

ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY
Sociology 376
Birmingham-Southern College
Spring 2015

Instructor: William Holt, Ph.D./J.D.
Course: Tuesdays/Thursdays
Time: 2:00 PM - 3:20 PM
Location: Harbert 204
E-Mail: wholt@bsc.edu

Office: Harbert 203C
Telephone: (205) 226-4834
Office Hours: Mondays/
Wednesdays, 9 AM-11AM;
or by appointment

Course Description

In this course we will explore the environment and environmentalism from a sociological standpoint. We focus on how socially created claims about the environment compete for attention and address social conflicts. We begin by examining how humans impact the environment including industrialization, urbanism, and the rise of material culture. Then, we explore the emergence of the environmental movement from early 19th century naturalists through the development of the National Parks System and into the present day. We include a module on social protests looking at the role of music and culture in environmental movements. Next, we turn our attention to environmental ethics focusing on debates over biogenetics, genetically modified foods, pesticides and animal rights.

We discuss social justice issues including race and class as well as eco-feminism. As part of a cross-departmental project funded through US EPA and ACS Mellon grants, we will be conducting a community study. In 2012, the US EPA declared four neighborhoods within Jones Valley as the North Birmingham Collaboration Project creating a Superfund site with a community redevelopment component combining a tradition remediation with an environmental justice program. You will obtain experience conducting video interviews with residents. In cooperation with the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, these videos will become part of their archives on environmental issues in the region.

The second part of this class starts by examining environmental policies and how they are applied. We conclude the term by focusing on specific topics related to environmental issues including globalization, climate change, sustainable development, transportation, energy, and food supplies including agriculture. It is hoped that by the end of the semester you see environmental concerns in new ways. This course serves as an elective class for UES.

Course Catalog

Examines environmental issues from a sociological perspective. Emphasis is placed on human causes of environmental change such as science and technology, the government and the economy, population and consumption, and

religion and culture; social and environmental consequences of the relationships between humans and the environment. Prerequisite: SO 101 or 102, or UES 150.

Learning Outcomes:

- 1) Conceptualize and frame environmental issues from the perspective of sociology.
- 2) Think critically about contemporary environmental issues and challenges.
- 3) Collect, analyze and interpret data.
- 4) Recognize and appreciate human difference on the basis of social class, race/ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, and the skills to apply their understanding in diverse social contexts related to environmental issues.

Required Books/Other Course Materials

The following texts are required for this course:

American Sociological Association (ASA). 2010. *ASA Style Guide*. 4th ed. Washington, D.C.: ASA.

Mann, Charles C. 2011. *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created*. New York: Vintage.

These texts are available in the BSC Bookstore. Other materials indicated by an * on the syllabus is available electronically on Moodle.

Assignments

Your grade involves class participation (10%), two in class exams (20% apiece), community studies reports (40%), and class presentation (10%). Your participation grade includes class attendance as well as involvement in discussions. There will be two in class exams based on lectures and course readings. You will be responsible for a summary report of your video interviews with the North Birmingham Community Study.

Deadlines

Thursday, March 5	Exam One
Tuesday, April 28	Community Reports
Tuesday, May 5	Class Presentation
Wednesday, May 13	Exam Two

Grading and Evaluations

Grading

You will receive a numerical score for each grade. The course will use the BSC grading scale (listed below) for all assignments and your term grade.

BSC Grading Scale

A	100-93	C	76-73
A-	92-90	C-	72-70
B+	89-87	D+	69-67
B	86-83	D	66-60
B-	82-80	F	59 & below
C+	79-77		

Your final grade in this course will be arrived at on the basis of an average of your grades for the required components of the course, weighted, as spelled out below. Each assignment and activity will first be scored from 0 to 100 points. Required work not submitted will be scored as 0. Then your score for each component will be multiplied by a weighting factor to yield the points for that component. The total points will be your average for the course.

<u>% of Final Average</u>	<u>Component</u>	<u>Grade 0-100 pts.</u>	<u>Weighted Factor</u>	<u>Points</u>
20%	Exam One	_____	.20	_____
20%	Exam Two	_____	.20	_____
40%	Community Report	_____	.40	_____
10%	Class Presentation	_____	.10	_____
10%	Participation	_____	.10	_____
100%	FINAL AVERAGE=TOTAL WEIGHTED POINTS			_____

Class Participation

Class participation and interaction with instructors and students is one of the hallmarks of liberal arts education. This particular class is no different. Some of the concepts we will explore may be difficult to grasp at first; if every member of the class contributes and asks questions from a variety of perspectives, our learning experience will be enhanced. To participate actively means that you are engaging in readings, which will help you prepare for tests and exams.

Expectations for class participation:

- You should strive to contribute at least once in each class period.
- Participation will be judged on the quality and depth of your contribution and not just on how often you speak.

- When interactive activities are scheduled, make sure to prepare adequately so that you are able to participate in a well-informed manner.

**If you are uncomfortable speaking in class, would like me to call on you, or would like to discuss how you can contribute more effectively please contact me so we can discuss this as soon in the semester as possible.

Attendance

Class attendance is expected as part of your enrollment in this course. An attendance list will be distributed at each class. It is your responsibility to sign this list each class. This list will serve as your official attendance record for class. Students who are absent three days in succession will be reported to Student Affairs. Absences due to illness, family emergency or participation in a BSC-sponsored activity are considered excused but will require documentation. If you miss an in-class exam, you should expect to make up this work within a week of the class date.

