

Environmental Sociology

Development Sociology 3240

Spring 2017

Tuesday/Thursday, 1:25pm-2:40pm, 173 Warren Hall

Instructor

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Course Overview

Humans have fraught relationships with the animals, plants, land, water—even geological processes—around us. People struggle over who gets to use what, which resources to use or to keep intact, what scientific claims are true and worthy of action. People come together to revere, conserve, protect the things many call nature. Every environmental concern is on some level a social concern, and more social concerns than we often realize are environmental concerns. In this course, we will examine how people make and respond to environmental change and how groups of people form, express, fight over, and work out environmental concerns. We will probe how population change, economic activity, government action, social movements, and changing ways of thinking shape human-environmental relationships. Through these conversations, we will explore possibilities for rich and durable ways of living together in our social and material world.

Our goal in this course is to give you knowledge, analytical tools, and expressive skills that help you feel confident to address environmental concerns as a social scientist and a citizen. We will work together so that by the end of the course you will be able to

- explain different perspectives about how people create and resolve environmental concerns
- discuss key debates in the sociology of environmental change, communicating the theoretical claims and empirical evidence each side of the debate brings to bear
- competently evaluate claims about environmental risk and vulnerability
- use sociological concepts and tools to analyze the emergence, dynamics, and outcomes of environmental controversies
- express your knowledge and reasoning in engaging written communication

Note: We are constantly on the lookout for materials that are current and helpful to you. As a result, this syllabus may change at the instructors' discretion.

Readings

Bell, Michael and Loka L. Ashwood. 2016. *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*. **Fifth edition**. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Shapiro, Judith. 2016. *China's Environmental Challenges*. **Second edition**. Malden, Massachusetts: Polity Press.

Note: Both books are on reserve at the Mann Library. If you use electronic versions, you will be responsible for locating content indicated by page numbers in the paper edition.

Other readings and audiovisual materials will be provided on Blackboard.

All of the course material is meant to contribute to your learning; otherwise, it would not be assigned. We will work together to ensure that you absorb the main ideas and key points of every reading.

Course Requirements and Grading

To get a good grade in this course, not to mention get the full benefit of the ideas we'll share, you will have to come to class fully prepared, participate thoughtfully, complete assignments, and take a test. We will provide materials and assistance, and what you do with these will decide how much you learn.

Participation

You will get something out of this class – a grade, and a measure of interest and enjoyment – to the extent that you're there, really there: coming prepared, listening thoughtfully, and making helpful contributions. We encourage your there-ness by doing our best to provide engaging material and also by making there-ness matter for your grade. We understand that everyone has 'off' days. We also understand that you are starting from different places and that speaking in class makes some students uncomfortable. We hope this class will give all students a chance to hone participation skills. We will provide varied opportunities to participate: discussions, quizzes, group activities, and Blackboard questions or forums. Each day you will receive a ✓+, ✓, or ✓- for participation, or a 0 if you are absent. Keep in mind that the rubric is a flexible tool and is designed to give us a global sense of your contributions over time. The lowest 2 will be dropped, effectively allowing 2 absences without penalty.

Criterion	Excellent - thanks! (✓+)	Room to improve (✓)	Needs to change (✓-)
Attendance, preparedness for class	Is present, has all needed materials, has evidently done the required reading, and is ready to start when class does. Excels on quizzes.	Brings most or all needed materials to class, has the required reading, arrives on time. Moderate quiz performance.	Has not completed the reading or brought materials. Is not ready when class starts, arrives late, or is absent. Fails quizzes.
Contributions (quantitative)	Contributes on a regular basis. Converses without dominating.	Contributes occasionally. Alternatively, verges on dominating discussion.	Does not speak, or spoken contributions are poorly considered.
Contributions (qualitative)	Provides interesting or useful general impressions, well-founded opinions, relevant and clarifying questions, responses to classmates' questions, or specific and thoughtful criticisms. Shows understanding of assigned readings. Uses concepts and terminology appropriately.	Provides ideas or questions that are constructive and occasionally insightful, but sometimes are general, are not relevant, repeat what has been said, or reveal a lack of preparation. Mostly uses appropriate terminology.	Makes comments that are off topic or uninformative, not expressing concepts accurately. Relies on opinion and personal taste, e.g., "I love it" or "It's bad" without evidence or integration of new information. Shows a lack of preparation.
Presence	Demonstrates engagement: not only speaks, but also listens attentively (does not repeat what has been said) and takes notes as appropriate.	Makes a bit of effort: is awake, paying attention, and occasionally jots something down.	Is distracted, distracts classmates, falls asleep.

The Bluebook

We will provide a notebook you can use for dialogue with us and for content checks. The bluebook lets us have a dialogue aside from classroom discussions. Write your questions and concerns; we'll respond. Also, now and then we will pose a question or two during class for you to answer in your notebook. The grade applies only to the question we pose, with partial credit just for answering.

Short Assignments

On 4 occasions you will receive a prompt to write a short paper (less than 1,000 words). These prompts will ask you apply concepts that we have discussed or read about. Some will contribute to developing ideas for your final article. They will be graded on mastery, creative engagement, and quality. We will provide a detailed rubric with the assignment.

The e-Zine

Environmental sociology is about controversies. The field emerged in efforts to understand how people struggle over weighing conservation against development, redressing and preventing public health hazards, and taking on technological risks. In most any controversy you will find organizations: groups of people who act on a common purpose. These organizations make claims about facts – whether a problem exists and who it affects – and values – what things we should be concerned about. They work on each other, on governments, on businesses, and on the public to press for different courses of action. To work toward just, safe, and rewarding resolutions, we need to understand these struggles.

