AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY NEWS

Newsletter of the American Sociological Association's Section on Environmental Sociology

Fall 2025

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SECTION CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Dear colleagues,

Here we are again at the start of a new academic year. Working in higher education has always come with challenges: keeping up with society's changes so that our teaching evolves; getting to know new generations of students; navigating bureaucracy; limited research funding; shrinking university budgets; and so much more.

Since January, we in the United States have faced a particularly virulent frontal attack on the values we hold dear: free inquiry and free expression. For many of us, this has been personal. There has been a rollback of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice programing, curriculum, and offices. Funding for critically important social science, from climate change to environmental justice, is drying up. Teaching about or speaking to the social and ecological consequences of fascism, genocide, war, racism, xenophobia, and transphobia has led to the firing of higher education workers, especially those without the protections of tenure. There has also been doxing, harassment, and death threats by far-right individuals and groups that oppose us as higher education workers. Despite the severity of the moment, the institutions that might check authoritarianism are increasingly fragile, if not outright complicit.

This is not about American exceptionalism. The stakes are truly global. The federal government is weakening environmental protection laws, pulling out of climate commitments, pushing artificial

intelligence, perpetuating war, deporting immigrants, and punishing those individuals or groups who stand in the way. Profound ecological and social consequences spill well beyond the militarized borders of the United States.

Yet, we must persist. The consequences are too grave to give up on free inquiry and free expression. Our work as environmental sociologists—as educators, researchers, and engaged people—offers critical insights into the current crises and possible paths out. To stop our work would acquiesce to repressive forces. I know you know all about this. You're living it.

It's in these moments when it's especially important to reassert our value to society and the values that motivate our work. When I look back at the papers that were presented in each of our section's sessions at the ASA Meeting in Chicago, I am proud to say that I'm an environmental sociologist. We are grappling with critically important matters: climate change, degrowth, disasters, renewable energy grids, environmental inequalities, environmental health, food systems, global natural resource flows, just transitions, science and technology, social movements, urbanization, water, and so much more. We are also critically important to sociology as a discipline, evidenced by The Sociology of Climate Change pre-conference before the annual ASA meeting. Such cross-fertilization across sections is poised to continue as our Chair-Elect, Kerry Ard, puts together an exciting set of section sponsored and co-sponsored sessions for the 2026 meeting in New York.

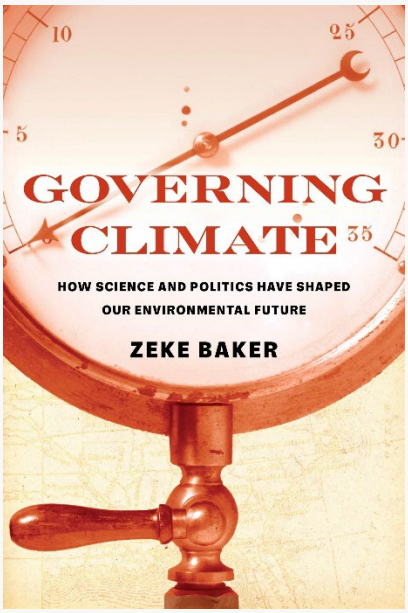
Our work remains critical as an evidence-based counter to empirically suspect policies and practices and interrogation of systems that have put people and the planet in harm's way. That said, it is important in these dire moments to imagine and organize worlds that advance human and ecological flourishing. In my capacity as Chair of our section over the next year, I will articulate and pursue such commitments in the spaces I have the privilege to occupy, and I welcome all input you would like me to consider and act on. I am honored to continue the work of the many people who have served our section and to do so alongside our council. It is our collective effort over decades that makes us resilient. While there are many fronts to uphold free inquiry and free expression, we will continue to face them together.

