

**ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY – SOC 229**  
Fall 2017 – Tuesday and Thursday 10:00-11:20  
Maxey 304

Professor Alissa Cordner  
Maxey 325

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30-2:30, Wednesdays 1-2:20pm, and by appointment  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS**

Environmental sociology examines interactions between human societies and the natural environment. This is a two-way relationship, and so environmental sociology identifies how humans impact the environment and how the environment in turn shapes human societies. Key questions in environmental sociology include, how is “the environment” defined and what role do societies have in that definition? How is the environment shaped by society, and how is society shaped by the environment? Who controls access to environmental resources, and who is impacted by environmental hazards? Environmental sociology studies can take place at multiple levels of analysis, including studies of individual consumption, how people come together into environmental social movements, how governments regulate environmental issues, and how transnational corporations make decisions about natural resource extraction.

The goal of this course is to provide an overview of the central debates in environmental sociology and explore current environmental topics from a sociological perspective. At the end of the course, you will be able to describe key theories in environmental sociology, explain how environmental sociologists look at issues like technological innovation and population stresses on resources, and apply these key theories to a variety of contemporary environmental problems. Additionally, this course will challenge your writing skills and require collaborative group work.

**REQUIRED BOOKS (Available at the bookstore)**

Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition by Kenneth A. Gould and Tammy Lewis. 2014. Oxford University Press.

**Additional resources:**

Additional readings are uploaded on the course Schoology website (see below).

To complete the Environment and the Media Assignment, you will need to subscribe to “Above the Fold,” a daily email on environmental news compiled by Environmental Health Sciences.

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/subscribe>

SOC229 is participating in a semester-long trial of a different Learning Management System called **Schoology**. Readings and assignments will be posted on the Schoology website.

Log into Schoology at <https://schoology.whitman.edu>, or click on the Schoology tab at [my.whitman.edu](http://my.whitman.edu). You can also download a mobile app at [my.whitman.edu](http://my.whitman.edu). If you have questions about Schoology, you can email: [schoology\\_help@whitman.edu](mailto:schoology_help@whitman.edu).

A full description of the course and links to all readings and resources is on main screen of the SOC/ENVS229 Schoology site. Readings may be provided through uploaded PDFs, links to the Penrose library, or links to external sites.

If you need to send an email to the whole course, you must do this through Schoology (not your email). On the main screen for the course, click the “Updates” link and then click “Post.”

## **COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING**

The course utilizes a mix of readings from books and academic journals. Additionally, many assignments will also involve popular media, non-profit websites, and environmental studies resources. The course includes critical and reflexive writing, group work, announced and unannounced in-class quizzes and assignments, two exams, and a final project with a presentation.

**Participation in class:** Participating in class discussions, asking questions, answering questions. This includes demonstrating that you have completed required readings. Readings should be completed for the day under which they are listed.

**Responses, in-class quizzes, and other assignments:** Assignments and quizzes may be announced or unannounced. Assignments will often but not always be finished in class. Quizzes will take a variety of forms. Responses may be assigned to specific readings or specific events. Expect a number of short (1-2 page) writing assignments in addition to readings and other class work.

**Group assignments:** The class will be divided into small groups in week 2 and presentations will begin in week 4. There will be two group assignments over the course of the semester, marked in the syllabus by group number. For the Local Environmental Controversy presentation, your group will pick a current environmental controversy taking place in Oregon or Washington. For the Environment and the Media presentation, your group will choose a media story from “Above the Fold.” A detailed assignment description will be distributed in week 2.

**Midterm Exam:** There will be a midterm exam in class on 10/19. The exam will be a mix of short answer and short essay. It will be closed book and closed note, but you may use one 3x5 note card of notes (front and back). The note card should be your own work, and if you choose to use one, you will turn it in with your midterm.

**Theory Application:** You will write a 5-6 page paper applying multiple theories in environmental sociology to an environmental topic. This paper is due in class on 11/16. A detailed assignment description will be distributed in class.

**Final Project and Paper:** The final project for this course will be an original multimedia project and a research paper on any environmental topic. You will present your project in class during the last week of class. A detailed assignment description will be distributed in class.

## COURSE EXPECTATIONS

### Course Expectations

#### *Participation and Classroom Environment:*

This class requires actively participating in class, engaging with group discussions and projects, and taking the time to do all required readings and complete all assignments. Come to class prepared to demonstrate your preparation by discussing the material, and asking and answering questions about readings or the topics at hand. You will learn more and earn a higher grade in this class if you participate actively.

