

# Environmental Sociology

Development Sociology 3240

Spring 2017

Monday/Wednesday, 2:55pm-4:10pm, 173 Warren Hall

Instructor

John Zinda

251A Warren Hall

[jaz65@cornell.edu](mailto:jaz65@cornell.edu)

Office Hours: Wednesdays 11:00am-12:00noon  
or by appointment

Teaching Assistant

Holly Buck

160 Warren Hall

[hjb84@cornell.edu](mailto:hjb84@cornell.edu)

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:00pm-2:50pm or by  
appointment

## Course Overview

Humans have fraught relationships with the animals, plants, land, water – even geological processes – around us. We struggle over who gets to use what, which resources to use or to keep intact, what scientific claims are true and worthy of action. We come together to revere, conserve, protect the things many call nature. Every environmental concern is on some level a social concern. And more social concerns than we often realize are environmental concerns. In this course, we will examine how people make and respond to environmental change and how groups of people form, express, fight over, and work out environmental concerns. We will probe how population change, economic activity, government action, social movements, and changing ways of thinking shape human-environmental relationships. Through these conversations, we'll explore possibilities for rich and durable ways of living together in our social and material world.

Our goal in this course is to give you knowledge, analytical tools, and expressive skills that help you feel confident to address environmental concerns as a social scientist and a citizen. We will work together so that by the end of the course you will be able to

- explain different perspectives about how people create and resolve environmental concerns
- competently evaluate claims about environmental risk and vulnerability
- analyze environmental controversies in terms of the interests, resources, factual claims, and value judgments different groups of people bring to the table
- express your knowledge and reasoning in engaging written communication

*Note: We are constantly on the lookout for materials that are current and helpful to you. As a result, this syllabus may change at the instructors' discretion.*

## Required Readings

Bell, Michael and Loka L. Ashwood. 2016. *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*. Fifth edition. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc.

*Note: This book is on reserve at the Mann Library. You can use other editions, but reading assignments all reference the 5th edition, so you will be responsible for locating the content.*

Other readings and audiovisual materials will be provided on Blackboard.

## Course Requirements and Grading

To get a good grade in this course, not to mention get the full benefit of the ideas we'll share, you will have to come to class fully prepared, participate thoughtfully, complete assignments, and take a test. We will provide materials and assistance, and what you do with these will decide how much you learn.

### Participation

You will get something out of this class – a grade, and a measure of interest and enjoyment – to the extent that you're there, really there: coming prepared, listening thoughtfully, and making helpful contributions. We encourage your there-ness by doing our best to provide engaging material and by making it worth points. We understand that everyone has 'off' days. We also understand that you are starting from different places and that speaking in class makes some students uncomfortable for a range of reasons. We hope this class will give all students a chance to hone participation skills. We will provide varied opportunities to participate: discussions, quizzes, group activities, and Blackboard questions or forums. Each day you will receive a  $\checkmark+$ ,  $\checkmark$ , or  $\checkmark-$  for participation, but keep in mind that the rubric is a flexible tool and is designed to give us a global sense of your contributions over time. The lowest 2 will be dropped, effectively allowing 2 absences without penalty.

Criterion	Excellent -- thanks! ( $\checkmark+$ )	Room to improve ( $\checkmark$ )	Needs to change ( $\checkmark-$ )
Attendance, preparedness for class	Is present, has all of the required materials, has evidently done the required reading, and is ready to start when class does. Excels on quizzes.	Brings most or all needed materials to class, has the required reading, arrives on time. Moderate quiz performance.	Has not completed the reading or brought required materials. Is not ready when class starts, arrives late, or is absent. Fails quizzes.
Contributions (quantitative)	Contributes on a regular basis. Leads without dominating.	Contributes occasionally. Alternatively, verges on dominating discussion.	Does not speak.
Contributions (qualitative)	Provides interesting or useful ideas and questions in the form of general impressions, well-founded opinions, relevant and clarifying questions, responses to classmates' questions, or specific and thoughtful criticisms. Shows understanding of assigned readings. Uses concepts and terminology appropriately.	Provides ideas or questions that are constructive and occasionally insightful, but are sometimes very general, are not relevant, repeat what has been said, or reveal a lack of preparation. Sometimes uses appropriate terminology.	Makes comments that are off topic or uninformative, lacking in appropriate terminology. Relies on opinion and personal taste, e.g., "I love it" or "It's bad" without evidence or integration of new information. Shows a lack of preparation.
Presence	Demonstrates engagement: not only speaks, but also listens attentively (does not repeat what has been said) and takes notes as appropriate.	Makes a bit of effort: is awake, paying attention, and occasionally jots something down.	Is distracted, distracts classmates, falls asleep, etc.

