

Environmental Sociology Section 01 SOCI 141

Fall 2023 3 Unit(s) 08/21/2023 to 12/06/2023 Modified 08/18/2023

Contact Information

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Office Hours: On Zoom Tuesdays 9:30-10:30 a.m.

<https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/92544100827>

Course Description and Requisites

This course will analyze how human beings interact with their environment from both macro and micro sociological perspectives. The course will address a number of other relevant topics, including environmental classism, environmental racism and policy responses to environmental problems.

Prerequisite: Upper Division Standing

Letter Graded

Program Information

Program Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to think sociologically about the relationship between social structure, interaction, identities, and inequalities.
2. Students will be able to identify and explain major sociological theories and apply them to everyday life.
3. Students will be proficient in qualitative and quantitative research design, data collection and data analysis.
4. Students will be proficient in oral and written communication skills appropriate to the discipline.
5. Students will be able to practice sociology as educated and civically engaged persons.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

In this class, we will explore Environmental Sociology. This course will analyze how human beings interact with, shape and are shaped by their environment from both macro and micro perspectives. Material will be based on both qualitative descriptions and quantitative trends of contemporary environmental sociological research.

This course will challenge the human exceptionalism paradigm and will answer the following questions: How do personal issues and environmental problems overlap? Which environmental concerns garner the most attention? Why? What role does environmental activism play in social change? When do environmental bads become a concern for masses of people? How and when do people commit to change for the environment?

Specific attention will be paid to how environmental harms and social change happens. In the process of examining the social construction and social destruction of the environment and status quo related to our thoughts, beliefs and actions related to the environment, the course will address a number of other relevant topics, including: social inequity, environmental classism, environmental racism, eco-feminism, environmental activism, coping with climate crisis, political responses to environmental problems, and consequences of/for environmental policy.

Institutional Outcomes	Student Learning Outcomes	Assessment Method
Critical Thinking	Students will be able to define the core terms and the major theoretical approaches of Environmental Sociology and apply these concepts to various social manifestations.	Class Discussion, Open-ended questions on assignments and reflections

Communication	Students will be able to articulate insights generated from core terms and major theoretical approaches and discuss how these concepts inform the study of present day Environmental Sociology.	Class discussion, assignments and reflections
Evaluate Empirical Sociological Research	Students will read and evaluate empirical sociological research related to sustainability, environmental justice and climate destabilization.	Class discussion, assignments and reflections
Valuing Diversity and Global Awareness	Students will understand how identities such as race, class, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, and nationality contribute to a range of social experiences and social perspectives regarding Environmental Sociology.	Class discussion, Group work (including group assignments)
Self-Awareness	Students will be able to discuss their interpretation of Environmental Sociology as it relates to their lived experiences by evaluating the impact their structural position has on their lives, as well as the lives of others.	Class discussion, assignments and reflections

✓ Grading Information

A total of 350 points is possible for this course.

Participation in Class Dialogue and Discursive Space	40 pts total
Dialogue Facilitation	25 pts total
In-class participation, module activities/ HWs, quizzes, discussions, Etc.	250 pts. total
Final Project	35 pts.
TOTAL	350 pts.

Criteria

Grades will be calculated as follows:

331 - 350+ = A
315 - 330 = A-
303 - 314 = B +
293 - 302 = B
280 - 292 = B -
268 - 279 = C +
258 - 267 = C

245 - 257 = C -
233 - 244 = D +
223 - 232 = D
209 - 222 = D -
000 - 208 = F

Type	Weight	Topic	Notes

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

"Unless we change the direction we are headed, we might wind up where we are going."

-Chinese Proverb

Below is the course outline. This schedule is subject to change with fair notice. Reading should be completed by the class lecture date.

Date(s)	Topics and course content. Links to readings and media are on Canvas	Reminders
MODULE 0/ COURSE BASICS	Welcome back to SJSU: Please feel welcome to get started on this course. Assignment: Create a Learning Page Upload your name pronunciation to NameCoach	Check on Canvas for information about course and Zoom meetings
Aug 21 st -25 th MODULE 1	Introduction to Environmental Sociology: · What do we mean when we say the environment? · What is Environmental Sociology? Review Learning Page: Introduction to Environmental Sociology Reading: "Environmental Sociology: From Analysis to Action" Hypothesis Available Introduction to Tree Sitting and Forest Bathing Assignment: Learning Page	

Date(s)	Topics and course content. Links to readings and media are on Canvas	Reminders
Aug 28 th -Sep 1 st MODULE 2	Environmental Sociology and Theory: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · How do major sociological theories understand and/or address the environment and society? · What are the major theories specific to the field of environmental Sociology? · How are these theories used to analyze the environment and society? Review Learning Page: Environmental Sociology and Theory Reading: Heiner "The Establishment Vs. The Environment" Hypothesis Available Pellow, David N. "The State and Policy" in <i>Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology</i> Hypothesis Available Assignment: Better World Shopping Guide	
Sept 4 th -8 th MODULE 3	Human Consumerism and the Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · What are commodity chains? · What role do we play in environmental harm? · Are there solutions to our collective environmental problems? Review Learning Page: Environmental Sociology and Consumerism Reading: Wood "Nature's Trust" Hypothesis Available Reading: Schor and Jorgenson "Is it Too Late for Growth?" Hypothesis Available Watch: The Story of Stuff Watch: The Case for a 4 day work week	Check Last Day to Drop Courses Without an Entry on Student's Permanent Record (D)

