

**SOC 865: Environmental Sociology**

Fall 2015

5:00-7:50 Tuesdays

119A Berkey Hall

Instructor: Dr. Aaron M. McCright  
E-184 Holmes Hall; 401A Berkey Hall

Office Hours: by appointment  
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Course Objectives: Students in this graduate seminar will develop a solid understanding of the major theories, conceptual issues, and methodologies from the foundations to the frontier of environmental sociology. This course will cover the following topics: epistemological foundations; realism; political-economic perspectives; environmental inequality; human drivers of environmental impacts; environmental attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors; climate change politicization and denial; climate change views; environmental movements; and environmental governance and reform. Students will work on a semester-long scholarly paper that may relate to their thesis/dissertation work and/or be suitable for independent submission to a peer-reviewed scholarly journal.

Required Materials: All required course readings and handouts are PDF files available electronically on our D2L website.

<u>Course Requirements:</u>	<b><u>Graded Components</u></b>	<b><u>Points</u></b>
	Discussion Leader for Four Readings (25 points each)	100
	Critical Review Essays of Four Readings (40 points each)	160
	Class Participation	40
	Scholarly Paper Presentation	50
	<u>Scholarly Paper</u>	<u>150</u>
	Total	500

<u>Grading Scale:</u>	<b><u>Number Grade</u></b>	<b><u>Percentile</u></b>	<b><u>Point Total</u></b>
	4.0	92.5-100	463-500
	3.5	87.5-92.4	438-462
	3.0	82.5-87.4	413-437
	2.5	77.5-82.4	388-412
	2.0	72.5-77.4	363-387
	1.5	67.5-72.4	338-362
	1.0	62.5-67.4	313-337
	0.0	<62.5	<313

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities should contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities to establish reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a disability specialist, call 353-9642 (voice), 355-1293 (TTY), or visit MyProfile.rcpd.msu.edu.

“If a nation wishes to be ignorant and free, it wishes for what never was and what never will be.”  
--Thomas Jefferson in a personal letter to Colonel Charles Yancey  
of Albemarle County, VA (dated January 6, 1816)

## **Guidelines and Expectations for Leading Discussion**

On four occasions, you and a colleague will collaborate to lead class discussion for approximately forty minutes on a selected reading. This page provides you with suggestions for effectively leading discussion on your reading and identifies those criteria according to which you will be evaluated. Prior to leading discussion in class, you should inform me (in person or by e-mail) about what you plan to do. This will give you a chance to clear up any confusion or ask any questions you may have about the reading, and it will let me keep you focused on the more salient/important aspects of the reading.

### Suggestions for Effective Discussion Leading

#1 suggestion: BE CREATIVE! (This is your course, so take ownership of it!)  
 be enthusiastic, energetic, and engaging and have a positive attitude  
 lead your classmates in a discussion of the reading's main points  
 briefly offer a critical analysis of the author's argument and ask the class to respond  
     (e.g., evaluate the logic, organization, clarity, strength, and effectiveness of the author's argument)  
 help your classmates critically evaluate the author's writing quality and effectiveness  
 create and ask discussion questions stemming directly from the reading  
 create and ask discussion questions that relate the reading to prior readings  
     (e.g., you may especially want to address recurring themes in the course)  
 create and ask discussion questions that relate the reading to current events  
 or, better yet, help your classmates create such questions and guide them in discussing them  
 utilize audio/visual aids to facilitate discussion and enhance your classmates' participation  
     (e.g., PowerPoint slide shows, chalkboard drawings, musical selections, video selections)  
 utilize handouts to convey important information or to stimulate class discussion  
 plan simulations or activities to facilitate class participation

<u>Evaluation Criteria</u>	<u>Points Possible</u>
1. <b>discussion of the substantive content of the reading</b> identification of main points; breadth and depth of analysis	8
2. <b>overall organization of class discussion</b> efficient organization of topics, questions, and activities; time management	6
3. <b>ingenuity</b> effective use of audio/visual aids; creation of informative handouts use of innovative simulations and group activities	4
4. <b>engagement with classmates</b> maintenance of a reasonable level of productive engagement with classmates	4
5. <b>attitude</b> ample display of enthusiasm and energy	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>

### A Few Words of Advice

Job titles matter. Class discussion leaders are expected to lead class discussion. Your goal as a class discussion leader should be to talk less and engage your classmates to talk more. For instance, rather than tell your classmates what the reading is about (not good), you can ask them questions so they can tell you what the reading is about (better), or you can design an activity through which they ask and answer their own astute questions about the reading (mo' better). Keep in mind that the word "presentation" does not appear above, and that is no coincidence.