We will discuss controversial issues in this class, and disagreement is valuable and encouraged! Because this class is based so heavily on discussion, it is important to maintain a respectful environment. I encourage everyone to speak honestly and openly, and ask that you respect others' experiences and opinions when you disagree.

You are expected to come to all classes. Unexcused absences will lower your overall grade. If you know that you will miss class (for religious holidays, sports events, fieldtrips for other classes, etc.), please tell me as soon as possible. If you miss class due to illness or personal emergencies, you must have the Dean of Students office contact me to excuse your absence. You will not be able to make up any work from unexcused absences.

Education research shows that in most instances, the use of laptops in class can decrease student learning, decrease recall of information, and distract peers. Please talk with me about this if you have concerns or questions. Unless we make other arrangements, please turn off cell phones and laptops during class.

#### *Late work:*

All assignments are due at the beginning of class unless otherwise noted.

I do not accept late assignments, unless your absence from class is excused by the College. Assignments for pre-arranged absences (like fieldtrips) are due *before* you leave. I do recognize that things come up and schedules can be very busy. In recognition of this, you can turn in **one assignment up to 24 hours late** at any point in the semester, *excluding any in-class presentations, the midterm, and any components of the final project assignment*. To do this, simply let me know over email or in class that you will be using your one-time extension and

make arrangements with me to turn in your assignment. If you do not use your one-time extension during the semester, I will add 5 extra credit points (out of ~1000 for the class) to your grade at the end of the semester.

*Out-of-class communication:*

Feel free to come to my Office Hours (Tuesdays 1:30-2:30, Wednesdays 1:00-2:20, and by appointment) to discuss course materials or talk one-on-one about sociology or environmental studies. I maintain a GoogleDoc (linked through Schoology) where you can sign up for specific meeting times. If you cannot make my scheduled office hours, please contact me a minimum of 48 hours ahead of time to make another appointment. Also feel free to email me about questions or concerns you have with the course.

I will respond to emails received during the week within 24 hours. I may not always check email over the weekend. I will sometimes send updates to the class listserv that will come to you as emails from Schoology, so be sure to check your Whitman email account regularly.

*Students with Disabilities:*

If you are a student with a disability who will need accommodations in this course, please meet with Antonia Keithahn, Assistant Director of Academic Resources: Disability Support (Memorial 326, 509.527.5767, keithaam@whitman.edu) for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs. All information about disabilities is considered private; if I receive notification from Ms. Keithahn that you are eligible to receive an accommodation due to a verified disability, I will provide it in as discreet a manner as possible.

*Academic Honesty:*

All work for this course must be original to this course and yours alone. I encourage you to talk about ideas and course materials with your classmates for all assignments except the final exam, but unless an assignment is explicitly collaborative, assignments should be your own work.

The Whitman policy on academic honesty can be found on the Dean of Student's website (<http://www.whitman.edu/offices-and-services/dean-of-students/right-to-know/rights-and-responsibilities>) or in the student handbook.

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

*Readings and assignment dates are subject to change.*

	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>
<b>Week 1</b>	<p><b>8/29</b></p> <p>Introduction – no readings</p>	<p><b>8/31</b></p> <p><i>Twenty Lessons</i> Introduction – Gould and Lewis, “An Introduction to Environmental Sociology”</p> <p>Dunlap and Catton – “Environmental Sociology”</p>
<b>Week 2</b>	<p><b>9/5</b></p> <p><i>Twenty Lessons</i> Chapter 1 – Capek, “The Social Construction of Nature”</p> <p>Hayes – “The Lie of the Lion”</p>	<p><b>9/7</b></p> <p><i>Twenty Lessons</i> Chapter 3 –Pellow, “The State and Policy”</p> <p><i>Twenty Lessons</i> Chapter 5 – Campbell, “Corporate Power”</p>
<b>Week 3</b>	<p><b>9/12</b></p> <p>Schnaiberg and Gould – <i>Environment and Society: The Enduring Conflict</i> (Ch. 3)</p> <p>Edwards – “Our People Are Still Resisting”</p>	<p><b>9/14</b></p> <p>No readings</p>
<b>Week 4</b>	<p><b>9/19</b></p> <p>Mol, Sonnenfeld, and Spaargaren – <i>Ecological Modernisation Reader</i> (Chapter 2)</p> <p>Bloomberg – “Climate Progress, with or without Trump”</p> <p><b>Global Environmental Policy Presentation:</b> Group 1</p>	<p><b>9/21</b></p> <p><i>Twenty Lessons</i> Chapter 2 – Barbosa, “Theories in Environmental Sociology”</p> <p>McClintock – “Why Farm the City?”</p> <p><b>Environment and the Media Presentation:</b> Group 5</p>
<b>Week 5</b>	<p><b>9/26</b></p> <p><i>Twenty Lessons</i> Ch. 9 – Bell, “Energy, Society, and the Environment”</p> <p>Finckel et al. – “The Shale Gas Boom and Need for Rational Policy”</p> <p>Fountain – “On Nuclear Waste, Finland Shows U.S. How It Can Be Done”</p> <p><b>Global Environmental Policy Presentation:</b> Group 2</p>	<p><b>9/28</b></p> <p><i>Twenty Lessons</i> Chapter 8 – Bates, “Population, Demography and the Environment”</p> <p>Ehrlich and Holdren – “Impact of Population Growth”</p> <p><b>Environment and the Media Presentation:</b> Group 6</p>

