

SYLLABUS
Sociology 330 – Society and Environment
2:00-3:15pm T/TH
Spring Semester 2007

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Office Hours:
Tuesday, 8:00-9:30am, Thursday 12:30-1:45pm; and by appointment

Required Text:

Bell, Michael Mayerfeld. 1998. *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*. (2nd Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Checker, Melissa. 2005. *Polluted Promises: Environmental Racism and the Search for Justice in a Southern Town*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Gunter, Valerie and Steve Kroll-Smith. 2007. *Volatile Places: A Sociology of Communities and Environmental Controversies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

In addition, select readings will be placed on the SHAC server in my Instructor Folder for download. These are marked as (SHAC) on the syllabus. This will replace a reading packet for purchase as was originally listed in the course reading requirements.

Course Description: This course has three primary objectives: First, it will provide a critical examination of the broader theoretical frameworks that have informed human's relationship with nature and how these have changed with time within the field of sociology. This includes how we socially construct nature and how the natural world influences us. Second, it will examine the role of social/political/economic organization in the evolution and definition of environmental problems. Third, we will examine how questions of inequality, race, class, ethnicity, gender, globalization, power and community are interrelated with the physical environment.

Course Objectives:

Through successful completion of SOC 330, students will have the opportunity to develop and demonstrate knowledge, skills, and competencies in the following areas:

1. A clear comprehension, from a sociological perspective, of issues and variables that influence the environment and society.
2. Critical knowledge about the role that social inequalities occupy in issues of environmental risk and exposure.

3. Comprehension and ability to critically evaluate the application of sociological methods to social behaviors and issues related to society's relationship to the environment
4. A clear understanding of how people can participate more fully and actively as citizens on issues of social and environmental concern.

Course Assignments:

Weekly Reading Reflection Questions: The course will involve completing all reading assignments from the texts BEFORE it is presented for discussion in class, to enable us to have a more informed interactive discussion rather than a straightforward lecture.

You will be required to turn in 2-3 questions on each week's readings at the end of each Tuesday's class period. These questions should demonstrate a critical reflection on each week's readings. The questions may focus on concepts that are simply not clear, concepts or arguments that you disagree with, or any other aspect of the readings. These will be used for discussions and will be collected every week for credit. Each week's reading reflection questions are worth 1% of your final grade for a total of 10%. There are 11 weeks of readings so you may miss ONE week of questions without penalty or loss of points. **These CANNOT be made up unless there is a pre-arranged absence or a documented emergency that I approve of.** If such situation exists you MUST speak to me within one week of such absence in order to be considered for the lost points.

Exams: There will be two exams throughout the semester, each worth 15% of your final grade for a total of 30%.

Book Review: You will be required to write a 5-7 page book review on the book by Melissa Checker "Polluted Promises". This review is designed to be both a critical assessment of the book's content as well as an opportunity for you to react to the material. This is NOT a book report where a simple reporting/regurgitation of the book generally will suffice. The book report is worth 20% of your final grade and is **due in class Thursday, April 26. (I will consider allowing you to read another book of your choice, but you must first get my approval on the book).**

Environmental Impact Diary: You will be required to keep an "environmental impact diary" of your activities for one day (a full 24 hour period). You will then discuss the implications for all three central issues of environmentalism—sustainability, environmental justice, and the rights and beauty of nature. The diary and reflection discussion are **due in class on Thursday, Feb. 15.** A more detailed assignment guide is available on WebCT or in my Instructor Folder.

Secret Life of Stuff Assignment: In this assignment you will follow the 'life' of two specific items that are common to most people's existence. You will document all the resources that go into producing a product and getting into the hands of the consumer...you! You will be comparing the life process of either a dozen eggs or a gallon of milk, comparing one item from a typical mainstream commercial store like

Jewel or Wal-Mart to another from a small, locally owned store “Common Ground” in Bloomington which carries locally grown and produced food products. The assignment is worth 20% of your final grade and is **due in class on Thursday, March 22**. A more detailed assignment guide is available on WebCT or in my Instructor Folder.

Attendance: Your participation is essential to the success of this course, and therefore attendance is also critical. I will **randomly** take attendance several times throughout the semester and count that towards your participation/attendance portion of your grade, which is worth 5% of your final grade. This can not be made up without prior approval or a legitimate reason that I approve of.