## Schedule of Class Discussion Leaders

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Discussion Leader</u>
September 15	Greider and Garkovich 1994 Murphy 2002 Rosa 1998	Jeny Sam Sm. Mark
September 22	Freudenburg, Wilson, and O'Leary 1998 Grant, Jones, and Bergesen 2002 Hooks and Smith 2004	Stephen, Kathryn Ran, Fitz Matt
September 29	O'Connor 1994 Gould, Pellow, and Schnaiberg 2004 Bunker 2005	Sara, Joan Sam St., Ashley Perry, Tony
October 6	Downey 2005 Grant, Trautner, Downey, and Thiebaud 2010 Mohai, Pellow, and Roberts 2009	Stephen, Kathryn Fitz Jeny
October 13	Rudel and Roper 1997 Shandra, Leckband, and London 2009 York, Rosa, and Dietz 2003	Sam Sm., Ran Matt, Sara Mark
October 20	Clark and York 2005 Jorgenson 2012 Rosa and Dietz 2012	Joan, Ashley Perry Sam, Tony
October 27	Xiao and McCright 2012 Clements, Xiao, and McCright 2014 McCright, Xiao, and Dunlap 2014	Sam Sm., Sara Mark Stephen
November 3	Gelissen 2007 Marquart-Pyatt 2012 Nawrotzki 2012	Ran Jeny, Kathryn Fitz, Perry
November 10	McCright and Dunlap 2010 Brulle 2014 Dunlap and McCright 2015	Matt, Ashley Tony, Joan Sam St.
November 17	Goebbert et al. 2012 Hamilton and Stampone 2013 Marquart-Pyatt et al. 2014	Sara, Fitz Sam Sm., Ran Stephen
November 24	McLaughlin and Khawaja 2000 Johnson 2006 Longhofer and Schofer 2010	Mark, Kathryn Ashley Tony, Sam St.
December 1	Buttel 2003 Schofer and Hironaka 2050 Roberts, Parks, and Vasquez 2004	Joan Jeny Perry, Matt

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Ashley Stoltenberg	stolten2@msu.edu	Mark Suchyta	suchytam@msu.edu
Sara Torres	torress9@msu.edu	Anthony (Tony) Vanwitsen	vanwitse@msu.edu
Stephen Vrla	svrla@msu.edu	Qiong (Joan) Zhang	zhangqio@msu.edu

## Guidelines for Critical Review Essays

Over the course of this semester, you will lead discussion on four different readings. If you lead discussion with a colleague, you will be individually responsible for writing a review essay of your reading of **approximately three to four double-spaced pages** in length. Your essay should be typed in **size 12 Times New Roman font** with **1-inch margins** all around. Be sure to put **page numbers** on each page, and put the **full citation** of the reading at the top of the first page.

Your review essay is due by Noon on the Friday after the Tuesday class in which you lead discussion. Sound confusing? Think of it like this. If you lead discussion on a reading on Tuesday, then you have until Friday at Noon to e-mail me your critical review essay as a Word file. I will then post your critical review essay on our D2L website for everyone to access for future reference.

Your critical review essay should contain the following information.

### 1. describe the main contribution(s) of the article

- A. identify the literature(s) the authors address and discuss how they situate themselves in this literature
- B. explain the primary theoretical or conceptual issue or research question the author examines

### 2. summarize the main points of the reading

- A. briefly identify the key claims, arguments, methods, results, and/or implications
- B. the key word in A is “key”; don’t try to summarize everything

### 3. critically assess how well the authors accomplished what they set out to do

- A. identify what the authors do well (what are the strengths of the article?)
- B. identify what the authors do poorly (what are the weaknesses of the article?)
- C. here are some words of wisdom