Sincerely,
Joshua Sbicca
ASA Section on Environmental Sociology Chair
Associate Professor of Sociology
Director of the Prison Agriculture Lab
Colorado State University

PUBLICATIONS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

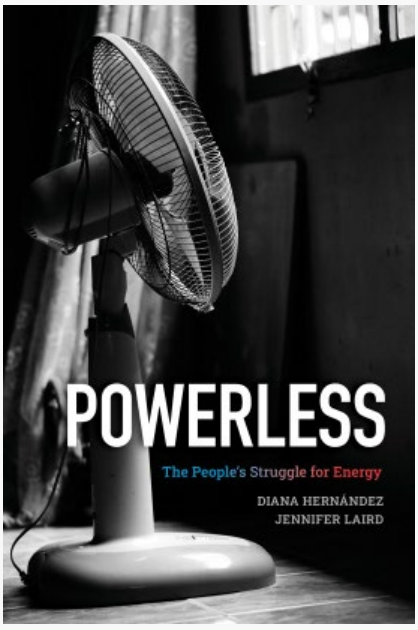
Books

[Governing Climate: How Science and Politics Shape Our Environmental Future](#)
Zeke Baker
Sonoma State University



After decades of debate about global warming, the fact of the climate crisis is finally widely accepted. People at all scales—from the household to the global market—are attempting to govern climate to deal with its causes and impacts. Although the stakes are different now, governing climate is centuries old. In this book, Zeke Baker develops a genealogy of climate science that traces the relationship between those who have created knowledge of the climate and those who have attempted to gain power and govern society, right up to the present, historic moment. Baker draws together over two centuries of science, politics, and environmental change to demonstrate the "co-production" of climate knowledge and power-seeking activity, with a focus on the United States. This book provides a fresh account of contemporary issues transecting science and climate politics, specifically the rise of "climate security," and examines how climate science can either facilitate or reconcile the unequal distribution of power and resources.

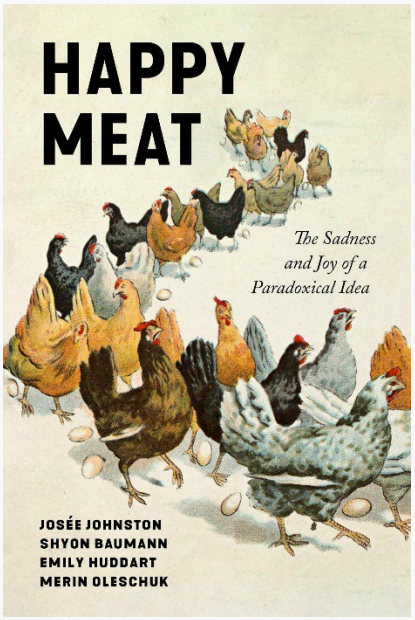
[Powerless](#)
Diana Hernández, Columbia University
Jennifer Laid, Lehman College



When energy affordability limits access, households face cold, heat, darkness, and unsafe conditions. In Powerless, sociologists Diana Hernández and Jennifer Laird expose the hardship of energy insecurity, defined as the inability to meet household energy needs. About one in ten U.S. households are energy insecure, while four in ten are at risk. Energy insecure families often face “heat or eat” dilemmas, sacrificing food for warmth, or resorting to dangerous alternatives like open flames and ovens. Many are hyper-vigilant, deliberately underconsuming energy and living with discomfort to avoid costs. Despite its severity, energy insecurity remains hidden, treated as a private struggle rather than a social crisis. Hernández and Laird argue that household energy is a human right. They propose easing access to aid, adjusting rates by income, reforming disconnection policies, and promoting energy literacy. Powerless reveals the economic, physical, and emotional toll of energy insecurity, while demonstrating that energy equity is within reach.

Happy Meat: The Sadness and Joy of a Paradoxical Idea.

