

SYD 4510-002 Environmental Sociology

Spring 2013

(3 credit hours)

Prerequisite: 3 credits of a lower-division social science course

Meets: Mondays, 4:20-7pm, DW103

Professor Patricia Widener

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Office hours: Mondays 2:30-4pm, 10-10:30pm; and Wednesdays 3:30-7pm, 10-10:30pm

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Course description: This course examines the nexus between society and the environment. Beginning with a history of environmental sociology, this course uses a tool kit approach to explore a range of sociological perspectives to better understand how an environmental problem is a social problem, and vice versa. These perspectives (though not all) include political economy, environmental justice & environmental racism, social construction, globalization & global inequality, environmental health, community-based knowledge and environmental activism. We will use these perspectives to study national and international cases, such as (but not limited to) the BP oil spill, chemical toxins in a community, population growth, Indigenous land use struggles, climate change and global food production. Finally, we will explore environmental change from individual action to global initiatives. Students should leave class having gained a much broader and deeper understanding of the environment from a sociological perspective.

Course objectives

- To think critically about the links between the environment and society.
- To apply key sociological concepts to better understanding how, when and where the environment and society collide or intersect.
- To become conversant in issues of importance to the field of environmental sociology by practicing the explanation of key concepts and the application of them to environmental-social conflicts.

Skills developed or practiced

- Critical reading, critical thinking and critical writing skills
- Ability to apply sociological concepts and/or perspectives to contemporary national and global events and/or experiences
- Awareness of and ability to discuss pressing environmental issues from a sociological perspective

Assignments

Exam I: This is an in-class essay exam. To prepare, sample questions will be available on Blackboard one week prior to the exam. Please bring blue books to the exam unless I indicate otherwise. This exam is worth 30% of your grade.

Study advice: Do the readings, come to class (every class for the full class), take detailed notes in class, ask questions in class, by email and/or during office hours if you are confused, return to the readings (perhaps reread the readings), prepare a detailed study guide, study from that guide

Exam II: This is an in-class essay exam. To prepare, sample questions will be available on Blackboard one week prior to the exam. Please bring blue books to the exam unless I indicate otherwise. This exam is worth 30% of your grade.

One paper: This is a six page paper assignment (excluding title page, excluding selected passages from the assigned reading and excluding a reference page if you include one). It is to be double-spaced, 12pt font, Times New Roman with one-inch margins, page numbers included. This assignment is designed to enable you to demonstrate your critical reading, critical thinking and critical writing skills. It is based on any two or three chapters of the readings assigned before Spring Break [EXCEPT FOR CHS 7 & 8]. It is not based on lecture notes, though lecture will facilitate your understanding of the readings. You must cite the readings and page numbers.

The point of the paper is for you to demonstrate that you understand the assigned readings and that you can apply sociological concepts and/or perspectives learned from the readings to better understand a recent news event.

There are five components to this paper:

- (1) Select a news article published in a newspaper between 2010-2013 (attached a print out of the newspaper article);
- (2) Select and present three significant passages from any two or three chapters in the assigned readings before Spring Break;
- (3) Interpret the meaning of the passages into your own words;
- (4) Apply your understanding of the sociological concepts and/or arguments as identified in the selected passages to better understand your selected news article from a sociological perspective;
- (5) Incorporate the above into a university-level paper with introduction, point of paper, use of transitions and concluding summary. Detailed writing guidelines are available on Blackboard. This is a university-level paper and the tasks to complete it are noted above and in the writing guidelines.

- DUE DATE: This paper assignment is due March 11, and is based on any two or three chapters in the assigned readings before Spring Break.
- A printed copy must be turned in and it must be sent through SafeAssign by the beginning of class. Do not send the newspaper article through SafeAssign. [SafeAssign is on Blackboard found under Contents.]
- This paper is worth 30% of your grade.

Attendance: Attendance is likely to improve your understanding and test scores. In addition, percentage points will be deducted for full absences (10% per absence) and partial absence (5% per partial absence).

Final grade assessment	Percent worth	Due date
Exam I	30%	February 25
Paper	30%	March 11
Exam II	30%	April 22
Attendance	10%	

Policy on late assignments and make-up exams

- Each day that the paper is late, 10% will be deducted from your paper grade.
- Make-up exams may be possible, but must be approved by the professor. Make-up exams will not be an exact duplicate of the in-class exam. If approved, make-up exams will be taken at the Testing & Evaluation Center.

