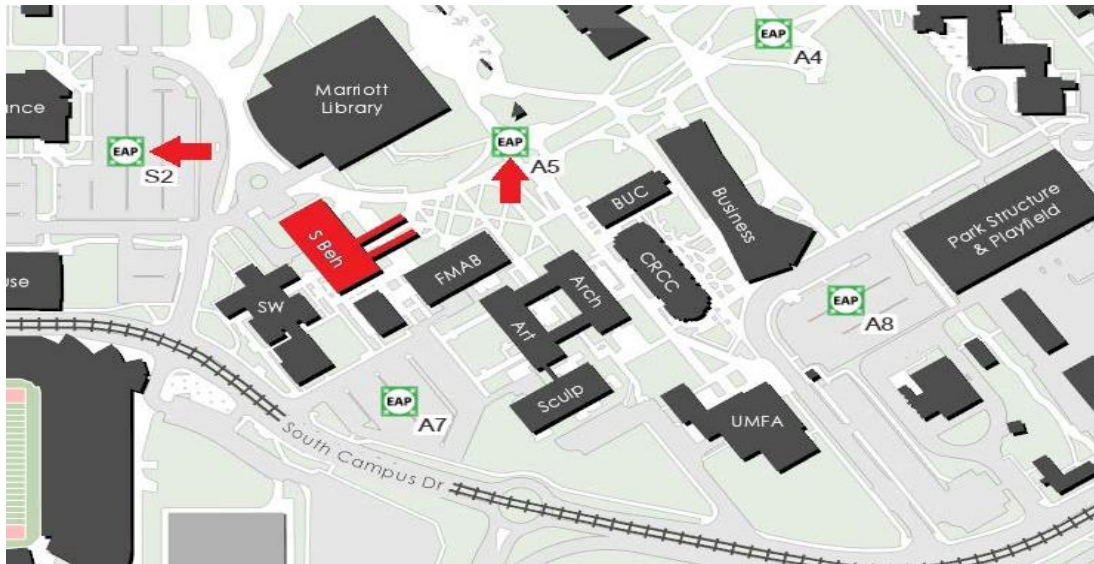
University Policies

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 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 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.

