

## Sociology 6007: FOUNDATIONS IN ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY

### Associate Professor Jill Harrison

Department of Sociology, University of Colorado-Boulder

Office: 248 Ketchum

jill.harrison@colorado.edu

Office hours: Tuesdays 9:00-10:30, and by appointment

Graduate Seminar

Fall Semester 2019

Tuesdays 3:00-5:30; KTCH 1B40

*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 multidisciplinary 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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:

Finney, Carolyn. 2014. *Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors*. University of North Carolina Press.

Fletcher, Robert. 2014. *Romancing the Wild: Cultural Dimensions of Ecotourism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Hoover, Elizabeth. 2017. *The River Is in Us: Fighting Toxics in a Mohawk Community*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Mackendrick, Norah. 2018. *Better Safe Than Sorry: How Consumers Navigate Exposure to Everyday Toxics*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Pellow, David. 2014. *Total Liberation!: The Power and Promise of Animal Rights and the Radical Earth Movement*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

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:

Bell, Michael, with Michael Carolan. 2016. *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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

Catton, William R., Jr., and Riley E. Dunlap. 1978. "Environmental sociology: A new paradigm." *American Sociologist* 13(1): 41-49.

Buttel, Frederick H. 2002. "Has environmental sociology arrived?" *Organization and Environment* 15(1): 42-54.

Mol, Arthur P.J. 2006. "From environmental sociologies to environmental sociology? A comparison of U.S. and European environmental sociology." *Organization and Environment* 19(1): 5-27.

Pellow, David N., and Hollie Nyseth Brehm. 2013. "An environmental sociology for the twenty-first century." *Annual Review of Sociology* 39: 229-250.

Lockie, Stewart. 2015. "What is environmental sociology?" *Environmental Sociology* 1(3): 139-142.

Scott, Lauren N., and Erik W. Johnson. 2017. "From fringe to core? The integration of environmental sociology." *Environmental Sociology* 3(1): 17-29.

### Week 3/ September 10: The Social Construction of Nature

Activity leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Bird, Elizabeth A.R. 1987. "The social construction of nature: Theoretical approaches to the history of environmental problems." *Environmental Review* 11(4): 255-264.

Proctor, James. 1998. "The social construction of nature: Relativist accusations, pragmatist and critical realist responses." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88: 352-376.

Merchant, Carolyn. 2003. "Shades of darkness: Race and environmental history." *Environmental History* 8(3): 380-394.

Freudenburg, William R., Scott Frickel, and Robert Gramling. 1995. "Beyond the nature/society divide: Learning to think about a mountain." *Sociological Forum* 10(3): 361-392.

Hannigan, John A. 2006. Selections from *Environmental Sociology: A Social Constructionist Perspective*. New York: Routledge.

#### **Week 4/ September 17: Population Growth and the Environment**

Activity leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Hardin, Garrett. 1968. "The tragedy of the commons." *Science* 162: 1243-1248.

Simon, Julian L. 1980. "Resources, population, environment: An oversupply of false bad news." *Science* 208(4451, June 27): 1431-1437.

Goldman, Michael. 1997. "'Customs in common': The epistemic world of the commons scholars." *Theory and Society* 26(1): 1-37.

Cafaro, Philip. 2012. "Climate ethics and population policy." *WIREs Climate Change* 3: 45-61.

Hunter, Lori M. 2008. "Population, health, and environment through a 'gendered' lens: When women are better off, so are populations." *World Watch* 21(5): 16-21.

Hunter, Lori M., and Aseem Prakash. 2019. "Hardin's oversimplification of population growth." *Nature Sustainability* 2: 78-79.

#### **Week 5/ September 24: Marxist Approaches in Environmental Sociology**

Activity leader: \_\_\_\_\_

O'Connor, James. 1991. "On the two contradictions of capitalism." *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 2: 107-109.

Foster, John Bellamy. 1992. "The absolute general law of environmental degradation under capitalism." *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 3: 77-82.

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.

Downey, Liam, and Susan Strife. 2010. "Inequality, democracy, and the environment." *Organization and Environment* 23(2): 155-188.

Bell, Shannon E., and Richard York. 2010. "Community economic identity: The coal industry and ideology construction in West Virginia." *Rural Sociology* 75: 111-143.

Foster, John Bellamy. 1999. "Marx's theory of metabolic rift: Classical foundations for environmental sociology." *American Journal of Sociology* 105(2): 366-405.

#### **Week 6/ October 1: Ecological Modernization**

Activity leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Spaargaren, Gert, and Arthur P. J. Mol. 1992. "Sociology, environment, and modernity: Ecological modernization as a theory of social change." *Society & Natural Resources* 5(4): 323-344.

Buttel, Frederick H. 2000. "Ecological modernization as social theory." *Geoforum* 31(1): 57-65.

Fisher, Dana, and William Freudenburg. 2001. "Ecological modernization and its critics: Assessing the past and looking toward the future." *Society and Natural Resources* 14: 701-709.

