

Democratic Citizenship

Soc 195 ☞ Fall 2008 ☞ SH 220

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Sociology 195 will focus on environmental citizenship. Citizenship concerns the rights and responsibilities of individuals within a polity. These rights and responsibilities can be considered in the context of the human-environment relationship. In this sense, being citizens involves recognizing that humans are part of a natural world and that our interactions with that world shape and are shaped by the lives of others, both human and nonhuman. Uneven relations of power are central to social difference and to the human-nonhuman relationship. Citizenship thus involves cognizance of these relations.

This course introduces you to the study of the nature-society relationship. We will explore the local-global forces that shape how humans and nonhumans live on the planet. Beginning with the ways of thinking and doing that have provided a foundation for Western socio-environmental interactions, we will move through a broad range of examples. The class provides conceptual tools that will help students to understand nature-society relations toward better human-nonhuman futures.

Required text:

Bell, Michael. 2009. *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology, 3rd edition*. Los Angeles, Pine Forge Press.

Your text provides a range of concepts that explain why it is important to think about *human-environment* relationships, why this society faces a variety of socio-environmental challenges and what means have been used to address them.



Greenpeace Canada sending New Democratic Party Leader Alexa McDonough off to Bonn, Germany for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 6 Part II Conference of the Parties July 2001. The placard reads “Bonn” Vacances. Photo credit: ©Greenpeace Canada/Calzavara, June 2001, Ottawa, Canada.



Schedule of Lecture Topics and Reading Assignments

Changes may be made to this syllabus.

Week 1 Fundamental concepts

Aug. 26 and 28 Introduction to the study of nature-society relations

Reading: Environmental Problems and Society, Chapter 1, pp. 1-17

August 29th Last day to drop with no W and a refund

Week 2 Case study: climate change

Sept. 2 and 4 Understanding global climate change as a socio-environmental problem

Cities and climate protection (drawing on my Ph.D. research)

Reading: Environmental Problems and Society, Chapter 1, pp. 18-30

Excerpts from An Inconvenient Truth and Everything's cool (dvds)

Week 3 Making places

Sept. 9, 11 Suburban and urban natures

Reading: Money and Machines, Chapter 3

Excerpts from: Who killed the electric car (dvd)

Week 4 The limits of consumption

Sept. 16 Consumption

Reading: Consumption and Materialism, Chapter 2

Sept. 18 Changing the story of stuff? The politics of consumption

The story of stuff (dvd)

Excerpts: Colbert, Sept. 17, 2008, oil companies and interview with GM exec.

Week 5 Globalization and development

Sept. 23 and 25 Colonialism, capitalism and development

Reading: Population and Development, Chapter 4

Week 6 Taming nature

Sept. 30 Feminist critiques of domination of nature and women

Monocultures across America: the lawn

Reading: The Ideology of Environmental Domination, Chapter 6

Oct. 2 Excerpts from: Cadillac Desert: An American Nile (pbs video)

Week 7 Gender, environment and development

Oct. 7-9 Gender and land tenure in the *Office due Niger*, Mali (drawing on MA research)

Reading: Excerpts from Robbins, Paul. 2004. *Political Ecology*. Malden, Blackwell.

Exam review

Assignment on d2l

Week 8

Oct. 14 **FIRST EXAM** worth 20%

Covering: Lectures, videos for weeks 1-5 and

Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4

Week 9 Environmental justice

Oct. 16 and 21 Environmental justice

Reading: Body and Health, Chapter 5

Excerpts from: The Beloved Community (dvd)

Excerpts from: Power (Cree Nation against Hydro Québec)

October 23, No class, Fall break

Week 10 Environmental Protection

Oct. 28 Rachel Carson and Silent Spring

Reading: The Ideology of Environmental Concern, Chapter 7

Excerpts from Waste = Food

Oct. 30 Global environmentalism

Week 11 The idea of wilderness

Nov. 4 and 6 The idea of wilderness and the creation of the park

Reading: The Human Nature of Nature, Chapter 8

Week 12 second exam

Nov. 11, No class

Nov. 13 **SECOND EXAM** worth 15%

Covering: weeks 6-10 lectures, videos and Readings: Bell chapters 5, 6, 7

Week 13 Risk and vulnerability

Nov. 18, 20 Katrina and abandonment

Reading: The Rationality of Risk, Chapter 9

Excerpts from When the Levees Broke (dvd)

Week 14 Socio-environmental change

Nov. 25 Changing the food system

Reading: Mobilizing the Ecological Society, Chapter 10

Excerpts from: The Future of Food (Michael Pollan on the cost of food, school gardens), King Corn and Humane Society video of downer cows

November 27, No class, thanksgiving

Week 15 What future nature?

