Sociology 6007: FOUNDATIONS IN ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY

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Department of Sociology, University of Colorado-Boulder  Fall Semester 2019
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I acknowledge that the University of Colorado Boulder sits upon land within the territories of the Ute, Cheyenne, and Arapaho peoples. I further acknowledge that 48 contemporary tribal nations are historically tied to the lands that make up the US state of Colorado. In this class, we will discuss ways to integrate this recognition into research, teaching, and service pertaining to the environment in order to create a more just academy and world.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
I have designed this course to introduce graduate students to the field of environmental sociology. We will spend of the semester getting acquainted with major areas of debate in environmental sociology, often through ‘classic’ journal articles and synthetic review articles, but also through innovative new areas of research and challenges to the canon. In the last few weeks of the semester, we will then build upon this foundation by reading and critically evaluating recent monographs.

Although I had sociology graduate students most in mind while designing this syllabus, the course will be useful for students in other graduate programs as well. As will become clear, environmental sociologists mingle with geographers, anthropologists, political scientists, ecologists, philosophers, and other scholars who inhabit the broad world of environmental studies. Throughout the semester, we will discuss environmental sociology’s inherent multidisciplinarity at the same time that we interrogate its relationships with (and grounding in) the discipline of sociology.

I have several goals in this course. First, students will learn the contours of environmental sociology in terms of topics, arguments, tensions, major scholars, classic publications, and new important work. Second, students will be asked to question widespread narratives about what constitutes “environmental sociology,” and to consider how such narratives can reproduce domination and silence other perspectives. Third, students will become familiar with the scholarship of some faculty at CU-Boulder. Fourth, through applying foundational theoretical perspectives to current events, students will practice situating current events within longstanding theoretical debates and evaluate the contemporary relevance of theories learned in class. Fifth, students will discuss the merits, protocol, and challenges of different types of publications (refereed journal articles, books, and policy or other outreach reports).

I should also note that I have focused the syllabus on many of the analytical frameworks that I have found to be most seminal and influential. However, it would be impossible to comprehensively survey this prolific field of work in one semester. Thus, with regret, I have had to leave out considerable work and numerous topics of debate.

Students should consider joining the Envirosoc and Envirograds listservs – both are sponsored by the American Sociological Association’s Environment and Technology Section. Find access to both of these listservs here: http://listserv.neu.edu/cgi-bin/wa?HOME
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- **Preparation and participation**: Because each week’s readings are responses to and developments of readings we will have covered in prior weeks, it is imperative that you attend every week and stay current with the reading assignments. Moreover, because this is a graduate reading seminar rather than a lecture-style course, you are expected to actively contribute to the discussions. I plan to lecture for a few minutes at the beginning and end of each class session, but otherwise you should expect the bulk of our time to be spent in discussion as a group. To facilitate your participation, bring with you to class the readings, your notes on them, and your discussion questions (see below).
  - Your regular, informed participation will count for 25% of your final grade.

- **Reading responses**: At least eight (8) times this semester, you are required to prepare and submit a reading response. My goals with this assignment are to compel you all to do all of the readings each week and to write up enough summary information so that you can recall the arguments and data later on when needed; I also want this to be flexible enough for you to write it in a way you find satisfying. Accordingly, in each reading response, you should summarize the key arguments and methodological approaches of that week’s readings, identify how persuasive you found the readings, draw connections among that week’s readings (How do these readings relate to each other?), draw connections between that week’s readings and previous week’s readings (How do these readings relate to other environmental sociological scholarship?), and conclude with a list of discussion questions that will help generate discussion and foster understanding and critical thinking amongst all of us about the readings (e.g., questions about the author’s argument, one or more key concepts they used, or how one article differs from another in regard to a particular theme). Your responses should be approximately 3-5 double-spaced pages, professionally composed, coherently organized, proofread, typed in 12-point font, and formatted with 1-inch margins and page numbers. Within your response, be sure to cite your sources using the following in-text citation format: (Smith 2007), or (Smith 2007: 1). You must submit each essay as a Word document (.doc or .docx) to the appropriate assignment folder on Canvas before class each week. Bring your discussion questions (along with your reading notes and copies of the readings) with you to class to help you participate in discussion.
  - These reading summaries will account for 40% of your final grade.
  - **Late policy**: I will only accept late reading summaries for documented cases of illness, injury, family emergency, etc.

- **Student-led activities**: At least once during the semester, you must prepare a short class activity that relates to course material. You could bring in outside materials that relate to a course concept (e.g., a news article, video clip, movie trailer, song, or a work of art) along with some discussion questions or prompts, do an interpretive dance, or direct us in some other activity. You all have wonderful classroom activity ideas that I won’t think of on my own, so this is your chance to spice up our class sessions, try out different teaching ideas, and apply course concepts to the broader world. At least one day before leading your activity, you must briefly discuss your ideas with me. Also, before leading your activity, you must submit to the assignment folder on Canvas a short (~1 page) summary of how you relate this activity to course theoretical concepts; this summary must be professionally composed, coherently organized, proofread, typed in 12-point font, and formatted with 1-inch margins and page numbers.
  - Your activity and summary will account for 5% of your final grade.

