

Environment and Society

Sociology 416/516

CRN: 15342/16092

Fall 2009

TR 4:00-5:20

207 Chapman

Professor Richard York

Office: 618 PLC

Office hours: TR 2:30-4:00

Email: rfyork@uoregon.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course you will learn about environmental sociology – the study of interactions between humans and the environment. This will involve issues from a diversity of disciplines including anthropology, biology, economics, geography, and history. We will explore how human societies affect the environment, and, in turn, how human societies are shaped by the environment, as well as how we come to recognize and understand changing environmental conditions.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- ❖ Ponting, Clive. 2007. *A New Green History of the World*. Penguin Books. 978-0-14-303898-6
- ❖ Gould, Kenneth A. and Tammy L. Lewis. 2009. *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*. Oxford University Press. 978-0-19-537112-3
- ❖ Barlow, Maude. 2009. *Blue Covenant: The Global Water Crisis and the Coming Battle for the Right to Water*. New Press. 978-1595584533
- ❖ Pellow, David Naguib. 2007. *Resisting Global Toxics: Transnational Movements for Environmental Justice*. MIT Press. 978-0262662017

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

Mid-term Exam (50 points): There will be an in-class mid-term exam. For the exam you will be responsible for all material covered in class and in the readings.

Final Exam (50 points): There will be a take-home final exam. For the exam you will be responsible for all material covered in class and in the readings.

Group discussion leading (25 points): You will be assigned to a group (~5-6 students per group). Each group will be responsible for leading a class discussion on the material covered in this course. You will be graded on how well you present information, how creative you are in selecting specific topics for discussion, and how well you facilitate that discussion (e.g., engaging others, encouraging conversation). I will provide more details in class.

Project paper (50 points): The individual project for this class involves you making some change in your lifestyle that reduces your impact on the natural environment or serves to bring about environmentally positive social change. This is intended to be a challenging and educational project whereby you can experience the social structural and cultural factors that constrain widespread social change along ecologically sensitive lines. You will select what type of change in your lifestyle you would like to make. Some examples of changes

include becoming a vegetarian or vegan, giving up driving a car, purchasing only locally produced products, and not using electricity. You may also choose to engage in some form of environmental activism. The length of time you will need to continue with this behavior depends of the difficulty entailed. I expect that two weeks will typically be a sufficient amount of time for most types of lifestyle changes, although some maybe much shorter (for example, giving up electricity for one or two days would probably be sufficient). The key point is that the behavior must be a change – i.e., not something you do already. The project does not require that you are successful at making the change, only that you make a sincere attempt at it. You will be required to make a short proposal (1 pages) of what you intend to do (basically laying out the ground rules and duration of time you think appropriate) and explaining briefly why it is important for the environment. I may require that you make some modifications to the plan (for example, choose a different activity or change the duration of time). Once I have approved the proposal you should implement the change and keep a journal of your experiences (note that you are not required to turn in this journal). You may find the change quite difficult and you may have failures at certain points – that is part of the learning experience. The final paper should be 7-10 double-spaced typed pages and explain (1) the details of the lifestyle modification you made, (2) the environmental significance of the lifestyle modification (including citation of appropriate sources to back up your claims), and (3) what you learned from the experience. You will be graded on how creative you are in developing and implementing your project and how well you research and write your paper. I will provide more details on this project in class and you should speak to me (or send me an email) to seek clarification if you are uncertain how to proceed or just want to discuss any options you are considering.

Pop quizzes and other in class activities (25 points): From time to time in class there may be a pop quiz or other assignment. These will not be announced in advance and you can only receive credit for them if you are in attendance (or have a legitimate excuse and inform me that you will be absent *before* class).

Additional requirement for graduate students only – in class lecture (50 points): In addition to being held to higher standards on the other assignments, graduate students will also be required to give a 30 minute lecture to the class on a topic and date to be negotiated. All graduate students will need to schedule a meeting with me to discuss this assignment.

DO NOT submit work via email or under my office door! All written work should be typed, double-spaced, using a reasonable sized font – typically, 12-point font is appropriate. I encourage you to print double-sided or to print on the clean side of used paper so as to conserve paper.

I will be happy to discuss any concerns about points awarded on your assignments. I have a set of standard expectations for evaluating assignments and am looking for thoroughness, thoughtfulness, and insightfulness. If you would like me to review your points on any assignment, I ask that you put your questions or concerns in writing and attach them to your paper so that I can review both before discussing them with you.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Academic Etiquette: Please be respectful to all members of the class. Please arrive in class on time and do not leave early (or pack up to leave early). Both arriving late and leaving early can be very disruptive. In addition, please do not talk while I am lecturing and do not interrupt other members of the class when they are talking. Of course, you should always feel free to raise your hand if you'd like to ask a question or make a comment, and you should talk freely and openly on discussion days.

