



*Course Information and Outline of Readings*

**A. Course Description**

This course is an introduction to the sociological study of the environment. In this course, students will learn about how the natural environment affects human interaction and development, while also considering how human societies impact the environment. The course will help students analyze current environmental issues from a critical, anti-racist, eco-feminist perspective, with a focus on achieving environmental justice. Students will also consider the relationship and tensions between capitalism and the environment.

**B. Background**

The goal of this course is to analyze the relationship between human society and the rest of the natural world, keeping in mind that human society is part of the natural world, and cannot exist separately from it. Beyond understanding the environmental issues that face human civilizations, the course seeks to provide students with the tools necessary to both discuss and to challenge them. Consequently, the course wraps up with a substantial treatment of the modern environmental justice movement, which seeks to eliminate environmental and resource inequities based on race, gender, class, or nationality, in North America and abroad.

The looming threat of planetary environmental collapse makes it imperative that students engage themselves in critical thinking and look at the relationship between humans and the environment in new ways. The course seeks to unravel the deeper roots of our environmental crisis as a necessary first step in the search for viable solutions.

**C. Methods of Evaluation**

1. Environmental Issues in the News Paper (25 percent)
2. Mid-Term Exam (25 percent)
3. Environmental Film Analysis (25 percent)
4. Final Exam (25 percent)

**Grading System:**

95 - 100	A+	4.00	Excellent. Superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.
85 - 94	A	4.00	
80 - 84	A-	3.70	
77 - 79	B+	3.30	Good. Clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.
73 - 76	B	3.00	
70 - 72	B-	2.70	
67 - 69	C+	2.30	Satisfactory. Basic understanding of subject matter.
63 - 66	C	2.00	
60 - 62	C-	1.70	
55 - 59	D+	1.30	Marginal performance. (Generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses.)
50 - 54	D	1.00	
0 - 49	F	0.00	Fail. Assigned to students: a) who do not meet the academic requirements of the course, or b) who cease to continue in the course, but do not withdraw as per Mount Royal University policy.

**D. Office Hours**

Office hours are by appointment. Please email me to make an appointment

## **E. Course Policies**

If you do not agree to the following conditions, you should not take this course:

- **Accommodation:** If you are a student with an Academic Accommodation Memo and Professor Acknowledgement form from Accessibility Services, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations in a private and confidential setting. Request to review and sign academic accommodation documents should not be made during or between classes. If you are a student experiencing a disability who may require academic accommodation and have not yet registered with Accessibility Services, please contact their office at [403 440 6868](tel:4034406868). You must be registered with Accessibility Services to access academic accommodations. If you require academic accommodations for a reason other than disability, please make an appointment with me to discuss or contact Diversity & Human Rights Services at [403 440 5956](tel:4034405956).
- **Attendance:** If you are aware of events that may preclude you from attending a *series* of class meetings, you must let me know as soon as reasonably possible. After the fact, you will not have the opportunity to make up missed work (with the exception of unforeseen injury or illness. **DO NOT** come to class if ill, particularly if contagious). If you have any problem with the course, including non-attendance, come to see me as soon as you can. Early on we can resolve the problem, but by late in the course it may be too late for me to be of help. I do not penalize nonattendance per se, but it will be impossible to obtain a high mark in the course if you are not consistently present.
- **Technology:** Refrain from using phones, ipads, and/or any other device during class. You may use your laptop in class (solely for course related purposes) provided it is not distracting to any other students and/or the instructor. This is a privilege, not a right; therefore, this rule can be changed at the discretion of the instructor.
- **E-mail:** You may e-mail questions or concerns to me, but be advised that I may take as long as one business day to respond. Accordingly, an e-mail sent on Friday may not be answered until Monday. Usually I will respond much sooner, but occasionally other commitments may keep me from responding immediately, so please leave at least one business day for a response. If questions require lengthy responses I will likely ask you to come to office hours to discuss the issue.
- **Student-Athletes:** MRU Student Athletes who miss missing a test because they are travelling for a competition must provide complete documentation (e.g., note from their coach) outlining the dates of travel and will then be allowed to schedule a time to make up the test. If a student athlete misses class the day a paper is due (with prior notice provided), the paper will be due at the start of the first class after the student returns from travel.
- **Honesty:** Students suspected of cheating on an examination or plagiarizing in an

assignment, in the instructor's opinion, will result in a report to the Office of Student Conduct. Students are expected to comply with all university regulations as outlined in the MRU Calendar and the MRU Student Code of Conduct. Students are expected to understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it (if you have any questions please see the supplementary materials/handouts available at the information desk in the library).