- 1. graduate students (novices who are still being socialized into the cultures of the sciences) often commit the faux pas of unfairly criticizing studies for not being perfect
- 2. no study is perfect; all have some limitation(s); for example, when writing up any specific article, scientists face many constraints that influence their decisions: journal policies on style, formatting, word counts, the display of tables and figures; pressure to make revisions to satisfy reviewers and editors; compromises between co-authors; and all of the financial, organizational, temporal, personnel, etc. constraints that influenced the design, data collection, and analysis of data from the study to begin with
- 3. but, despite these limitations, many studies still have much value; we’re aiming to evaluate the extent and limitations of this value in a reasonable manner
- 4. critically reviewing others’ work in a fair, meaningful, and supportive manner demands skills (e.g., communication and tact) you must cultivate and strengthen via much practice over time
- 5. this assignment will help you do this in a deliberate way

### 4. science is an ongoing conversation with a community of scholars, so end by posing some insightful questions you would ask the authors if you had a chance

You will be graded on the depth (10 points), thoroughness (10 points), clarity (10 points), and writing quality (10 points) of your critical review essay. Achieve as much depth, precision, clarity, etc. as you can, since your critical review essay will become a resource that your classmates may use later—especially if they take comps in the area.

## Scholarly Paper

Over the course of the semester, you will work on an environmental sociology scholarly project of your choosing. You should address a theoretical/conceptual quandary or an empirical puzzle. You must submit a **brief (1-2 paragraph) typed proposal by October 13**. You may submit your proposal to me prior to this date, and I urge you to do so. In your proposal, you should tell me what topic you have chosen and why you are interested in it. I will read your proposal and give you feedback. After that, we will negotiate a feasible paper project. The result of this project should be: (a) a polished draft of a manuscript that you may present at a conference; (b) a polished draft of a manuscript you may eventually submit for publication in a journal; or (c) a polished draft of a proposal for your thesis or dissertation research.

Each of you will make a **formal presentation** to the class about your scholarly project. Later in the semester, we will decide who presents on December 8th and who presents on December 16th. Your presentation should last between 10-12 minutes to allow some time for audience feedback. Thus, you should practice your presentation several times before you actually do it in class to make sure you are on time. You will be graded on the following characteristics: enthusiasm (16 points); clarity (16 points); and organization (18 points). In other words, you will be expected to present a clear and well-organized talk in an enthusiastic manner that engages the audience.

**The final draft of your scholarly paper is due by 5:00 PM on December 17.** Please submit it as a PDF file to mccright@msu.edu. You should aim for a final draft between 6,000-8,000 words (including main text, end/footnotes, and references). Your paper should be **typed in size 11 Times New Roman font**. The body should be **double-spaced** with **1-inch margins** all around. Be sure to put **page numbers** on each page. You will need a **title page** with the title of your paper, your name, the class name, section, date, and my name on it. You should refer to the class "Style Guide" for all in-text citations and references.

You will be graded on your substantive content (115 points) and writing quality (35 points).

1. substantive content
  - A. clarity/precision (23 points)
  - B. logical structure (23 points)
  - C. depth (23 points)
  - D. engagement with the literature (23 points)
  - E. overall organization (23 points)
2. writing quality
  - A. spelling, grammar, and punctuation (7 points)
  - B. sentence structure (9 points)
  - C. paragraph structure/organization (7 points)
  - D. transitions between paragraphs (5 points)
  - E. proper citation of others' work (7 points)