### Content Checks

We will provide a notebook you can use for content checks and for dialogue with us. Once a week, we will pose a question or two at the end of class for you to answer in that notebook. The grade applies only to the question we pose, with partial credit just for answering. You can also use the notebook to pose questions, concerns, or things you found interesting. We'll respond.

## Short Assignments

At 4 occasions you will receive a prompt to write a short paper (less than 1,000 words). These prompts will ask you apply concepts that we have discussed or read about. Some will contribute to developing ideas for your final article. They will be graded on mastery, creative engagement, and quality. We'll provide a detailed rubric with the assignment.

## The e-Zine

Environmental sociology is about controversies. The field emerged because people struggle over when conservation should weigh over development, how to redress and prevent public health hazards, what technological risks are acceptable, and so on. In most any controversy you will find organizations: groups of people who get together to act on a common purpose. These organizations make claims about facts – whether a problem exists and who it affects – and values – what things we should be concerned about. They work on each other, on governments, on businesses, and on the public to press for different courses of action. To work toward just, safe, and rewarding resolutions, we need to understand these struggles.

As an environmental-sociologist-in-training, over the course of the semester you will get familiar with an environmental controversy and an organization involved in that controversy. Through a series of assignments, you will examine this issue using different lenses environmental sociology provides. You will also hone your ability to tell stories with the written word, presenting facts and viewpoints with accuracy, integrity, and care. This work will culminate in an article in a web magazine we create together. We may publish it on Medium.

At various points, we will work on different aspects of examining and narrating controversies. We will also read and talk about some examples of long-form articles.

## The Test

We will have one test, in class, on the exam date. This test may address any information from readings and lectures in the course (including guest lectures). It may include short-answer and long-form open-ended questions, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and other question formats. We will provide a list of key concepts and topics from each segment that you will be expected to understand. For the test, you will be allowed to bring in one 8.5"×11" sheet of paper containing notes you have prepared.

## The Numbers

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Participation	10
Blue Book	10
Short Reflections (4x6 points)	24
Test	20
e-Zine Project:	36
Proposal	2
Annotated Bibliography	3
Full Draft	9
Peer Review	4
Revised Draft	18
Total	100

## Assignment Submission

Every written assignment is due by 12:00PM on the date listed in the syllabus, uploaded into the appropriate dropbox on Blackboard. Late work will be penalized one full letter grade per day for the first five days. After five days, unless emergency circumstances (e.g., a health issue, a death in the family) can be documented, you will receive a zero. It is your responsibility to make sure the document is effectively submitted.

## Extra Credit Policy

Out of concern for fairness, we do not offer extra credit. An activity that merits grade credit necessarily requires time and effort. But not all students have extra time available. As a result, extra credit opportunities bring a bias in favor of students who have the wherewithal to take extra time out. Since this luxury isn't available to all, we aim to give everyone a reasonable chance to do well by meeting the evaluation criteria within this syllabus.

## Making a Good Learning and Teaching Environment

We want to foster a classroom environment that's as conducive as possible to your learning. That requires that all students have a fair chance to pay attention and take part in dialogue and that we can communicate with you without impediment. We have put together these class policies based on our experiences of what does and does not help make this possible.

**Course Citizenship.** We seek to create a learning community in which issues are explored and class members come to better understand the opposing views on these issues. Therefore, in class discussions we will foster candid exploration of any topic relevant to the course. Students come to this course with a wide range of views. You should come to class mentally prepared to discuss pertinent topics with people who take positions that differ markedly from yours. Our goal is for all members of the class to feel that their knowledge, experiences, and insights are welcomed and valued, even when other people see things differently. As a course citizen, we expect that you will be able both to calmly explain your views and reasoning and to listen to the reasoning and views of those taking positions that you differ on. This requires that we all come from a starting point where we examine assumptions and, rather than taking current arrangements for granted, are open to thinking about the possibilities and limits of alternatives.