Graduate Students:

Graduate students who wish to receive graduate credit will be responsible for three additional reaction papers throughout the semester based on supplementary readings below. Each paper is worth an additional 100 points and the specific questions to be addressed in each reading reflection will be handed out in class. ******(Your final grade will be based on 1300 points instead of 1000 points due to the additional work that is required for graduate credit).

The specific readings and due dates are listed below:

Reaction Paper #1 – Due Feb. 1, 2007

Humphrey, Craig R., Tammy L. Lewis, and Frederick H. Buttell. 2002. “Social Theory and the Environment” pg. 34-68 in *Environment, Energy, and Society: A New Synthesis*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Reaction Paper #2 – Due Feb. 13, 2007

Humphrey, Craig R., Tammy L. Lewis, and Frederick H. Buttell. 2002. “Energy and the Environment: The Reemerging Energy Crisis” pg. 136-171 in *Environment, Energy, and Society: A New Synthesis*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Mazur, Allan. 2002. “Global Environmental Change in the News: 1987-90 versus 1992-96” pg. 262-271 in *Environment, Energy, and Society: A New Synthesis*. Humphrey, Craig R., Tammy L. Lewis, and Frederick H. Buttell (Eds.) Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Reaction Paper #3 - Due April 19, 2007.

Humphrey, Craig R., Tammy L. Lewis, and Frederick H. Buttell. 2002. “Environmental Sociology and Alternative Environmental Futures” pg. 265-305 in *Environment, Energy, and Society: A New Synthesis*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Mol, Arthur P.J. 2002. “Ecological Modernization: Industrial Transformations and Environmental Reforms” pg. 391-412 in *Environment, Energy, and Society: A New Synthesis*. Humphrey, Craig R., Tammy L. Lewis, and Frederick H. Buttell (Eds.) Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Late Assignments: I DO NOT accept late assignments for any reason. All work is due IN CLASS on the day it is due. Assignments turned in after class (in person or via email) will not be accepted. Please do not ask to turn in work late, it will not be accepted. **This applies to all written work, including reading reflection questions.**

Student Evaluation Overview:

I do not 'give' grades, you earn them based on your work. Your grade for the course will be based on the following evaluation methods:

Reading Reflection Questions (10%)	10 percent
Book Review (20%)	20 percent
Environmental Impact Diary (15%)	15 percent
Impact of Stuff Assignment (20%)	20 percent
Exams (2 @ 15% each)	30 percent
Participation/Attendance (5%)	5 percent

Monitoring Your Grades:

You can easily track your own progress through the course and monitor your grades on-line via WebCT. I strongly encourage you to monitor your grades so that you will not be surprised at the end of the semester. Instructions to access WebCT:

Go to <http://webct.ilstu.edu> (There is NO www in the WebCT address)

First time users: Your Login AND Password is your University ULID. Once you are logged on you may change your password to whatever you wish.

If you have used WebCT in the past, your login and password are whatever you have previously set.

WebCT will be up and running by the end of the second week of the semester.

Grading Scale:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	59% and below

Classroom Policies:

Much of the material presented in this course and the views expressed by other students and the instructor will challenge your values and beliefs, since adopting a sociological perspective entails looking at the world from a different vantage point than you typically

use. It is imperative that everyone be respectful of all ideas and the individuals and groups who state them. **Diverse ideas and views are important to the class, and all comments are encouraged and welcomed.** Please help ensure a comfortable and respectful environment for discussion. **Personal attacks or hostility are not acceptable and will not be tolerated.**

Disruptive behaviors (such as reading the newspaper in class or carrying on private conversations with your neighbor) are distracting and disrespectful. Final grades for borderline cases between two grades will be negatively influenced by these behaviors.

Late Arrivals: Arriving late for class is disruptive, disrespectful, and not acceptable in my class. College is similar to a job and if you are consistently late to your job you will be fired. Consequently, being *consistently late* for class during the semester can negatively affect a borderline grade at the end of the semester.

No make-up exams will be provided unless arranged for *at least two weeks in advance*. All important exam dates are listed on the syllabus. Please make note of these dates and contact me with any conflicts as soon as possible. Exceptions will be granted in the case of unexpected illness or emergencies. Please notify me as soon as reasonable in this situation and arrangements will be made. Events such as family reunions, vacations, Spring Break etc. are NOT acceptable reasons for make-up exams.