## Schedule of Events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Description of Reading/Writing Assignment</u>
<b>September 8</b>	<p><b>Introduction; Course Organization; General Overview of Environmental Sociology</b>            Dunlap, Riley E., and Eugene A. Rosa. 2000. "Environmental Sociology." Pp. 800-813 in <i>Encyclopedia of Sociology</i>, edited by Edgar F. Borgatta and Rhonda Montgomery. Second Edition. Volume Two. New York: Macmillan Reference.</p> <p>Mol, Arthur P. J. 2006. "From Environmental Sociologies to Environmental Sociology: A Comparison of U.S. and European Environmental Sociology." <i>Organization &amp; Environment</i> 19:5-27.</p> <p>Pellow, David N., and Hollie Nyseth Brehm. 2013. "An Environmental Sociology for the Twenty-First Century." <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i> 39:229-250.</p>
<b>September 15</b>	<p><b>Epistemological Foundations</b>            Greider, Thomas, and Lorraine Garkovich. 1994. "Landscapes: The Social Construction of Nature and the Environment." <i>Rural Sociology</i> 59:1-24.</p> <p>Murphy, Raymond. 2002. "The Internalization of Autonomous Nature into Society." <i>The Sociological Review</i> 50:313-333.</p> <p>Rosa, Eugene A. 1998. "Metatheoretical Foundations of Post-Normal Risk." <i>Journal of Risk Research</i> 1:15-44.</p>
<b>September 22</b>	<p><b>Realism in Environmental Sociology</b>            Freudenburg, William R., Lisa J. Wilson, and Daniel J. O'Leary. 1998. "Forty Years of Spotted Owls? A Longitudinal Analysis of Logging Industry Job Losses." <i>Sociological Perspectives</i> 41:1-26.</p> <p>Grant II, Don Sherman, Andrew W. Jones, and Albert J. Bergesen. 2002. "Organizational Size and Pollution: The Case of the U. S. Chemical Industry." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 67:389-407.</p> <p>Hooks, Gregory, and Chad L. Smith. 2004. "The Treadmill of Destruction: National Sacrifice Areas and Native Americans." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 69:558-576.</p>
<b>September 29</b>	<p><b>Political-Economic Perspectives on Human-Environment Interaction</b>            O'Connor, James. 1994. "Is Sustainable Capitalism Possible?" Pp. 152-175 in <i>Is Capitalism Sustainable: Political Economy and the Politics of Ecology</i>, edited by Martin O'Connor. New York: Guilford Press.</p> <p>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." <i>Organization and Environment</i> 17:296-316.</p> <p>Bunker, Stephen G. 2005. "How Ecologically Uneven Development Put the Spin on the Treadmill of Production." <i>Organization &amp; Environment</i> 18:38-54.</p>
<b>October 6</b>	<p><b>Environmental Inequality in the USA</b>            Downey, Liam. 2005. "The Unintended Significance of Race: Environmental Racial Inequality in Detroit." <i>Social Forces</i> 83:971-1007.</p> <p>Grant, Don, Mary Nell Trautner, Liam Downey, and Lisa Thiebaud. 2010. "Bringing the Polluters Back In: Environmental Inequality and the Organization of Chemical Production." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 75: 479-504.</p> <p>Mohai, Paul, David Pellow, and J. Timmons Roberts. 2009. "Environmental Justice." <i>Annual Review of Environment and Resources</i> 34:405-430.</p>

<u>Date</u>	<u>Description of Reading/Writing Assignment</u>
<b>October 13</b>	<p><b>Human Drivers of Environmental Impacts</b></p> <p>Rudel, Thomas K., and Jill Roper. 1997. "The Paths to Rain Forest Destruction: Cross-national Patterns of Tropical Deforestation, 1975-90." <i>World Development</i> 25:53-65.</p> <p>Shandra, John M., Christopher Leckband, and Bruce London. 2009. "Ecologically Unequal Exchange and Deforestation: A Cross-National Analysis of Forestry Export Flows." <i>Organization &amp; Environment</i> 22:293-310.</p> <p>York, Richard, Eugene A. Rosa, and Thomas Dietz. 2003. "Footprints on the Earth: The Environmental Consequences of Modernity." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 68:279-300.</p> <p><b>Scholarly Paper Proposal Due</b></p>
<b>October 20</b>	<p><b>Human Drivers of Climate Change</b></p> <p>Clark, Brett, and Richard York. 2005. "Carbon Metabolism: Global Capitalism, Climate Change, and the Biospheric Rift." <i>Theory and Society</i> 34:391-428.</p> <p>Jorgenson, Andrew K. 2012. "The Sociology of Ecologically Unequal Exchange and Carbon Dioxide Emissions, 1960-2005." <i>Social Science Research</i> 41:242-252.</p> <p>Rosa, Eugene A., and Thomas Dietz. 2012. "Human Drivers of National Greenhouse-Gas Emissions." <i>Nature Climate Change</i> 2:581-586.</p>
<b>October 27</b>	<p><b>Environmental Attitudes, Values, Beliefs, and Behaviors in the USA</b></p> <p>Xiao, Chenyang, and Aaron M. McCright. 2012. "Explaining Gender Differences in Concern about Environmental Problems in the United States." <i>Society and Natural Resources</i> 25:1067-1084.</p> <p>Clements, John M., Chenyang Xiao, and Aaron M. McCright. 2014. "An Examination of the 'Greening of Christianity' Thesis among Americans, 1993-2010." <i>Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion</i> 53:373-391.</p> <p>McCright, Aaron M., Chenyang Xiao, and Riley E. Dunlap. 2014. "Political Polarization on Support for Government Spending on Environmental Protection in the USA, 1974-2012." <i>Social Science Research</i> 48:251-260.</p>
<b>November 3</b>	<p><b>Environmental Attitudes, Values, Beliefs, and Behaviors in Cross-National Analyses</b></p> <p>Gelissen, John. 2007. "Explaining Popular Support for Environmental Protection: A Multilevel Analysis of 50 Nations." <i>Environment and Behavior</i> 39:392-415.</p> <p>Marquart-Pyatt, Sandra T. 2012. "Contextual Influences on Environmental Concern Cross-Nationally: A Multilevel Investigation." <i>Social Science Research</i> 41:1085-1099.</p> <p>Nawrotzki, Raphael J. 2012. "The Politics of Environmental Concern: A Cross-National Analysis." <i>Organization &amp; Environment</i> 25:286-307.</p>