**Lecture Slides.** We will post lecture slides on Blackboard once a week. These slides provide a broad outline without much detail, so you will still need to take notes in class.

**Food is all right; just be considerate.** Hunger and thirst make it hard to focus and learn. So you are allowed to have snacks, but be discreet, considering your classmates. If students notify us that snacking is distracting them, we may request that people be more thoughtful, or change this guideline.

**No Cell Phone Use.** Using cell phones in class disrupts your own and other students' learning. Turn your cell phone off when class starts. If there is an emergency reason you must check your phone on a particular day, talk to us about it before class.

**Laptop Time.** Studies have found that taking notes on laptops is actually less effective in helping you remember than taking notes by hand, because in taking notes by hand you have to process the information to choose which points to highlight. Moreover, using your computer for tasks unrelated to class distracts you and your classmates. Therefore, most of the time laptops and tablets will not be allowed. We know it's hard to adjust when you're used to typing notes; we've struggled with it, too. But the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few. On some days we will announce times when

computers will be allowed for a writing task or to access readings. If you have a condition that makes you unable to take notes by hand, please contact us to discuss an option. If you are unable to print readings and concerned about accessing content, we encourage you to take notes as you read.

**Communication.** We are available and eager to help you succeed, so please do not hesitate to reach out to us in person or through email. Please use respect in email content and timing. Write clearly and with courtesy. We will do our best to respond to all emails within 48 hours. You will have the easiest time reaching us during work hours (8am-5pm weekdays). On nights and weekends we may be harder to reach due to personal and family commitments outside of work. Likewise, we will do our best to ensure that our emails to you are clear and leave you ample time to respond. We will provide notifications through email and Blackboard; please check both regularly. *To ensure that we promptly identify and address your email, please include the text "DSOC 3240" in the header.*

**Office Hours.** We welcome you to come and talk about your questions, concerns, and interests. If you need to meet outside scheduled office hours, you can make an appointment. It is usually easiest if you do so by email. Office hours will not be devoted to tutorial for materials that students miss when not attending class. *If you have questions about content or assignments, please ask them during lecture so we can all benefit from clarification.*

## Extra Support

In compliance with the Cornell University policy and equal access laws, we are available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for students with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made. Students with either an ongoing or short-term disability are encouraged to contact Student Disability Services (SDS) for a confidential discussion of their need for academic accommodations. SDS is in 420 CCC building; phone number is 254-4545.

If you are experiencing undue personal or academic stress at any time during the semester or need to talk with someone about a personal problem or situation, we encourage you to seek support as soon as possible. We are available to talk with you about stresses related to your work in our class. Additionally, we can assist you in reaching out to any one of a wide range of campus resources, including:

- Your college's Academic Advising or Student Services Office
- Cornell Learning Strategies Center at 255-6310, <http://lsc.sas.cornell.edu>
- Gannett Health Services at 255-5155, [www.gannett.cornell.edu](http://www.gannett.cornell.edu)
- Peer Support - Empathy Assistance & Referral Service at 255-EARS, <http://orgsync.rso.cornell.edu/org/ears>

## Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity: Students enrolled in this course are expected to abide by the University's Code of Academic Integrity. If you have not already done so, I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the code so that you understand clearly what constitutes plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism and cheating of any kind on an examination or assignment will have serious consequences, including a possible automatic "F" for the course. The Code of Academic Integrity and information on "Acknowledging the Work of Others" can be found at <http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/aic.cfm>.

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the [Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site](#).