Academic Integrity: All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly acknowledged and documented. For the consequences of academic dishonesty, refer to the Schedule of Classes published quarterly. Violations will be taken seriously and are noted on student disciplinary records. If you are in doubt regarding the requirements, please consult with me before you complete any requirement of the course.

Participation: Success in this class depends largely on your level of participation in the classroom. While I realize that not all students feel comfortable speaking in class, my hope is that we can make this an atmosphere in which everyone will feel that they can participate. Each student is responsible for attending class, being prepared for class, and contributing to the activities in class. We will frequently discuss the topics covered in this course, some of which may be controversial. I hope that discussions will be lively and interesting. I encourage everyone to feel free to engage enthusiastically in these discussions. This is a safe environment in which I want all students to feel comfortable. To ensure that our discussions will be productive, it is essential that at all times you are respectful to other members of the class. If you behave disrespectfully toward other members of the class, you will be asked to leave.

Attendance: I expect you to be in class, although I will not typically take attendance. Each of you will be responsible for any material, announcements, assignments, and/or schedule changes presented during class time. If you miss a class you will need to ask another student for details of what was covered in class; I will not repeat information in class for those who have missed classes. Also, note that 25 points of your grade come from "pop quizzes and other in class activities" (see above) that will not be announced in advance, for which you will receive credit only if you are in class (or if you make alternative arrangements with me when you miss class for legitimate reasons).

Disability Accommodations: Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. ***Please notify me during the first week of class*** of any accommodations needed for this course.

READING/ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE**

WEEK	TOPIC	READING	ASSIGNMENT/ACTIVITY
Week 1 9/29 & 10/1	Introduction to environmental sociology	Ponting ch. 1-5 G&L ch. 1 & 14	
Week 2 10/6 & 10/8	Theories and perspectives in environmental sociology I	Ponting ch. 6-10 G&L ch. 3 & 13	Tuesday day: Discussion Thursday: Film "Who's Counting" (03703)
Week 3 10/13 & 10/15	Theories and perspectives in environmental sociology II	Ponting ch. 11-14 G&L ch. 5 & 16	Tuesday: Project proposal due Thursday: Discussion
Week 4 10/20 & 10/22	Environmental history	Ponting ch. 15-17 G&L ch. 8 & 15	Thursday: Discussion
Week 5 10/27 & 10/29	Political economy of the world-system	G&L ch. 4 & 17	Thursday: Mid-term Exam
Week 6 11/3 & 11/5	Population, development, and the environment	Pellow ch. 1-3 G&L ch. 9 & 19	Thursday: Discussion
Week 7 11/10 & 11/12	Environmental Justice	Pellow ch. 4-5 G&L ch. 10 & 18	Thursday: Discussion
Week 8 11/17 & 11/19	Science, Technology, and Nature I	Pellow ch. 6-7 G&L ch. 2 & 7	Thursday: Discussion
Week 9 11/24	Science, Technology, and Nature II	Barlow ch. 1-3 G&L ch. 6 & 11	Tuesday: Project paper due Thursday: Thanksgiving (no class)
Week 10 12/1 & 12/3	Ecological reform	Barlow ch. 4-5 G&L ch. 12 & 20	Thursday: Discussion and hand out final exam
Finals Week	NO meeting this week. Your final exam is take-home and is due by 4pm on Wednesday (12/9) in the sociology office, 736 PLC. Place in Richard York's mailbox.		

Readings listed for each week should be completed before class on Thursday of that week.

****Disclaimer:** *We will try to stick to this syllabus and reading schedule. However, I reserve the right to make changes. Students will be notified in class in advance. (I am not responsible for those absent from class).*

KEEPING TRACK OF YOUR CLASS GRADE

GRADING

I do not grade on a curve – the grades are based on points alone. The point scale listed below is for undergraduates only – for graduate students the same percentage scale will be used, but there are a total of 250 points possible.

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| A Superior, a mark of excellence | D Passing but needs improvement |
| A+ 195-200 points (97.5 – 100%) | D+ 135-139 points (67.5 –69.5%) |
| A 186-194 points (93 – 97%) | D 126-134 points (63 – 67%) |
| A- 180-185 points (90 – 92.5%) | D- 120-125 points (60-62.5%) |
| B Outstanding, very good | F Below 60% is not a passing grade |
| B+ 175-179 points (87.5 – 89.5%) | |
| B 166-174 points (83 – 87%) | |
| B- 160-165 points (80 – 82.5%) | |
| C Good, average for most college students | |
| C+ 155-159 points (77.5 – 79.5%) | |
| C 146-154 points (73 – 77%) | |
| C- 140-145 points (70 – 72.5%) | |

Group discussion leading (25 points)

Mid-term Exam (50 points)

Project paper (50 points)

Quizzes and other in class activities (25 points)

Final Exam (50 points)

TOTAL EARNED