Shyon Baumann, University of Toronto
Emily Huddart, University of British Colombia
Josée Johnston, University of Toronto
Merin Oleschuk, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



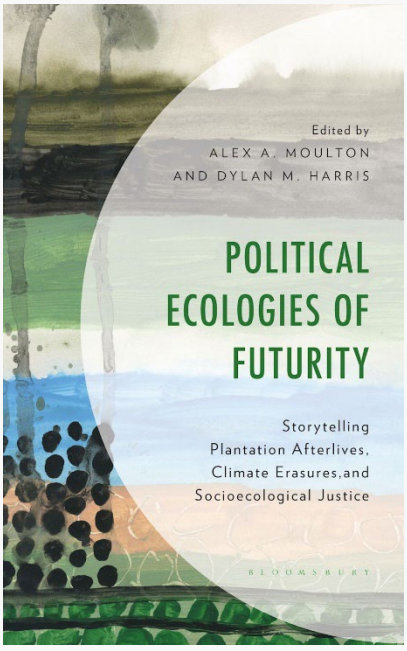
North Americans love eating meat. Despite the increased awareness of the meat industry's harms–violence against animals, health problems, and associations with environmental degradation–the rate of meat eating hasn't changed significantly in recent years. Instead, what has emerged is an uncomfortable paradox: a need to square one's values with the behaviors that contradict those values.

Using a large-scale, multidimensional, and original dataset, *Happy Meat* explores the thoughts and emotions that underpin our moral decision-making in this meat paradox. Conscientious meat-eaters turn to the notion of "happy meat" to make sense of their behaviors by consuming meat they see as more healthy, ethical, and sustainable. Happy meat might be labeled grass fed, free-range, antibiotic free, naturally raised, or humane. The people who produce and consume it, together, make up the complex landscape of conscientious meat-eating in modern Western societies.

The discourse of happy meat ultimately may not be a sufficient response to all the critiques of meat eating, rife as it is with contradictions. However, it offers a powerful case for understanding how moral boundaries and notions of the 'good eater' are constructed through negotiations of values, identity, and status.

Political Ecologies of Futurities

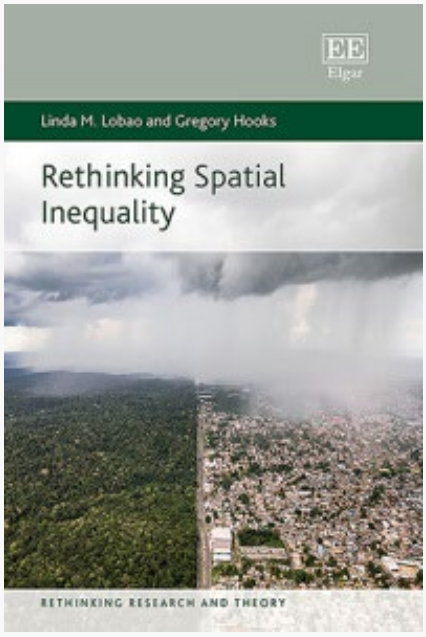
Alex Moulton (ed.), Hunter College of the City University of New York
Dylan Harris (ed.), University of Colorado, Colorado Springs



Speaking from a range of disciplinary perspectives and drawing on different epistemological and methodological approaches, the chapters examine the plurality of climate change geographies. As painful as they are, the erasure of landscapes that are artefacts of coloniality, racial capitalism, and environmental injustice does not herald placid futures. Erasure can make the present sterile, allowing for apolitical visions of the future to manifest, futures in which marginalized communities are not present. This diminishes prospects for climate justice or any sense of equitable futurity.
With ten chapters-featuring case studies from five countries and three distinct regions of the United States-along with an Introduction and Conclusion by the editors, 2 original poems, artistic sketch, and an Afterword from Mimi Sheller, this volume creatively demonstrates the potential of storytelling for making sense of climate change and the ecological politics of futures beyond the plantationocene. That is to say, the role storytelling can play in helping us understand the complex temporalities of socioecological transformation.