## Class Schedule

Date	Week, Theme	Readings	Assignments
25-Jan	1, Can There Be Environmental Sociology?		
30-Jan	2, Can There Be Environmental Sociology? Continued	B&A 1-8, 30-46	
1-Feb		B&A 8-29, Wackernagel & Rees	SA1 Values & Factual Claims
6-Feb	3, The Human Nature of Nature	B&A Ch 9. <b>Skip 259-263, 273-middle of 279</b> ; Angelo & Jerolmack	
8-Feb	Guest: Holly Buck	Purdy	<b>SA1 Due</b> ; SA2 Social Construction
13-Feb	4, Population, Growth, Scarcity, and Abundance	B&A 131-148; Lappe	
15-Feb	Library visit: location TBA		<b>SA2 Due</b> ; Proposal
20-Feb	BREAK		
22-Feb		B&A 148-162; Selected articles	
27-Feb	5, Consuming the Earth, Consuming Ourselves	Schor; Schmidt; WAMU	
1-Mar		Szasz	<b>Proposal due</b> ; SA3 Organizations
6-Mar	6, Making Stuff, Making Money, Making a Mess	Jackson; Schmidt; B&A 78-95.	
8-Mar		B&A 95-106; Whoriskey; Freudenburg	<b>SA3 Due</b> ; Biblio
13-Mar	7, The Environmental State	B&A 345-356, 246-250; Dryzek	
15-Mar	Guest: David Kay	TBA	<b>Biblio Due</b> ; Full Draft & SA4 Interests
20-Mar	8, Science, Accountability, and Participation	B&A 107-124; Zehner; Hakim	
22-Mar	Guest: Ellie Andrews	Kleinman & Suryanarayanan	<b>SA4 Due</b>
27-Mar	9, Confronting Environmental Injustices	B&A Ch 6; Selected Articles	
29-Mar		B&A 337-340; Selected Articles	<b>Full Draft Due</b> ; Peer Review
3-Apr	BREAK		
5-Apr	BREAK		
10-Apr	10, Disasters, Risk, and Vulnerability	B&A 284-311, Ritchie	
12-Apr	Guest: Peter Little	TBA	<b>Peer Review Due</b> ; Final Article
17-Apr	11, Environmental Ideology and Action	B&A 220-222, 211-219, 234-246.	
19-Apr		Brulle, Lemann, Bratman	
24-Apr	12, Struggling with Climate Change	Norgaard; Conceivable Future	
26-Apr		McCright & Dunlap	<b>Final Article Due</b>
1-May	13, What Next?	B&A Ch 13	
3-May		Selected Articles	
8-May	14, What have we made?	Classmates' Articles	
10-May	Review		
TBA	Final Exam		



## Detailed Contents

### Weeks 1-2: Can there be environmental sociology?

Wednesday, January 25

Monday, January 30

Bell and Ashwood, pp. 1-8, 30-46.

Wednesday, February 1

Bell and Ashwood, pp. 8-29.

Wackernagel, Mathis and William E. Rees 1996. *Our Ecological Footprint: Reducing Human Impact on the Earth*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

### Week 3: The Human Nature of Nature

Monday, February 6

Bell & Ashwood, Ch. 9. Skip pp. 259-263, 273-middle of 279.

Angelo, Hilary and Colin Jerolmack. 2012. "Nature's Looking Glass." *Contexts* 11(1):24-29.

Wednesday, February 8 Guest Speaker: Holly Buck

Purdy, Jedediah. 2016. "The New Nature." *Boston Review*, January 4 (<https://bostonreview.net/forum/jedediah-purdy-new-nature>).

### Week 4: Population, Scarcity, and Abundance

Monday, February 13

Bell & Ashwood, Ch. 5, pp. 131-148.

Lappe, Frances Moore and Joseph Collins. *World Hunger: Ten Myths*. (<https://foodfirst.org/publication/world-hunger-ten-myths/>)

Wednesday, February 15

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Wednesday, February 22

Bell & Ashwood, Ch. 5, pp. 148-162.

### Week 5: Consuming the Earth, Consuming Ourselves

Monday, February 27

Schor, Juliet. 2010. Chapters 2 and 4 in *Plenitude: The New Economics of True Wealth*. New York: Penguin Press.

Schmidt, Conrad. 2012. *Workers of the World Relax, Part I: Here we go again* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5UyPowNuYI>).

OPTIONAL: "The Lure Of Minimalism." The Diane Rehm Show, 28 July 2016 (<https://thedianeremshow.org/shows/2016-07-28/the-lure-of-minimalism>).

Wednesday, March 1

Szasz, Andrew. 2007. *Shopping Our Way to Safety: How We Changed from Protecting the Environment to Protecting Ourselves*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press. Pp. 1-8, 99-103, 194-211.

### Week 6: Making Stuff, Making Money, Making a Mess

Monday, March 6

Jackson, Tim. 2009. Chapter 5 in *Prosperity Without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet*. London ; Sterling, VA: Earthscan.

Schmidt, Conrad. 2015. *Workers of the World Relax III: Alternatives to Growth*

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssz0zWHswZE>)

Bell & Ashwood, Ch. 3, pp. 78-95.