Date(s)	Topics and course content. Links to readings and media are on Canvas	Reminders
Sept 11 th -15 th MODULE 4	<p>Vested Powers: The Role of Corporations and Media in Shaping What We Know About the Environment.</p> <p>This week we will explore how corporations impact both what we think and what we feel about the environment and how they do it.</p> <p>Read: "Corporate Power: The Role of Global Media" In <i>Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology</i> Hypothesis Available</p> <p>Read: Bellamy Foster, John. "Let Them Eat Pollution." Hypothesis Available</p> <p>Watch: Superfund Site Info.</p> <p>Assignment: Calculate Your Environmental Footprint and Learning Page</p>	Check Last Day to Add Courses & Register Late (A)
Sept 18 th -22 nd MODULE 5	<p>Environmental Racism</p> <p>This week will explore environmental racism and how we are all implicated in it.</p> <p>Review Learning Page: Environmental Racism</p> <p>Read: Why Every Environmentalist Should be Anti-Racist.</p> <p>Read: Satcher 2022 "Multiply – deserted areas: Environmental racism and Food, Pharmacy and greenspace Access in the Urban South." Hypothesis Available</p> <p>Read: McKinney and Thomson 2022 "Landfills and disasters: a geospatial analysis of environmental injustice across the United States." Hypothesis Available</p> <p>Watch: The Story of Rise St. James</p> <p>Watch: What its Like to live in Cancer Alley</p> <p>Assignment: Environmental Racism Learning Page</p>	

Date(s)	Topics and course content. Links to readings and media are on Canvas	Reminders
Sept 25 th -29 th MODULE 6	<p>Eco-feminism. Learners read selections from the book, <i>All We Can Save</i> (Campus Read 2022). It is available through the library if you want to get a head start reading it. http://libaccess.sjlibrary.org/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=2395505&site=ehost-live&scope=site&ebv=EK&ppid=Page_-1</p> <p>Read: Ecofeminism by Vandana Shiva</p> <p>Read: What is Ecofeminism by Alicia H. Puleo</p> <p>Listen to Podcast: How Gender Equality Can Save the Planet.</p> <p>Assignment: Learning Page Eco-feminism</p>	
Oct 2 nd -6 th MODULE 7	<p>Transnational Environmental Degradation and Harm, the ties that bind: Oil, Gas and Power</p> <p>Watch movie <i>Crude</i></p> <p>Read Chapters 3 and 4 from the book <i>Flammable</i></p> <p>Assignment: Learning page</p>	
Oct 9 th -13 th MODULE 8	<p>Trash, Electronic Waste and Commodity Chains</p> <p>Read: The Global Village Dump: Trashing the Planet Hypothesis Available</p> <p>Read: Electronic Waste: The Clean Industry Exports Its Trash Hypothesis Available</p> <p>Watch: Where Your Recycled Plastic Ends Up</p> <p>Assignment: Learning Page</p> <p>Assignment: Track Your Trash</p>	

Date(s)	Topics and course content. Links to readings and media are on Canvas	Reminders
Oct 16 th -20 th Module 9	Environmental Activism, Historical Understandings and The Radical Flank <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · What is the history of Environmental Movement? · What is the history of environmentalism and environmental Activism in the United States? · What is the Radical Flank Read: Chapter 5: Earth First! In <i>Eco-Warriors</i> by Rik Scarce Watch Movie: <i>If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front</i> (Available through SJSU library) Assignment: Learning page and dialoguing about Environmental Sociology Assignment: Mid-semester Tree Sitting	
Oct 23 rd -Oct 27 th MODULE 10	Fictional Book reading related to Environmental Sociology Read Chapter 1 of <i>Ministry for the Future</i> by Stanley Kim Robinson Students will be assigned one chapter from the book <i>Ecotopia</i> available online. Assignment: Flipgrid Response	
Oct 30 th - Nov 3 rd MODULE 11	Environmental Degradation: Coal, Natural Gas and Fracking Watch: <i>Planet of the Humans</i> Watch: <i>Fracking in America</i> Read: Choose a chapter from the book <i>Green Illusions</i> by Ozzie Zehner to read Assignment: Learning Page	
Nov 6 th -Nov 10 th MODULE 12	Environmental Degradation: Our Food and Supply Chains Environmental Degradation: Water Read: Drinking by Andrew Szasz Watch Movie <i>Flow: For Love of Water</i> Watch: Tale of Two Cities Assignment: Flipgrid Water	

Date(s)	Topics and course content. Links to readings and media are on Canvas	Reminders
Nov 13 th - 17 th MODULE 13	<p>We will have a guest speaker this week from Factory Farming Awareness Coalition</p> <p>Read: "Swines and Hog Farms" in <i>Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology</i></p> <p>Watch: <i>Cowspiracy</i> (This movie is available through Netflix or other online portals for purchase).</p> <p>Watch: Factory Farming Awareness</p> <p>Assignment: Learning Page: Food</p>	
Nov 20 th -24 th MODULE 14	Thanksgiving Break	
Nov 27 th -Dec 1 st MODULE 15	<p>Moving Forward, Society and the Environment: Change, Ideas and Actions.</p> <p>We will introduce the precautionary principle and discuss the Green New Deal.</p> <p>Read: David N. Pellow: from <i>Total Liberation</i>, Chapter "Never Apologize for your Rage."</p> <p>Read: Integrating the Precautionary Principle.</p> <p>Read: Earth Democracy: Sustainability, Justice and Peace</p> <p>Watch: The Venus Project</p> <p>Watch: Zizek: First as Tragedy, Then as Farce</p> <p>Watch: The Green New Deal</p> <p>Assignment: Letter to the Earth</p>	
Dec 4 th -6 th MODULE 16	Finishing Up	
Dec 12 th MODULE FINAL PROJECT	Final Project Due	

