

ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY

SOC 355, SECTION 1

Fall 2019

M/W 9:30 – 10:45am

Room: CCC 330

Department of Sociology and Social Work
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point



Gyre (photograph), by Chris Jordan (2009)

Instructor: David Barry, PhD

Email: dbarry@uwsp.edu

Zest hours: Th 9-10am

Office hours: MW 1-2pm

Office: CCC 448

Office phone: 715-346-4197

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

“Without self-understanding we cannot hope for enduring solutions to environmental problems, which are fundamentally human problems.” Yi-Fu Tuan, 1974

*“Sustainability, the guiding concept behind ecological modernization, is as much a political-economic dimension as an ecological one: what can be sustained is only what political and social forces in a particular historical alignment define as acceptable.”
John Hannigan, 2007*

What is the relationship between nature and society? How do human actions, beliefs, and decisions impact the environment and vice versa? How do humans construct their own environment and what does that say about culture and the lived world? What are the long-term effects of these realities and what do these projects say about sustainable existence into the future?

These are important questions not unique to sociology. But by developing and applying a sociological perspective to these issues, fresh reflections result with important consequences and potential solutions. The nature of this course (pun intended!) is to delve into this sub-discipline of sociology. Along the way, connections across other disciplines will be made, such as political science, psychology, religious studies, etc. But a genuine sociological paradigm will be cultivated, which will highlight important relationships between race and gender and the environment; the role of religion in understanding nature and the role of social activism; how social institutions like family and mass media influence attitudes and beliefs about the environment; what agency individuals can and should take in approaching societal problems related to the environment; and so much more!

Learning Outcomes

Students can/will be able to...

- 1. Describe and recall major concepts and methods used by social scientists, across multiple disciplines, to investigate globalization and other global phenomena.**
- 2. Apply major ideas and theories to real-world problems and issues that are global in breadth and scope.**
- 3. Develop a personal global identity.**
- 4. Apply discipline-specific standards of oral and written communication to compose an articulate, grammatically correct, and organized presentation/piece of writing with properly documented and supported ideas, evidence, and information suitable to the topic, purpose, and audience.**
- 5. Critique their own and others' writing/oral presentations to provide effective and useful feedback to improve their communication.**

REQUIRED TEXT

- (1) Gould, Kenneth A. and Tammy L. Lewis. (2015). *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*. Oxford University Press.
- (2) Supplementary material will be provided throughout the semester

COURSE FORMAT AND EXPECTATIONS

Format

The format of each class will vary throughout the semester. Since we all learn differently, I will utilize a variety of teaching methods to present the material. These methods will include lectures, in-class activities, video presentations, and class discussions. It is vital that you come to class prepared (i.e., read what you are asked to have read!) and ask questions and make comments when you have them. Not only will the material make more sense, but you will get a lot more out of the class as well.

Academic Integrity

To ensure that the highest level of academic and personal integrity is upheld, it is important that you understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at UWSP (see [Academic Integrity: A Guide for Students](#)). For a complete overview of UWSP academic standards and disciplinary procedures, please visit: the following website: <http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Academic-Misconduct.aspx>

Disability Services

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP's policies. Any student who feels that an accommodation may be needed based on the impact of a disability should contact [Disability Services and Assistive Technology](#) at 715-346-3365 in Room 609 Learning Resource Center at 900 Reserve Street. Staff will work to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Technology Policy

My expectations regarding technology are simple and, hopefully, not unrealistic. I do not expect students to be without their phones, tablets, and/or computers. I completely understand that the schedule for most students may even necessitate this. In fact, our class will even utilize this as a resource at times during the semester; for instance, in-class activities that prompt students to do a quick search online. I also understand that some students prefer to take notes electronically, on a tablet or laptop. (Be warned: [research shows that students retain more information when notes are hand-written](#).) But, *unless specified otherwise or a circumstantial agreement with me is made, phones should be silent (e.g., airplane mode), and out of sight*. As soon as a device becomes a distraction to the class, I will revoke technology privileges all together.

Attendance Policy

Your attendance and participation will be recorded and calculated as part of your final evaluation. However, I understand ‘participation’ inclusively. This can include the conventional (i.e., talking in class) as well as other forms of interaction in and outside of class (e.g., office hour visits, email discussions, in-class activities). In short, I am looking for students to be engaged in the material, however or wherever that might be.