- **Turning in Assignments:** All papers should be turned in at the start of the class meeting at which they are due. E-mail attachments are not an acceptable medium for turning in work. Late work can be turned into the dropbox outside of room B349.
- **Late Work:** All assignments will lose 10 percentage points for each day they are late. This does not count weekends. So, 19/25 paper, due Thursday, will receive a mark 16.5/25 if turned in on Friday and a mark of 14/25 if turned in Monday (a deduction of 2.5 points per day).

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to see me at your convenience. I hope you enjoy the course and I wish you every success in your personal and academic pursuits.

## **F. Writing and Learning Services**

If you are interested in refining (or developing) your studying, note taking, or writing abilities, consider visiting Writing and Learning Services at EL 2100 or calling them at 403-440-6452. Their free hands-on assistance and group workshops could help you become a more efficient and effective student. They can be of assistance with study skills, textbook reading, exam taking, or a number of other student needs.

## **G. Your Mental Health**

Feeling stressed, anxious, sad, overwhelmed, alone, or sick and achy? Finding it hard to be motivated, meet deadlines or attend class? Having a hard time sleeping, concentrating or retaining information no matter how much you study? Help is available! See MRU's [Mental Health Website](#) for all resources.

## **H. Dating, Domestic and Sexual Violence**

You are encouraged to find general information on healthy relationships and dating, domestic and sexual violence as well as information on how these issues are addressed at Mount Royal University. See MRU's [Dating, Domestic and Sexual Violence Website](#).

## **I. Reading**

Available for purchase at bookstore:

Gould, Kenneth A. and Tammy L. Lewis (2014). *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

All other readings will be posted to blackboard.

## **G. Weekly Outline of Topics, Readings, and Due Dates**

### Week 1— Thinking Sociologically About the Environment

- September 11: No reading
- September 13: *20 Lessons*, Introduction & Chapter 1

### Week 2— Political Economy of the Environment

- September 18: *20 Lessons*, Chapter 3 & Chapter 4  
Film: “Blue Gold: World Water Wars”
- September 20: *20 Lessons*, Chapter 7  
Film, continued

### Week 3 -- Theories of Environmental Sociology

- September 25: *20 Lessons*, Chapter 2
- September 27: Ergas, Christina and Richard York (2012). “Women’s Status and Carbon Dioxide Emissions: A Quantitative Cross-National Analysis.” *Social Science Research*. 41: 965-976.

### Week 4— Climate Change – Denial, Mitigation, and Adaptation

- October 2: *20 Lessons*, Chapter 15
- October 4: **Environmental Issues in the News Paper Due**

[Reading Break – No Class October 9 or October 11]

Week 5— Risk and Disaster

- October 16:            *20 Lessons*, Chapter 14  
October 18:            No reading

Week 6 — The Sociology of Science and Technology

- October 23:            *20 Lessons*, Chapter 6  
October 25:            *20 Lessons*, Chapter 5

Week 7— Food, Water, and Agriculture

- October 30:            **Mid-Term Exam**  
November 1:            *20 Lessons*, Chapter 8

Week 8— Food, Water, and Agriculture

- November 6:            *20 Lessons*, Chapter 12  
November 8:            *20 Lessons*, Chapter 13

Soresnson, John. (2013). "Human Consequences of Animal Exploitation: Needs for Redefining Social Welfare." *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* 40(4): 7-32.

Week 9-- Energy

- November 13:            No Class – Remembrance Day  
November 15:            *20 Lessons*, Chapter 9

Week 10— Energy, Cont'd

November 20: Milnes, Travis and Timothy J. Haney. (2017). "There's Always Winners and Losers": Traditional Masculinity, Resource Dependence, and Post-Disaster Environmental Complacency." *Environmental Sociology* 3(3): 260-273.

November 22: No reading

Week 11— Environmental Justice

November 27: *20 Lessons*, Chapter 10 and Chapter 11

November 29: Davidson, Debra. (Forthcoming). "Evaluating the Effects of Living with Contamination from the Lens of Trauma: A Case Study of Fracking Development in Alberta, Canada." *Environmental Sociology* (Published Online First): 1-14.

Week 12 — Environmental Movements and Change

December 4: Grady-Benson, Jessica and Brinda Sarathy (2016). "Fossil Fuel Divestment in US Higher Education: Student-Led Organising for Climate Justice." *Local Environment* 21(6): 661-681.

**Environmental Film Analysis Due**

December 6: Bell, Shannon Elizabeth and Yvonne A. Braun. (2010). "Coal, Identity, and the Gendering of Environmental Justice Activism in Central Appalachia." *Gender & Society*. 24(6): 794-813.

Week 13— Environmental Movements and Social Change

December 11: No reading

**Final Exam** will occur during the regularly scheduled final exam period, between December 13 and December 23.