Rethinking Spatial Inequality

Linda Lobao, Ohio State University
Gregory Hooks, McMaster University



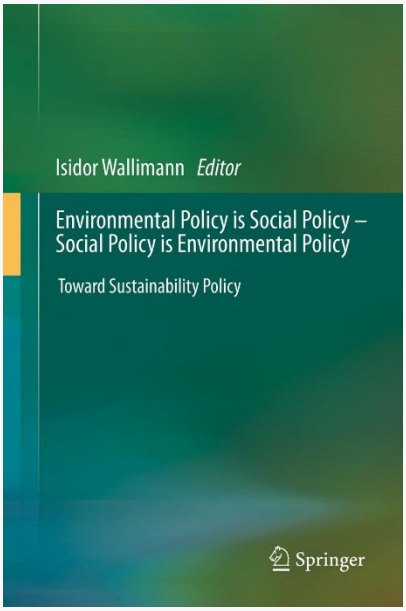
This illuminating book offers a new perspective on social science inquiry into the spatial dimensions of societal well-being; addressing the key question of who gets what, and where.

Leading scholars Linda M. Lobao and Gregory Hooks adopt an organizing framework that speaks to the concept of spatial inequality, how it forms a lens on societal disparities, and how it gives rise to work with underlying commonalities across different social science disciplines. With this scaffolding, the authors consider spatial inequality across spatial scales, places, and populations, including the subnational scale, so often missing in inequality research. Illustrative cases center on poverty, public service provision and austerity policies, environmental justice, and war and conflict. The book concludes by advancing an integrative social science agenda to guide future emancipatory research on inequality.

Rethinking Spatial Inequality is a vital resource for students and scholars of inequality across the social sciences including sociology, human geography, development, regional, urban, and rural studies, demography, and political science. Policymakers and practitioners in public service provision will also benefit from this perceptive book.

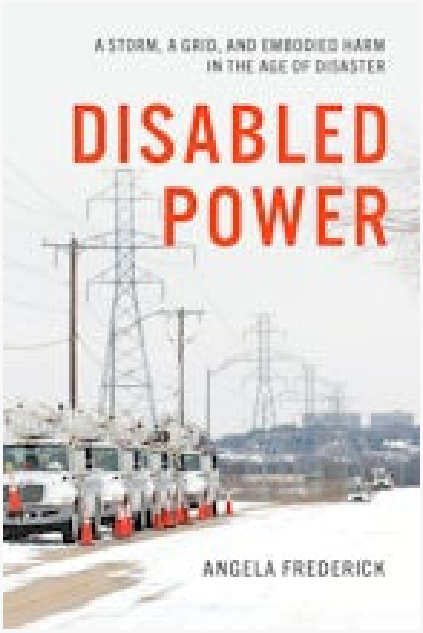
Environmental Policy is Social Policy – Social Policy is Environmental Policy

Isidor Wallimann
Syracuse University



This book argues that social and environmental policy should be synthetically treated as one and the same field, that both are but two aspects of the same coin – if sustainability is the goal. Such a paradigm shift is indicated, important, and timely to effectively move towards sustainability. This book is the first to take this approach and to give examples for it. Not to synthetically merge the two fields has been and will continue to be highly insufficient, inefficient and contradictory for policy and public administration aiming for a transformation towards a sustainable world. In general, social problems are dealt with in one "policy corner" and environmental problems in another. Rarely is social policy (at large) concerned with its impact on the environment or its connection with and relevance to environmental policy. Equally, environmental problems are generally not seen in conjunction with social policy, even though much environmental policy directly relates to health, nutrition, migration and other issues addressed by social policy. This book intends to correct the pattern to separate these very significant and large policy fields. Using examples from diverse academic and applied fields, it is shown how environmental policy can (and should) be thought of as social policy – and how social policy can (and should) simultaneously be seen as environmental policy. Tremendous benefits are to be expected.