Assignment Submission and Late Policy

All assignments (unless specified otherwise) should be submitted by the respective deadline electronically via Dropbox on CANVAS. Turnitin (originality checking software) is activated with results viewable to you and me. Please use this as a tool for writing. Late work is accepted up to one week after the specified deadline (5-point reduction), also via the appropriate CANVAS dropbox. I will not accept assignments after this.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATIONS

Weekly Discussion Posts

Weekly Discussion Posts are *critical* dialogues covering some aspect from the previous week and organized in a popular online format via Canvas. This will allow your fellow students to comment/discuss in a productive and respectful manner. This interactive approach is vital for working through new material. The specific requirements and directions will be discussed in class.

6 Weekly Discussion Posts (10 points each) = 60 points

Group Roundtables

Group Roundtables will serve as extensions from the unit-specific group discussions you’ll have on Canvas. Specific requirements and expectations about the roundtables will be discussed in class.

2 Group Roundtables (25 points each) = 50 points

Unit Assignments

Unit Assignments are more organized assignments that approach a specific topic or problem. The requirements and expectations for these papers will be discussed in class. In general, these are assignments that allow you to apply the concepts and ideas we have discussed in class to a setting/problem of your choosing. These papers will require some research and activity outside of class to complete.

3 Unit Assignments (50 points each) = 150 points

Final Project

The final project will serve as a conventional closing assignment, bringing together concepts and themes from the entire course. Specific details about the project will be discussed in class.

Final Project = 100 points

Attendance/Participation

Attendance is crucial to succeed in this class. Keeping up on your reading in order to actively participate in class will ensure that you are adequately prepared for the assignments. My teaching philosophy is based on a cultivation of *active learning*. This means that I aim to provide an environment whereby students are able to ‘experience’ the material. However, this is a dual relationship. Students must also be willing to learn in order to make this happen. By *being* in class regularly (not just present), an active and invigorating culture of learning can be developed. *Attendance and Participation will be recorded via in-class activities and quizzes*. This being said, life is always full of unexpected events and emergencies. If you think you will miss a class, please let me know as soon as possible so we can make other arrangements.
Attendance/Participation = 40 points

Evaluation

Evaluation of this course is based on the standard UWSP grading scale.

Course Evaluation:

Discussion Posts =	60 (6, 10 points each)
Group Roundtables =	50 (2, 25 points each)
Unit Assignments =	150 (3, 50 points each)
Final Project =	100
<u>Participation =</u>	<u>40</u>
Total =	400

Grading Scale		
Letter Grade	Percent	Points
A	92-100	366<
A-	90-91	358-365
B+	87-89	346-357
B	83-86	330-345
B-	80-82	318-329
C+	77-79	306-317
C	73-76	290-305
C-	70-72	278-289
D+	67-69	266-277
D	60-66	238-265
F	<60	<238

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic/Activity	Reading	Assignment
4-Sep	Introductions	Q Intro; King Ch1	
9-Sep	ES Basics: History, Concepts and Theory	Q Ch1 and 2	
Physical			
11-Sep	Disasters	Q Ch14; King Ch13	
16-Sep	Built environment	King Ch8	
18-Sep	Food	Q Ch12	
23-Sep	Population/demography	Q Ch8 and 9	DP1
25-Sep	Health	Q Ch11	
30-Sep	Technology	Q Ch7	DP2
2-Oct	Case Study		
7-Oct	Group Roundtable		
Ideological			
9-Oct	Consumption/materialism	King Ch10; Bell Ch2	UA1
14-Oct	Family, Politics and Identity	Strangers in their own land	
16-Oct	No class		
21-Oct	Religion, Gender, and the Environment	Bell Ch7	DP3
23-Oct	Media	Q Ch5	
28-Oct	Globalization	King Ch14 and 15	
30-Oct	Social inequality	Q Ch10; King Ch7	
4-Nov	Case study		DP4
6-Nov	Group Roundtable		
Organizational			
11-Nov	Science (astrosociology)	Q Ch6; King Ch17	UA2
13-Nov	Political Economy	Q Ch3, 4 and 17	
18-Nov	Social change - historical	Q Ch16	DP5
20-Nov	Social change - critical	Q Ch18; Pellow Ch1	
25-Nov	Change and you - living with it	Q Ch20; King Ch21	
27-Nov	Case study		DP6
2-Dec	Group Roundtable		
4-Dec	Final paper presentations		UA3
9-Dec	Final paper presentations		
11-Dec	Final paper presentations		
12/17/2019	Final Exam		Final Project
2:45-4:45			