Academic integrity is required for all students. Cheating, plagiarism, or other academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and is a violation of University policy. Any such acts will be promptly reported to the appropriate University officials for further action. For a full explanation of the student code of conduct and an explanation of academic integrity please visit the website of Student Dispute Resolution Services http://www.sdrs.ilstu.edu/Student_Conduct.shtml .

No “live” cell-phones, pagers, etc. are permitted without prior permission from the instructor. If you have a special need, please see me to make me aware of the situation as soon as possible.

Availability of Instructor – It is MY responsibility to assist you in grasping the material and concepts that are presented in the course. However, it is YOUR responsibility to seek out assistance when you are having difficulty. Do not wait until the end of the semester when it is too late. I encourage you to use my office hours or to contact me to arrange a time if the established hours conflict with your schedule. I am more than willing to arrange a time that works for both of us. The best way to reach me is via e-mail. **PLEASE NOTE: I WILL ONLY ACCEPT MAIL FROM AND SEND MAIL TO YOUR ULID ACCOUNT.** *Finally, you must allow me 24 hours to respond to your message.* If you send me a message on Friday afternoon or over the weekend, I will not respond until Monday as I am often out of the technology loop during the weekends.

Grades Availability – As a result of FERPA protection, no grades are given over the phone or through e-mail. You are responsible for maintaining an accurate record of your

grades throughout the semester. No grades will be given out during final examination week. Therefore, any grade checks will have to be taken care of prior to this time. If the technology gods are looking upon me with favor, I should have a WebCT course website up shortly after the first week of class that will enable you to check your current grade at any point in time for yourself so you can track your own progress. Details of how to access this will be forthcoming.

Special Needs: Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability should contact Disability Concerns at 350 Fell Hall, 438-5853 (voice), 438-8620 (TDD).

Tentative Course Schedule

****Questions due every Tuesday unless otherwise noted.***

Week	Topic	Reading/ Assignments
Jan. 16-18	Course Introduction: What is Environmental Sociology?	Bell, Chapter 1
Jan 23-25	What are Current Environmental Problems, and How Can Sociology Help? Understanding Environmental vs. Natural Resource Sociology.	Environmental News Network www.enn.com Read 4-5 current news articles of your choosing. Be prepared to talk about which articles you read. Buttel, 2002 (SHAC) Field, Luloff, and Krannich, 2002 (SHAC)
Jan. 30– Feb. 1	The Social Basis of Environmental Problems	Bell, Chapter 2 Gardner et al. 2004. “The state of consumption today” (SHAC) Prugh, Tom. 2005. “Seven Tons” (SHAC)
Feb.6-8	The Social Basis of Environmental Problems	Bell, Chapter 3 Sawin. 2004. “Making better energy choices” (SHAC)
Feb. 13-15 Environmental Impact Diary Due Feb. 15	The Social Basis of Environmental Problems	Bell, Chapter 4 and 5
Feb. 20 (no questions due this week)	The Social Basis of Environmental Problems	<i>Making the Link: Population, Health, Environment</i> (SHAC)

Feb. 22	EXAM #1	
Feb. 27-March 1	People First, Environment Second	Bell, Chapter 6 Brehm, Joan M. and Brian Eisenhauer. 2006. <i>“Environmental Concern in the Mormon Culture Region.” (SHAC)</i>
March 6-8	Who Cares About the Environment?	Bell, Chapter 7
March 13-15	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK	
March 20-22 Stuff Assignment Due March 22	What IS Nature?	Bell, Chapter 8 Wilson, 1997. <i>“The Wolf in Yellowstone: Science, Symbol, or Politics?” (SHAC)</i>
March 27-29	The Environment and Risk	Bell, Chapter 9 Brown, Phil and Edwin J. Mikkelsen. 1990: <i>“No Safe Place: Toxic Waste, Leukemia, and Community Action”</i> pg. 1-42, 75-124. (SHAC)
April 3 - 5	Can We Fix It?	Bell, Chapter 10
April 10	Exam 2	
April 12	Environmental Controversy and Risk	“Libby, MT” Documentary
April 17-19	Agriculture and Environment	To be Announced.
April 24-26 BOOK REVIEW DUE April 26	Environmental Controversies: Putting Material, Ideal, and Practical in Practice	Gunter and Kroll-Smith, Chapters 1-3
May 1-3	Environmental Controversies: Putting Material, Ideal, and Practical in Practice	Gunter and Kroll-Smith, Chapters 4-7
NO FINAL EXAM		