Jorgenson, Andrew K., and Brett Clark. 2012. "Are the economy and the environment decoupling? A comparative international study, 1960-2005." *American Journal of Sociology* 118: 1-44.

Rudel, Thomas K., J. Timmons Roberts, and JoAnn Carmin. 2011. "Political Economy of the Environment." *Annual Review of Sociology* 37: 221-238.

Asafu-Adjaye, John, et al. 2015. "An Ecomodernist Manifesto." [www.ecomodernism.org](http://www.ecomodernism.org)

Monbiot, George. 2015. "Meet the ecomodernists: Ignorant of history and paradoxically old-fashioned." *The Guardian*. September 24. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/georgemonbiot/2015/sep/24/meet-the-ecomodernists-ignorant-of-history-and-paradoxically-old-fashioned>

### **Week 7/ October 8: Neoliberalization of Environmental Governance**

Activity leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Harvey, David. 2005. Selections from *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Centeno, Miguel A., and Joseph N. Cohen. 2012. "The arc of neoliberalism." *Annual Review of Sociology* 38: 317-340.

Tierney, Kathleen. 2015. "Resilience and the neoliberal project: Discourses, critiques, practices – and Katrina." *American Behavioral Scientist* 59(10): 1327-1342.

Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. 2015. Selections from *Racial Formation in the United States*. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge.

Ayo, Nike. 2012. "Understanding health promotion in a neoliberal climate and the making of health conscious citizens." *Critical Public Health* 22(1): 99-105.

McCarthy, James. 2019. "Authoritarianism, Populism, and the Environment: Comparative Experiences, Insights, and Perspectives." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 109(2): 301-313.

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

Activity leader: \_\_Jill\_\_\_\_\_

Mohai, Paul, David Pellow, and J. Timmons Roberts. 2009. "Environmental justice." *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 34: 405-430.

Taylor, Dorceta. 2011. "Introduction: The evolution of environmental justice activism, research, and scholarship." *Environmental Practice* 13(4): 280-301.

Di Chiro, Giovanna. 1998. "Environmental justice from the grassroots: Reflections on history, gender, and expertise." In *The Struggle for Ecological Democracy: Environmental Justice Movements in the United States*, edited by Daniel Faber, 104-136. New York: Guilford Press.

Pellow, David N. 2000. "Environmental inequality formation: Toward a theory of environmental injustice." *American Behavioral Scientist* 43(4): 581-601.

Brown, Phil. 2000. "Popular epidemiology and toxic waste contamination: Lay and professional ways of knowing." In *Illness and the Environment: A Reader in Contested Medicine*, ed. Steve Kroll-Smith, Phil Brown, and Valerie J. Gunter. New York: New York University Press.

Agyeman, Julian, Robert D. Bullard, and Bob Evans, eds. 2003. Selection from "Joined-up thinking: Bringing together sustainability, environmental justice and equity." In J. Agyeman, R. D. Bullard, and B. Evans, eds., *Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World*, pp. 1-12. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Gould, Kenneth A., and Tammy L. Lewis. 2017. Chapters 1 and 2 from *Green Gentrification: Urban Sustainability and the Struggle for Environmental Justice*. Routledge.

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

Activity leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Pulido, Laura. 2000. "Rethinking environmental racism: White privilege and urban development in southern California." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90(1): 12-40.

Pulido, Laura. 2016. "Flint, environmental racism, and racial capitalism." *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 27(3): 1-16.

Pellow, David Naguib. 2018. "Critical environmental justice studies." Pp. 1-33 in *What is Critical Environmental Justice?* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

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.

Lubitow, Amy, and Thaddeus R. Miller. 2013. "Contesting sustainability: Bikes, race, and politics in Portlandia." *Environmental Justice* 6(4): 121-126.

Malin, Stephanie A., and Stacia S. Ryder. 2018. "Developing deeply intersectional environmental justice scholarship." *Environmental Sociology* 4(1): 1-7.

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

Activity leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Holleman, Hannah. 2017. "De-naturalizing ecological disaster: colonialism, racism and the global Dust Bowl of the 1930s." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 44(1): 234-260.

Bacon, J.M. 2019. "Settler colonialism as eco-social structure and the production of colonial ecological violence." *Environmental Sociology* 5(1): 59-69.



Norgaard, Kari Marie, Ron Reed, and J.M. Bacon. 2018. "How environmental decline restructures indigenous gender practices: What happens to Karuk masculinity when there are no fish?" *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 4(1): 98-113.

Cantzler, Julia Miller, and Megan Huynh. 2017. "Native American environmental justice as decolonization." *American Behavioral Scientist* 60(2): 203-223.

Whyte, Kyle Powys. 2017. "The Dakota Access Pipeline, environmental injustice, and U.S. colonialism." *Red Ink* 19(1): 154-169.

*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**