Dec. 2 and 4 Sustainable cities

Excerpts: (dvd) Chicago: city of big shoulders

Environmental citizenship assignment due, December 2

Journals due in class, December 4

Reading: Governing the Ecological Society, Chapter 11

Week 16

Dec. 9 **THIRD EXAM** worth 15%

Covering: weeks 11-15 and chapters 8, 9, 10, 11 (Replaces exam during exam week)

Dec. 11 last class: exams and assignments discussed and returned

Course requirements:

In this course you will be expected to do the following:

1. Attend regularly. I will take attendance daily. Poor attendance will affect your grade.
2. Read your email. At various points in the course I will send you materials or instructions by email. During the semester you should check your email daily. Using email with me is also a good way to get quick answers to your questions.
3. Read all assigned pages in your text (approximately 20-30 pages which should be read for the first class of each week). Class discussions will be based on assigned readings.
4. Participate in class discussions. The success of this course depends on your participation. You must always come to class prepared to discuss assigned readings.
5. Complete and submit all assignments by due dates. These assignments include:
 - Journal writing assignment due Dec. 4
 - Environmental citizenship assignment due Dec. 2-11Assignments must be submitted by due dates. Late assignments will not be accepted, except in cases of documented emergencies.
6. Complete the environmental citizenship assignment (more details on d2l): Choose a socio-environmental issue that interests you and learn about it over the course of the semester. Prepare a brief single spaced account that you can submit online and a hard copy of the following:
 - 1) Keep a record of how you found or became interested in this issue. Did you start reading the newspaper, hear it on the Daily Show, learn about it in another class or from a friend? Did you pursue it and decide it was not so interesting—if so, why? Then what did you do? The idea is to catalogue a process of becoming interested in and aware of something about the human-environment.
 - 2) What are the aspects of this issue: a) is it local, global, both? b) who does it affect? c) why is it important to society d) what are its causes, e) what is being done about it?
 - 3) You will need to find a nonprofit organization(s) or state-nonprofit partnership working on the issue. What is the organization trying to do? What has it tried? With what outcomes?
7. Bring your journal to class each time. Journals will be used to practice free writing and writing in response to a question I provide. This will be done during every class period for 5 minutes at the beginning or end of class. You will be graded on a) whether you have an entry for each class, b) evidence of improvement in writing over the semester including clear topic sentences, proper grammar, flow and structure and c) ability to deal with the question provided.
8. Take three exams. You are allowed one page of notes to be used in these exams. You must tell me before the exam if an emergency has occurred making it impossible for you to take the test. Documentation will be required.



Grading

Class participation: 10%

Journal Assignment: 20%

Environmental Citizenship Assignment: 20%

Mid-term exam (in class exam on Oct. 21, short answer, fill in the blank, multiple choice): 25%

Final exam (same format as midterm): 25%

Grades

95-100 A	83-85 B	73-75 C	63-65 D
90-94 A-	80-82 B-	70-72 C-	60-62 D-
86-89 B+	76-79 C+	66-69 D+	0-59 F

A: achievement is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.

B: achievement is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.

C: achievement meets the course requirements in every respect.

D: achievement is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.

F: achievement is inadequate and no credit will be given for the course.

I: (Incomplete) assigned due to extraordinary circumstances, e.g., hospitalization, which prevent the completion of work on time. Requires a written agreement.

Learning disability

Please provide documentation and discuss your needs with me well before an exam or before we get far into the lectures.



Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to teaching and learning in a university. All students are expected to be honest in the completion of their assignments and exams. Seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. For this class, any form of academic dishonesty will result in an "F" for the course. The following statement outlines prohibited acts:

Academic dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of student status, and resume falsification. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the use by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in selling or otherwise providing term papers or other academic materials; and commercialization sale or distribution of class notes without the instructors' permission.

<http://www.stcloudstate.edu/studenthandbook/code/conduct.asp>