<u>Date</u>	<u>Description of Reading/Writing Assignment</u>
<b>November 10</b>	<b>Climate Change Politicization and Denial</b> McCright, Aaron M., and Riley E. Dunlap. 2010. "Anti-Reflexivity: The American Conservative Movement's Success in Undermining Climate Science and Policy." <i>Theory, Culture, and Society</i> 27(2-3):100-133. Brulle, Robert J. 2014. "Institutionalizing Inaction: Foundation Founding and the Creation of U.S. Climate Change Counter-movement Organizations." <i>Climatic Change</i> 122:681-694. Dunlap, Riley E., and Aaron M. McCright. 2015. "Challenging Climate Change: The Denial Countermovement." Pp. 300-332 in <i>Climate Change and Society: Sociological Perspectives</i> , edited by Riley E. Dunlap and Robert J. Brulle. New York: Oxford University Press.
<b>November 17</b>	<b>Climate Change Views</b> Goebbert, Kevin, Hank C. Jenkins-Smith, Kim Klockow, Matthew C. Nowlin, and Carol L. Silva. 2012. "Weather, Climate, and Worldviews: The Sources and Consequences of Changes in Local Weather Patterns." <i>Weather, Climate, &amp; Society</i> 4:132-144. Hamilton, Lawrence C., and Mary D. Stampone. 2013. "Blowin' in the Wind: Short-Term Weather and Belief in Anthropogenic Climate Change." <i>Weather, Climate, &amp; Society</i> 5:112-119. Marquart-Pyatt, Sandra T., Aaron M. McCright, Thomas Dietz, and Riley E. Dunlap. 2014. "Political Orientation Eclipses Climate Extremes for Climate Change Perception." <i>Global Environmental Change</i> 29:246-257.
<b>November 24</b>	<b>Dynamics of Environmental Movements</b> McLaughlin, Paul, and Marwan Khawaja. 2000. "The Organizational Dynamics of the U.S. Environmental Movement: Legitimation, Resource Mobilization, and Political Opportunity." <i>Rural Sociology</i> 65:422-439. Johnson, Erik. 2006. "Changing Issue Representation among Major United States Environmental Movement Organizations." <i>Rural Sociology</i> 71:132-154. Longhofer, Wesley, and Evan Schofer. 2010. "National and Global Origins of Environmental Association." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 75:505-533.
<b>December 1</b>	<b>Analyses of Environmental Governance and Reform</b> Buttel, Frederick. 2003. "Environmental Sociology and the Explanation of Environmental Reform." <i>Organization &amp; Environment</i> 16:306-344. Schofer, Evan, and Ann Hironaka. 2005. "The Effects of World Society on Environmental Protection Outcomes." <i>Social Forces</i> 84:25-45. Roberts, J. Timmons, Bradley C. Parks, and Alexis A. Vasquez. 2004. "Who Ratifies Environmental Treaties and Why?: Institutionalism, Structuralism and Participation by 192 Nations in 22 Treaties." <i>Global Environmental Politics</i> 4:22-64.
<b>December 8</b>	<b>Scholarly Paper Presentations</b>
<b>December 16</b>	<b>Scholarly Paper Presentations</b> (our finals week meeting time is 5:45 to 7:45 pm)
<b>December 17</b>	<b>Final Draft of Scholarly Paper due to mccright@msu.edu by 5:00 pm</b>