Exams

The class includes two exams each counting 20% of your term grade. The in-class exams allow you to demonstrate your knowledge of class readings, lectures, and other materials. You will receive exam review sheets a week prior to each exam. It is your responsibility to utilize these study guides. During the class prior to each exam you will have a review period in which we will discuss any questions you have from these guides.

North Birmingham Community Study

Students will work in teams of three conducting six interviews per team. For your community study report, each student will be responsible for summarizing two interviews. The teams will develop a class presentation based on your research project. The presentation counts 10%.

OTHER IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE COURSE

Backup

To avoid problems that arise when computers crash, laptops are broken or stolen, or pets consume the only existing paper copy of your assignment, obtain a flash or external hard drive on which to back up your work. I would suggest that you have 10 GB or more of storage space on your flash/hard drive, and that you consider obtaining more than one so that you can make multiple copies of your work.

Moodle

It is vital for you to familiarize yourself with Moodle for this course as soon as possible. We will use Moodle throughout the semester for posting readings and announcements. Moodle is accessible via a link at the bottom of the BSC homepage <http://www.bsc.edu>.

Late Assignments

Assignments that are not accompanied by a valid excuse (e.g. illness or family emergency) will lose 10% of their graded value for each day they are late. For example, an assignment that received a 98 out of 100 points, but was turned in one day late would be graded as an 88 losing ten points for lateness.

Plagiarism and Cheating

Plagiarism and Cheating are serious offenses and will be reported to the honor council. Appropriate penalties will be assigned for work that does not meet the standards of academic integrity. Please refer to your copy of the honor code as well as the following sources on plagiarism: <http://plagiarism.org/index.html> and <http://www.turnitin.com>

Disability Policy

If you have a learning disability or challenge, or require an academic accommodation, please make arrangements to discuss this with me as soon as possible.

Course Outline

Conceptualizing Environmental Sociology

- February 3 Introduction
February 5 Mann, Charles C. 2011. *1493: Uncovering the New World*
February 10 *Columbus Created*. New York: Vintage.

Industrialization and Urbanization

- February 12 Sassen, Sakia. 1991. *The Global City: New York, London, and Tokyo*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pp. 245-319.*

Rise of the Leisure Class and Material Consumption

- February 17 Bird-David, Nurit, *et al.* 1992. "Beyond 'The Original Affluent Society': A Culturalist Reformulation." *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Feb., 1992). Pp. 25-47*
Veblen, Thorstein. [1899] 2012. *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.*

Environmental Social Movements

- February 19 Carson, Rachel. 1962. *Silent Spring*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Pp. 1-37, 103-127, and 277-297.*
February 24 Leopold, Aldo. 1966. *A Sand County Almanac*. New York: Oxford University Press. 3-92.*
February 26 Burns, Ken 2009. *National Parks: America's Best Idea*. Alexandria, VA: PBS Home Video.

Social Protests

- March 3 See Moodle for downloaded songs

March 5 **EXAM ONE-in class**

Environmental Ethics

- March 10 Ho, Maw-Wan. 1997. "The Unholy Alliance". *The Ecologist*, Vol. 27, No 4, July/August 1997.*
- Rauch, Jonathan. 2003. "Can Frankenfood Save the Planet?". *Atlantic Monthly*. October 2003. Pp. 102-108*
- Ray, Dixy Lee and Louis Guzzo. "The Blessings of Pesticides". In Louis P. and Paul Pojman. 2008. *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Higher Education. Pp. 562-567*

Social Justice

- March 12 Commission for Racial Justice. 1997. *Toxic Waste and Race in the United States: A National Report on the Racial and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Communities with Hazardous Waste Sites*. New York: United Church of Christ.*

March 17 **SPRING BREAK-no classes**
March 19

- March 24 Marcuse, Peter. 2006. "Rebuilding a Tortured Past or Creating a Model Future: The Limits and Potential of Planning in New Orleans." Pp. 271-290 in Chester Hartman and Gregory Squires, eds. 2006. *No Such Thing as a Natural Disaster: Race, Class and Hurricane Katrina*. New York: Routledge.*
- Pellow, David and Robert Brulle, eds. 2005. *Power, Justice and the Environment*. Cambridge: MIT Press.*
- Warren, Karen. 2008. "The Power and the Promise of Ecological Feminism." In Louis P. and Paul Pojman. 2008. *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Higher Education. Pp. 33-48.*

Climate Change

- March 31 McCright, Aaron, and Riley Dunlap. 2000. "Challenging Global
April 2 Warming as a Social Problem: An Analysis of the Conservative Movement's Counter-Claims." *Social Problems* 47(4): 499-522.*
- Scott, Daniel, C. Michael Hall, and Stefan Gossling. 2012. *Tourism and Climate Change*. New York: Routledge. Pp. 298-346.*
- An Inconvenient Truth*-movie in class.

April 7 North Birmingham Community Study-Field research
April 9

Sustainable to Resilient Development

- April 14 Todd, Nancy. 2005. *A Safe and Sustainable World: The Promise of Ecological Design*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.*
April 16 Yudelson, Jerry. 2008. *The Green Building Revolution*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press. Pp. 67-93*

Transportation

- April 21 Dennis, Kingsley and John Urry. 2009. *After the Car*. Malden, MA: Polity.*

Energy

- April 23 Roberts, Paul. 2004. *The End of Oil*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Pp. 141-233*

Food Systems

- April 28 Hansen, Henning Otte. 2013. *Food Economics: Industry and Market*. New York: Routledge, 234-271.*

Community Report-due in class

- April 30 Honors Day-classes do not meet

- May 5 **Community Report Presentations**

- May 13 **Exam Two-1-4pm.**