[Disabled Power: A Storm, A Grid, and Embodied Harm in the Age of Disaster.]
Angela Frederick
University of Texas at El Paso



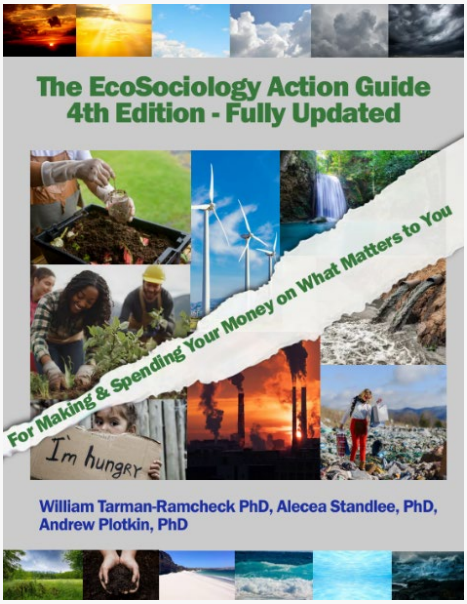
A call to place disability at the center of climate and disaster responses Every disaster is a disability disaster, argues Angela Frederick. Disabled Power tells the stories of Texans with disabilities who endured the 2021 Texas power crisis, which forced millions of Texas residents to endure a dayslong winter storm without heat or water. Based on 58 in-depth interviews with disabled Texans and parents of disabled children, Frederick highlights how disabled people and those with chronic health conditions are uniquely harmed when basic infrastructure such as power and water systems fail. She argues that the vulnerability people with disabilities experienced during this disaster was not an inevitable consequence of individual disabled bodies. Rather, disability vulnerability was "produced" by policies that "disabled" vital infrastructure. Frederick also emphasizes another meaning of the phrase "disabled power:" the individual and collective resilience and creativity Texans with disabilities exercised to survive the disaster. Despite common perceptions of people with disabilities as passive victims, Frederick shows how many found strategies to survive and to provide and receive care within their communities. Ultimately, the implications of this disaster extend far beyond Texas and underscore our increased vulnerability to infrastructural failures as extreme weather events become more common. Disabled Power offers a blueprint for reimagining vulnerability and resilience to center people with disabilities in disaster research and emergency response. Discount code NYUAU30 when you order directly from their site: https://nyupress.org/9781479828142/disabled-power/

The Oxford Handbook of Climate Action
Paul Almeida (ed.)
University of California, Merced

Indigenous Rights to Land Versus Extractivism: The promise and limits of ILO Convention No. 169 in Mexico
Tamara Wattnem
Trinity University

[The EcoSociology Action Guide 4th Edition–Fully Updated: For Making & Spending Your Money on What Matters to You]

William Tarman-Ramcheck, Carroll College
Alecea Standlee, Gettysburg College
Andy Plotkin, Palm Beach State College



To be presented at the Wisconsin Sociological Association November 14, 2025, for future publication. This "Action Guide" both introduces "EcoSoclology" which blends Ecology and Sociology, and helps plan one's future work and lifestyle to improve one's life while consuming less and conserving more of the planet's resources. The guide further serves as a Handbook for resources, ideas and exercises for making important "ecosocial" choices about everyday expenses and earnings. It can also help personally address current issues, and collectively solve related problems through EcoSocial Planning. It encourages us to understand each other, and work together toward matters of mutual benefit. To do so this guide offers an "EcoSocial Model" with an "EcoSociological Imagination" for guiding "REAL" (Real EcoSocial Alternatives for Living) Action. [https://article.isarpublisher.com/viewArticle/How-To-Save-Our-World-Hands-Off-Actions-to-Hands-On-Problem-Solving-by-Redirecting-Our-Money-Using-EcoSociology]

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Yannelli F, Visakorpi K, Arponen A, Arnillas C, Chinga Chamorro J, Chiuffo MC, Collinge SK, Cousens R, Devarajan K, Ehrlich K, grell-brisk marilyn, Kariuki RW, Kharouba HM, Ortiz AMD, Prado-Valladares A, Regan H, Schnabel F, Soares BE, Stotz GC, Williams M, Cadotte MW. 2025. Ecology for a social revolution: Re-defining the role of ecological and environmental science professionals and their responsibilities towards society. Research Ideas and Outcomes 11: e152859. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3897/rio.11.e152859

Public Sociology and Community Engagement

Kate Pride Brown organized a full-day symposium on "Academic Freedom and Human Rights" that took place at Georgia Tech on October 10.