Wednesday, March 8

Bell & Ashwood, Ch. 3, pp. 95-106.

Whoriskey, Peter. 2016. "The Batteries in Your Favorite Devices Are Literally Covering Chinese Villages in Black Soot." *Washington Post*, October 2.

(<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/business/batteries/graphite-mining-pollution-in-china/>).

Freudenburg, William R. 2005. "Privileged Access, Privileged Accounts: Toward a Socially Structured Theory of Resources and Discourses." *Social Forces* 84 (1): 89-114.

### Week 7: The Environmental State

Monday, March 13

Bell & Ashwood, Ch. 12, pp. 345-356, 246-250.

Dryzek, JS, C. Hunold, D. Schlosberg, D. Downes, and HK Hernes. 2002. "Environmental Transformation of the State: The USA, Norway, Germany and the UK." *Political Studies* 50(4):659-82.

Wednesday, March 15 Guest Speaker: David Kay

Readings TBA

### Week 8: Science, Technology, Accountability, and Participation

Monday, March 20

Bell & Ashwood, Ch. 4, pp. 107-124.

Zehner, Ozzie. 2013. "Unclean at Any Speed." *IEEE Spectrum: Technology, Engineering, and Science News*, June 30. (<http://spectrum.ieee.org/energy/renewables/unclean-at-any-speed>).

Hakim, Danny. 2016. "Scientists Loved and Loathed by an Agrochemical Giant." *The New York Times*, December 31

(<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/31/business/scientists-loved-and-loathed-by-syngenta-an-agrochemical-giant.html>).

Wednesday, March 22 Guest Speaker: Ellie Andrews

Suryanarayanan, Sainath and Daniel Lee Kleinman. 2013.

"Be(e)coming Experts: The Controversy over Insecticides in the Honey Bee Colony Collapse Disorder." *Social Studies of Science* 43(2):215-40.

## Week 9: Confronting Environmental Injustices

Monday, March 27

Bell & Ashwood, Ch. 6.

Selected articles.

Wednesday, March 29

Bell & Ashwood, pp. 337-340.

Selected articles.

## Week 10: Disasters, Risk, and Vulnerability

Monday, April 10

Bell & Ashwood, Ch. 10, pp. 284-311.

Ritchie, Liesel Ashley, Duane A. Gill, and J. Steven Picou.

2011. "The BP Disaster as an Exxon Valdez Rerun." *Contexts* 10(3):30-35.

Wednesday, April 12 Guest Speaker: Peter Little

Readings TBA

## Week 11: Environmental Ideology and Action

Monday, April 17

Bell & Ashwood, pp. 220-222, 211-219, 234-246.

Wednesday, April 19

Bulle, Robert J. 2015. Pp. 263-82 in *Twenty lessons in environmental sociology*, edited by K. A. Gould and T. L. Lewis. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lemann, Nicholas. 2013. "When the Earth Moved." *The New Yorker*, April 15.

(<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/04/15/when-the-earth-moved>)

Bratman, Eve, Kate Brunette, Deirdre C. Shelly, and Simon Nicholson. 2016. "Justice Is the Goal: Divestment as

Climate Change Resistance." *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences* 6(4):677-90.

## Week 12: Struggling with Climate Change

Monday, April 24

McCright, Aaron M. and Riley E. Dunlap. 2010. "Anti-Reflexivity: The American Conservative Movement's Success in Undermining Climate Science and Policy." *Theory, Culture & Society* 27(2-3):100-133.

Wednesday, April 26

Norgaard, Kari Marie. 2015. "Normalizing the Unthinkable: Climate Denial and Everyday Life." Pp. 246-59 in *Twenty lessons in environmental sociology*, edited by K. A. Gould and T. L. Lewis. New York: Oxford University Press.

Conceivable Future. 2017.

*Mission* (<http://conceivablefuture.org/mission>).

*The Problems* (<http://conceivablefuture.org/problems>).

*FAQ* (<http://conceivablefuture.org/FAQ>).

## Week 13: What Next?

Monday, May 1

Bell and Ashwood, Ch. 13.

Wednesday, May 3

Selected articles.

## Week 14: What have we made?

Monday, May 8

Classmates' articles.

Wednesday, May 10

Review.