“Unless we change the direction we are headed, we might wind up where we are going.”
-Chinese Proverb

Contact Information

Instructor: Megan Thiele
Office Location: DMH 224
Telephone: Please email me
Email: megan.thiele@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 12-12:50 and by appt.
Class Days/Time: M/W 1:30-2:45
Classroom: DMH 231

Course Description: In this class, we will explore the field of Environmental Sociology. This course will analyze how human beings interact with their environment from both macro and micro perspectives. To this end, 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? Who defines environmental bads as such? How? Which environmental concerns garner the most attention? Why? What role does environmental activism play in social change? When do environmental issues 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 social change happens. In the process of examining the social construction of the environment, the course will address a number of other relevant topics, including: social inequality, environmental classism, environmental racism, political responses to environmental problems, and consequences of/for environmental policy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Outcomes</th>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Discussion, Presentations, Open-ended questions and memos</td>
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</table>
**COURSE READING & MATERIAL**


One of the three following fiction books (to be determined in class):

- *The Monkey Wrench Gang* by Edward Abbey
- *Ecotopia* by Ernest Callenbach
- *Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn

All other readings are available through the class resources on Canvas and/or online via jstor.org.

Please purchase material to keep a journal, preferably a three-ring binder or spiral notebook—just for this class—that you will turn in periodically throughout the semester and at your final.

**COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

**Reading.** I expect all of the material to be read with a critical eye. Give yourself adequate time after each reading to reflect on the author’s central argument(s).

**Writing/Journal.** Please come to class having written a paragraph or two on each reading and please keep this in your personal “Environmental Sociology” journal.

**Papers/Quizzes.** You will be assigned either a memo or you will be given a quiz 5-10 times throughout the semester.

**Attendance.** Attendance is mandatory.

**Exams.** Mid-term and Final.

**Participation.** Active participation in class discussion and classroom activities is expected. You will receive 30 points for participation, including points for your group (5) and individual (5) presentations. Do not expect to get these points without participating and doing the course readings.
Grades

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Quizzes/Memos</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Journal/Final Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Exam 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Exam 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Participation (30 total)</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>In-class participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Individual Presentation</td>
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<td>100</td>
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University Policies

**Dropping and Adding**
Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester’s Catalog Policies section at http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the Academic Calendars webpage at http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/. The Late Drop Policy is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes. Information about the latest changes and news is available at the Advising Hub at http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/.

**Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material**
- Recording of lectures is not permissible for this course.
- Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor-generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.

**Academic Integrity**
Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The Student Conduct and Ethical Development website is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified.
Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act
If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 at http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Accessible Education Center (AEC) at http://www.sjsu.edu/aec to establish a record of their disability. If you think you might or know you will require alternative testing arrangements, you must register with the AEC at the beginning of the semester.

Student Technology Resources
Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center at http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/ located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

SJSU Peer Connections
Peer Connections, a campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring, offers small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for a number of undergraduate courses. Consultation with mentors is available on a drop-in or by appointment basis. Workshops are offered on a wide variety of topics. Peer Connections is located in three locations: SSC, Room 600 (10th Street Garage on the corner of 10th and San Fernando Street), at the 1st floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B. Visit Peer Connections website at http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu for more information.
SOCI 120: ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY  
Fall 2014  

Below is the course outline. This schedule is subject to change with notice provided in class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Reminders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1.</td>
<td>Aug 25</td>
<td>Introduction cont.</td>
<td>What do we mean when we say the environment? What is Environmental Sociology? What is the history of Environmental Sociology? What is the history of environmentalism in the United States?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2.</td>
<td>Sept 1</td>
<td>Labor Day–Campus Closed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wood, Mary Christina. 2007 “Nature's Trust: A Legal, Political, and Moral Frame for Global Warming.” Available at: <a href="http://lawdigitalcommons.bc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1080&amp;context=ealr">http://lawdigitalcommons.bc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1080&amp;context=ealr</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3.</td>
<td>Sept 8</td>
<td>Theory</td>
<td>How do major sociological theorists and theories understand and/or address the environment and society? Are there other major theories specific to the field of environmental Sociology? How are they used to analyze the environment and society?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Sept 10**

**Theory—Treadmill of Production**

*The Story of Stuff.*

**Week 4. Sept 15**


**Sept 17**


Further Reading:

**Week 5. Sept 22**

*Packaging Environmental Problems.* Vested Powers: The Role of State, Corporations and Media in Shaping what we know about the Environment. This week we will explore how corporations impact both what we think feel about the environment.


**Sept 24**

*Heiner, Robert. 2009 “The Establishment vs. the Environment” in Conflicting Interests: Readings in Social Problems and Inequality*


Further reading:
Week 6. Sept 29 Exam

Oct. 1
Read your fiction books

Week 7. Oct. 6 Read your fiction books

Oct 8 Discuss Fiction books

Week 8. Oct 13
Environmental Racism. This week will explore some of the implications of environmental racism, both within the U.S. and beyond. We will also introduce the precautionary principle.


Oct 15


Week 9. Oct 20
Environmental Problems, A Global Epidemic. This week will continue to explore how environmental problems play out on a global scale.


Oct 22
Blank Is Beautiful: Three Decades of Erasing and Remaking the World pg. 3-26.


Further reading:
Week 10. Oct 27
Water. This week continues with an exploration of environmental politics in California by discussing land and water rights’ and use. We also delve into the concept of institutionalization verses individualism and impacts on the environment.


Oct 29 Film

Week 11. Nov 3
Food. Commodity chains regarding our sustenance.


Video: “Joel Salatin: War Stories from the Local Food Front.” Available at: http://fora.tv/2010/11/24/Joel_Salatin_War_Stories_from_the_Local_Food_Front

Nov 5
Pesticides.


Further reading:

Week 12. Nov 10
Environmental Activism: Comparative and Historical Understandings of major environmental organizations.


Chapters 4: Greenpeace: Bridge To Radicalism and 5: Earth First!: Cracking The Mold.

**Nov 12**

*If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front.*

**Week 13. Nov 17**

Environmental Degradation: Land Use and Gentrification

This class session will explore how the development of urban infrastructure can manifest as environmental degradation.


**Nov 19**

Environmental Degradation: Power: Natural Gas, Coal and Oil. This class will introduce the concept of fracking. We will explore the involvement of the academy in promoting fracking and the politics of fracking in California. We will also address the negative consequences of oil spills and how these disasters extend to social networks and livelihoods of communities.

*This American Life podcast. Game Changer.* Available at:

*National Geographic.* “The New Oil Landscape.”
http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2013/03/bakken-shale-oil/dobb-text


Further reading:

**Week 14. Nov 24, 26**

Ted Talk: “William McDonough: Cradle to cradle design.” Available at:
http://www.ted.com/talks/william_mcdonough_on_cradle_to_cradle_design.html?%20William%20McDonough:%20Cradle%20to%20cradle%20design

Moving Forward: Does Every Dollar Make a Difference?

Student Presentations

Week 15. Dec 1
Student Presentations

Dec 3

Video: Zizek, Slavoj. RSA. “First as Tragedy, Then as Farce.” Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpAMbpQ8J7g

Week 16. Dec 8

Are Environmental solutions sustainable?


Further reading:

Dec 10
Environmental Problems Need Social Solutions.

Moving Forward: Social and Environmental Change-Ideas and Actions. How do we create new narratives about Society and the Environment?

The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-First Century Chapter 5. A Paradigm Shift in Our Concept of Education
Chapter 6. We are the Leaders We’ve Been Looking For.

Week 17. Dec 16 Final
12:15-2:15
Journal and Paper Due