Grading Scale

93-100	A	80-82	B-	67-69	D+
90-92	A-	77-79	C+	63-66	D
87-89	B+	73-76	C	60-62	D-
83-86	B	70-72	C-	0-59	F

Classroom Etiquette & Participation

- I expect everyone to contribute to course discussion, ask questions (in class, by email, and/or during office hours) and to apply course material to social experiences.
- In-class behavior should be suitable to a group and university setting: turn off your cell phones, be courteous when someone is speaking, be courteous if you arrive to class late, use computers for in-class purposes only, and in-class behavior should not be disruptive to other students or to in-class learning and discussion.
- Time for comments and questions will be designated each class period. During those times, in-class discussions should be in a manner that is inclusive and respectful of the opinions, insights and contributions of others.
- Time will be set aside to practice (in pairs) conversing on issues of importance to the field of environmental sociology. In the spirit of collaboration, be attentive, courteous, supportive and engaged.

Writing Center: For assistance in writing, visit the Center for Excellence in Writing located in the LA building, room 220 (954-236-1111). You may also schedule an online appointment via Skype. For more information, see www.fau.edu/UCFW

Statement of Academic Integrity: Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the University mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the University community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/4.001_Code_of_Academic_Integrity.pdf

Accommodations for students with disabilities: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students who require special accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) located in Boca Raton SU 133 (561-297-3880), in Davie - LA 240 (954-236-1657), in Jupiter - SR 110 (561-799-8585) and follow all OSD procedures.

Broward Counseling Center: Psychological counseling services are provided at no charge for students attending the Broward campuses. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 954-236-1210. The office is located in the Student Union Suite 206, on the Davie campus.
<http://www.fau.edu/student/broward/counselingbroward/>

Required texts

- King, Leslie and Deborah McCarthy (editors). 2009 (2nd edition). *Environmental Sociology: From Analysis to Action*. MD: Rowman & Littlefield
- McKibben, Bill. 2010. *EAARTH*. NY: Henry Holt.

Blackboard: Additional readings may be posted on Blackboard (<http://blackboard.fau.edu>) or found online.

Recommended readings & news thoughts: You are not required to read the news thoughts and/or recommended readings provided under the weekly assignments. However if you have a special interest in that particular week's reading, you may also be interested in the suggested readings. As society and environment collides during the semester, don't be surprised if I email you a link to relevant news articles.

SEMESTER IN REVIEW

Environmental sociology

Week 1: January 7

- Course overview
- Intro to Environmental Sociology

Political economy of the environment

Week 2: January 14

- King and McCarthy: Introduction, Chs 1 & 3

Recommended: Magdoff, Fred and John Bellamy Foster. 2011. *What Every Environmentalist Needs to Know about Capitalism*. NY: Monthly Review Press

Week 3: January 21 – NO CLASS, M.L. King Holiday

Environmental justice (EJ)

Week 4: January 28

- King and McCarthy: Chs 4-6

Recommended: Lerner, Steve. 2010. *Sacrifice Zones: The Front Lines of Toxic Chemical Exposure in the United States*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.

Social construction of the environment & nature

Week 5: February 4

- King and McCarthy: Chs 7-8

Corporate responsibility, transparency & accountability

Week 6: February 11

- King and McCarthy: Chs 9-10
- ****Exam I study guide available on Blackboard****

Globalization, global inequality & the environment

Week 7: February 18

- King and McCarthy: Chs 11-12

EXAM I

Week 8: February 25

****Week 9: SPRING BREAK March 4-10****

Popular culture & media representations

Week 10: March 11

- King and McCarthy: Chs 13-14
- ****Paper is due today****

Environmental health & risk

Week 11: March 18

- King and McCarthy: Chs 16-18

Recommended: 1) Davis, Devra. 2003. *When Smoke Ran Like Water*. Basic Books. 2) Horowitz, Joy. 2008. *The Poisoning of an American High School*. NY: Penguin.

Environmental activism

Week 12: March 25

- King and McCarthy: Chs 19-20

Recommended: Gottlieb, Robert and Anupama Joshi. 2010. *Food Justice*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.

Climate change & society

Week 13: April 1

- King & McCarthy: Ch 21
- McKibben: Preface & Ch. 1 (first half only)

Week 14: April 8

- McKibben: Chs 1 (second half) & 2
- Pew Center on Global Climate Change: Climate Change 101 Overview, January 2011.
Can be found online at: <http://www.c2es.org/docUploads/climate101-overview.pdf>

Climate change & agriculture

Week 15: April 15

- King & McCarthy: Ch 24
- McKibben: Ch 4 (first half)
- **Exam II study guide available on Blackboard**

EXAM II

Week 16: April 22

Environment change

Week 17: April 29

- King & McCarthy: Ch 22 & 23
- In-class documentary & discussion

Grades are due in the Registrar's Office by 9am, Monday, May 6.