	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>10/3</b> Park and Pellow – <i>Slums of Aspen</i> selection Kingsolver – <i>Flight Behavior</i> selection <b>Global Environmental Policy</b> <b>Presentation:</b> Group 3	<b>10/5</b> <b>No class:</b> October Break
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>10/10</b> <i>Twenty Lessons</i> Chapter 14 – Youngman, “Understanding Disaster Vulnerability” Bergstrand and Mayer – “Transformative Environmental Threats” <b>Global Environmental Policy</b> <b>Presentation:</b> Group 4	<b>10/12</b> To review the scientific basis of climate change: IPCC – “Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report” Dunlap et al. – “Political Divide on Climate Change” <b>Environment and the Media</b> <b>Presentation:</b> Group 7
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>10/17</b> <i>Twenty Lessons</i> Chapter 19 – Tavakolian, “Indigenous Cultures” Norgaard – “Politics of Fire” <b>Global Environmental Policy</b> <b>Presentation:</b> Group 5	<b>10/19</b> <b>Midterm Exam in Class</b>
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>10/24</b> <i>Twenty Lessons</i> Chapter 6 – York, “The Science of Nature and the Nature of Science” <i>Twenty Lessons</i> Chapter 7 – Gould, “Technological Change and the Environment” <b>Global Environmental Policy</b> <b>Presentation:</b> Group 6	<b>10/26</b> Beck – <i>World Risk Society</i> Chapter 7 <b>Environment and the Media</b> <b>Presentation:</b> Group 8
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>10/31</b> Alarioa and Freudenburg – “Environmental Risks and Environmental Justice” <i>Twenty Lessons</i> Chapter 10 – Mascarenhas, “Environmental Inequality and Environmental Justice” <b>Global Environmental Policy</b> <b>Presentation:</b> Group 7	<b>11/2</b> <i>Twenty Lessons</i> Chapter 12 – Konefal and Hatanaka, “Producing/Consuming Food” Beardsworth and Keil – “The Making of the Modern Food System” <b>Environment and the Media:</b> Group 1

	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>11/7</b> Piontak and Schulman – “Food Insecurity in Rural America” Shove and Ward – “Inconspicuous Consumption” <b>Global Environmental Policy</b> <b>Presentation: Group 8</b>	<b>11/9</b> Perkins – “Women’s Pathways to Activism” <b>Environment and the Media</b> <b>Presentation: Group 2</b>
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>11/14</b> <i>Twenty Lessons</i> Chapter 16 – Brulle, “U.S. Environmental Movements” Sellers – “How Republicans Came to Embrace Anti-environmentalism” <b>Environment and the Media</b> <b>Presentation: Group 3</b>	<b>11/16</b> <b>Due: Theory Application</b> <i>Twenty Lessons</i> Chapter 15 – Norgaard, “Normalizing the Unthinkable” <b>Environment and the Media</b> <b>Presentation: Group 4</b>
Thanksgiving Break		
<b>Week 13</b>	<b>11/28</b> <i>Twenty Lessons</i> Chapter 11 – McCormick, “The Sociology of Environmental Health” MacKendrick – “Media Framing of Body Burdens”	<b>11/30</b> Silnot – “Year Zero for Climate Change” Szasz – <i>Shopping Our Way to Safety</i> (Selections)
<b>Week 14</b>	<b>12/5</b> In class multimedia presentations: multimedia project due when you present	<b>12/7</b> In class multimedia presentations: multimedia project due when you present
Final Paper Due Friday <b>December 8<sup>th</sup></b> at 2:30pm		