Basseches, Joshua A.. Op-Ed in *MIT Technology Review*. "How to Make Clean Energy Progress Under Trump in the States- Blue and Red Alike. https://www.technologyreview.com/2025/08/19/1122023/how-to-make-clean-energy-progress-under-trump-in-the-states-blue-and-red-alike/?utm_source=staff_social_outreach&utm_medium=tr_staff_social&utm_campaign=social&utm_content=guestbp

Career Transitions

Alexander Priest: Completed PhD at Rice University, Houston Texas and started (08-01-25) as an Assistant Professor of Resource Economics and Environmental Sociology at the University of Alberta, Edmonton Alberta.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Calls for Abstracts

npj Climate Action - **Climate Activism: Bridging Science, Advocacy, and Public Engagement** (see link below and attachment) https://www.nature.com/collections/gbaficedif

Climate activism is a dynamic force driving societal transformation, yet its full potential remains untapped without deeper integration of scientific rigor, inclusive advocacy frameworks, and participatory public engagement. While climate science provides critical evidence for action, and grassroots movements amplify urgency, persistent gaps exist in translating knowledge into equitable policies, fostering cross-sector collaboration, and addressing the socio-political complexities of climate justice.

The climate crisis demands scientists to not only inform but also inspire action, yet this shift challenges longstanding norms of detachment. For instance, public trust in climate science remains high, but visible scientist-led protests risk politicizing research, potentially undermining credibility in polarized contexts. Conversely, media campaigns leveraging scientific authority—such as IPCC report summaries for grassroots education—have amplified public support for policies like renewable transitions. This Collection aims to examine the evolving role of scientists in climate advocacy, tensions between objectivity and activism, and public engagement strategies (e.g., protests, media campaigns). It analyzes ethical dilemmas, policy influence, and societal perceptions of climate activism.

This Collection welcomes Original Research, Reviews, Perspectives, and Case Studies that address the following topics:

- Scientists as Advocates: Explore tensions between scientific objectivity and activism, ethical frameworks for protest participation, and cultural/political variations in public trust when scientists lead campaigns.
- Scientists as allies: Analyse how diverse climate-related movements (including sceptics or denialists) engage scientists, and how this affects both the movements' and the scientists' legitimacy and political impact.
- Policy Influence: Investigate strategies to leverage expertise for policy impact without bias, conflicts of interest in industry ties, and credibility risks of endorsing technologies/policies.
- Public Engagement: Assess how scientist-communicator collaborations shape behavior (e.g., IPCC outreach) and lessons from youth-scientist alliances like climate strikes.
- Justice & Equity: Address Global North dominance in knowledge production, support for marginalized grassroots movements, and scientists' roles in advocating reparations/loss-and-damage.

Environmental Sociology Section Award Calls

Environmental Sociology Student Paper Award
Deadline: April 1, 2026
Contact: Caleb Scoville (chair), caleb.scoville@tufts.edu

The purpose of this award is to recognize an outstanding paper written by a graduate student or group of graduate students. All members of the Section and the ASA are encouraged to submit nominations; self-nominations are also welcome. In addition to recognition, recipients will receive a modest monetary award. Papers do not have to be published or accepted for publication to be considered. They must have been submitted to the ASA annual meeting and/or to a journal by a graduate student(s) at the time the nomination is made. Published papers must have been accepted for publication or published between January 1, 2025 and December 31, 2025 and while the author(s) was still a graduate student in order to be considered. Papers co-authored with faculty are ineligible. To nominate a paper, please send a PDF copy of the paper along with a nomination letter that includes information about the paper's status by April 1, 2026 to Policy & Research Committee Chair, Caleb Scoville (caleb.scoville@tufts.edu). Please include "Environmental Sociology Student Paper Award" in the subject line.