- **Final paper**: You are required to produce a final paper that meaningfully engages with one or more themes/topics from this course. You should design the assignment to be useful to your own needs (e.g., responses to one or more possible questions of an upcoming comprehensive exam; literature review for a dissertation proposal; article for publication; or thought piece). I expect that your paper will be 10-20 pages (double-spaced). Your paper must be proofread, coherently organized, and thoughtfully composed.
  - You must submit to me a one-page proposal for your final paper by 10/29 to the assignment folder on Canvas. You are welcome and encouraged to meet with me before this date to discuss your final
paper ideas, and you are welcome and encouraged to submit your final paper proposal before this date. Your proposal will count for 5% of your final grade. Your proposal must include 1-2 paragraphs describing your topic of interest and an initial bibliography.

- Your final paper is due by 5pm on December 18th to the assignment folder on Canvas. It will account for 25% of your final grade.
- Late policy for final paper: I will only accept a late final paper for documented cases of illness, injury, family emergency, etc.

In sum, your grade will be based on the following:

- Class participation: 25%
- Reading responses (at least 8): 40%
- Student-led activity: 5%
- Final paper proposal: 5%
- Final paper: 25%

The following grading rubric is endorsed by the Sociology Department for its graduate program, and it explains how final grades in graduate seminars should be interpreted:

- A: Consistently performs well above expectations for the course
- A-: Performs above expectations for the course
- B+: Meets expectations for the course
- B-: Occasionally performs below expectations for the course
- B-: Consistently performs below expectations for the course
- C range: Unsatisfactory work for a PhD student. Serious concerns regarding student progression toward degree.

If you have any questions or concerns, free to meet with me or email me!

REQUIRED READINGS
The following books are required; they can be purchased from the University Bookstore or borrowed from Norlin library:


All other readings will be available as downloadable material to websites through the “Content” link of this course’s Canvas website.
I recommend the following book (or an earlier edition of it) to students who have little prior experience with the debates covered in this course or who simply want an accessible, engaging overview of the concepts:


**UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

**Accommodation for Disabilities**
If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the Disability Services website. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see Temporary Medical Conditions under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

**Classroom Behavior**
Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on classroom behavior and the Student Code of Conduct.

**Honor Code**
All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu; 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the Honor Code Office website.

**Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation**
The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct intimate partner abuse (including dating or domestic violence), stalking, protected-class discrimination or harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information about the OIEC, university policies, anonymous reporting, and the campus resources can be found on the OIEC website. Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.
Religious Holidays
Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

OUTLINE OF READINGS

Week 1/ August 27: Course Organization

(Introductions, discuss syllabus)

Week 2/ September 3: Some Introductions to and Overviews of Environmental Sociology


Activity leader: ____________


Week 4/ September 17: Population Growth and the Environment

Activity leader: __________


Week 5/ September 24: Marxist Approaches in Environmental Sociology

Activity leader: __________


Gould, Kenneth A., David N. Pellow, and Allan Schnaiberg. 2004. “Interrogating the treadmill of production: Everything you wanted to know about the treadmill but were afraid to ask.” Organization and Environment 17(3): 296-316.


Week 6/ October 1: Ecological Modernization

Activity leader: __________


Week 7/ October 8: Neoliberalization of Environmental Governance

Activity leader: ____________


Week 8/ October 15: Environmental Inequality, Environmental Racism, and Environmental Justice

Activity leader: __Jill__________


**Week 9/ October 22: Critical Reflections and New Directions in Environmental Justice Studies**

Activity leader: ___________


Harrison, Jill Lindsey. 2017. “‘We do ecology, not sociology’: Interactions among bureaucrats and the undermining of regulatory agencies’ environmental justice efforts.” *Environmental Sociology* 3(3): 197-212.


**Week 10/ October 29: Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Environmental Movements**

Activity leader: ___________


Note: Final paper proposal due today

Week 11/ November 5: Elizabeth Hoover’s book The River Is in Us: Fighting Toxics in a Mohawk Community

Activity leader: ____________

Week 12/ November 12: Carolyn Finney’s book Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors

Activity leader: ____________

Week 13/ November 19: Robert Fletcher’s book Romancing the Wild: Cultural Dimensions of Ecotourism

Activity leader: ____________

[Week of November 25th: Thanksgiving break]

Week 14/ December 3: Norah Mackendrick’s book Better Safe Than Sorry: How Consumers Navigate Exposure to Everyday Toxics

Activity leader: ____________

Week 15/ December 10: David Pellow’s book Total Liberation!: The Power and Promise of Animal Rights and the Radical Earth Movement

Activity leader: ____________

December 18, 7pm: Final paper due to assignment folder on Canvas