Environmental Sociology Outstanding Publication Award
Deadline: February 1, 2026
Contact: Caleb Scoville (chair), caleb.scoville@tufts.edu

This is given for publications of special noteworthiness in the field of environmental sociology. It is given in alternate years for either (a) a book in even years or (b) a single article in odd years. This year, the committee will consider books published within the period January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2025. To nominate a book, please email a nomination letter by February 1, 2026 to Policy & Research Committee Chair, Caleb Scoville (caleb.scoville@tufts.edu), who will provide the names and addresses to which hard or digital copies of the book should be sent no later than February 15, 2026. Please include "Environmental Sociology Outstanding Publication Award" in the subject line.

Distinguished Contribution Award
Deadline: April 1, 2026
Contact: Raoul Lievanos (chair), raoull@uoregon.edu

This award is given annually to recognize individuals for outstanding service, innovation, or publication in environmental sociology. It is intended to be an expression of appreciation, awarded when an individual is deemed extraordinarily meritorious by the Section. All members of the Section are encouraged to submit nominations; self-nominations are welcome. Nominations for this award must be received by April 1, 2026. To nominate an individual for this award, please send a letter of nomination describing the nominee's contribution to environmental sociology, accompanied by a copy of the nominee's CV, to the chair of the award committee, Section Past-Chair, Raoul Lievanos (raoull@uoregon.edu). Please include "Distinguished Contribution Award Nomination" in the subject line.

Environmental Sociology Teaching and Mentorship Award (Bi-yearly)
Deadline: March 1, 2026
Contact: Lourdes Vera (chair), lavera@buffalo.edu

This award, given in even years, honors faculty members who demonstrate a notable dedication to teaching and mentorship through: innovative pedagogy; actionable attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion; robust community-engaged approaches; and/or other elements of excellence in the teaching and mentoring of undergraduate and/or graduate students in environmental sociology. All members of the Section are encouraged to submit nominations; self-nominations are welcome. The award is open to faculty of any rank, including tenure-track or

contingent positions. Nomination packages should be combined into a single PDF and submitted by email to Lourdes Vera (lavera@buffalo.edu) by March 1, 2026. Nomination packages should include: (1) Letter of Nomination, not to exceed 2 pages; (2) personal statement on teaching and mentorship philosophy, not to exceed 3 pages; (3) CV with relevant components highlighted, such as teaching/mentoring awards and activities, publications or presentations co-authored with students (underline the names of student co-authors and indicate whether undergraduate, master's, or doctoral student). Please include "Environmental Sociology Teaching and Mentorship Award" in the subject line.

Nominations will be vetted within two weeks, and a selection of candidates will be asked to submit a comprehensive packet of additional materials by April 15, 2026 including: (1) a maximum of 5 letters of student support (any mix of present or past students); (2) a maximum of 2 additional letters of support from colleagues who are not former students; (3) a maximum of 3 syllabi or other relevant material from the past 5 years; and (4) excerpts or summaries of teaching evaluations as desired.

Robert Boguslaw Award for Technology and Humanism (Bi-yearly)
The Robert Boguslaw Award for Technology and Humanism, given in odd years, honors a doctoral student or other young investigator who has obtained a Ph.D. in the past five years. The purpose of the award is to recognize work that investigates the relationship between technology and humanism or otherwise proposes innovative solutions to emerging social issues associated with technology. We will accept nominations for this award at a later time for the 2027 award cycle.

Environmental Sociology Practice and Outreach Award (Bi-yearly)
This award, given in odd years, honors faculty scholar-activists who demonstrate outstanding practice and outreach contributions that advance equity in the context of socio-environmental relations. We will accept nominations for this award at a later time for the 2027 award cycle.

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