As an environmental-sociologist-in-training, over the course of the semester you will get familiar with an environmental controversy. Through a series of assignments, you will examine this issue using tools environmental sociology provides. You will also hone your ability to tell stories with the written word, presenting facts and viewpoints with accuracy, integrity, and care. We will also read and talk about some examples of long-form articles. This work will culminate an online publication on Medium, in which you will have the option to include your article.

The Test

We will have one test, on the final exam date. This test may address any information from readings and lectures in the course (including any guest lectures). It may include short-answer and long-form open-ended questions, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and other question formats. We will provide a list of key concepts and topics from each segment that you will be expected to understand. For the test, you will be allowed to bring in one 8.5"×11" sheet of paper containing notes you have prepared.

The Numbers

Assignment	Percent
Participation	10
Blue Book	10
Short Reflections (4x6 points)	24
Test	20
e-Zine Project:	36
Proposal	2
Annotated Bibliography	3
Full Draft	9
Peer Review	4
Revised Draft	18
Total	100

Assignment Submission

Every written assignment is due by 12:00PM on the date listed in the syllabus, uploaded into the appropriate dropbox on Blackboard. Late work will be penalized one-half letter grade on the same day and one full letter grade per day for the next five days. After five days, unless emergency circumstances (e.g., a health issue, a death in the family) can be documented, you will receive a zero. It is your responsibility to make sure the document is effectively submitted.

Extra Credit Policy

Out of concern for fairness, we do not offer extra credit. An activity that merits grade credit necessarily requires time and effort. But not all students have time available. As a result, extra credit opportunities bring a bias in favor of students who can take extra time. Since this luxury isn't available to all, we aim to give everyone a reasonable chance to do well by meeting the evaluation criteria within this syllabus.

Making a Good Learning and Teaching Environment

We want to foster a classroom environment that's as conducive as possible to your learning. That requires that all students have a fair chance to pay attention and take part in dialogue and that we can communicate with you without impediment. We have put together these class policies based on our experiences of what does and does not help make this possible.

Course Citizenship. We seek to create a learning community in which issues are explored and class members come to better understand the opposing views on these issues. Therefore, in class discussions we will foster candid exploration of any topic relevant to the course. Students come to this course with a wide range of views. You should come to class mentally prepared to discuss pertinent topics with people who take positions that differ markedly from yours. Our goal is for all members of the class to feel that their knowledge, experiences, and insights are welcomed and valued, even when other people see things differently. As a course citizen, we expect that you will both calmly explain your views and reasoning and listen to the reasoning and views of those taking positions that you differ on. This requires that we all come from a starting point where we examine assumptions and, rather than taking current arrangements for granted, are open to thinking about the possibilities and limits of alternatives.

Food is all right; just be considerate. Hunger and thirst make it hard to focus and learn. So you are allowed to have snacks, but be discreet, considering your classmates. If students notify us that snacking is distracting them, we may request that people be more thoughtful, or change this guideline.

No Cell Phone Use. Using cell phones in class disrupts your own and other students' learning. Turn your cell phone off when class starts. If there is an emergency reason you must check your phone on a particular day, talk to us about it before class.

Laptop & Tablet Time. Studies have found that taking notes on laptops is actually less effective in helping you remember than taking notes by hand, because in taking notes by hand people process information differently to record key points in limited time. Moreover, using devices for tasks unrelated to class distracts you and your classmates. We acknowledge that students have requested that instructors allow computers. Nonetheless, our concern for your learning requires that we disallow them most of the time. We know it's hard to adjust when you're used to typing notes; we've struggled with it, too. On some days we will announce times when computers will be allowed for a specific task. If you have a situation that makes you unable to take notes by hand, please contact us to discuss options. If you are unable to print readings and concerned about accessing content, we encourage you to take notes as you read.

Lecture Slides. We will post lecture slides on Blackboard once a week. These slides provide a broad outline; being attentive and taking notes in class will help you retain what we cover.

Communication. We are available and eager to help you succeed, so please do not hesitate to reach out to us in person or through email. When doing so, please communicate clearly and with courtesy. We will do our best to respond to emails within 48 hours. It will be easiest to reach us during work hours (8am-5pm weekdays). On nights and weekends we may be harder to reach due to personal and family

commitments outside of work. Likewise, we will do our best to ensure that our messages to you are clear and leave you ample time to respond. We will provide notifications through email and Blackboard; please check both regularly. *To ensure that we promptly identify and address your email, please include the text "DSOC 3240" in the header.*

Office Hours. We welcome you to come and talk about your questions, concerns, and interests. If you need to meet outside scheduled office hours, you can make an appointment. It is usually easiest if you do so by email. Office hours will not be devoted to tutorial for materials that students miss when not attending class. *If you have questions about content or assignments, please ask them during lecture so we can all benefit from clarification.*

Extra Support

In compliance with the Cornell University policy and equal access laws, we are available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for students with disabilities. Except in unusual circumstances, requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, so arrangements can be made. Students with either an ongoing or short-term disability are encouraged to contact Student Disability Services (SDS) for a confidential discussion of their need for academic accommodations. SDS is in 420 CCC building; phone number is 254-4545.

If you are experiencing undue personal or academic stress at any time or need to talk with someone about a personal problem or situation, we encourage you to seek support as soon as possible. We are available to talk with you about stresses related to your work in our class. Additionally, we can assist you in reaching out to any one of a wide range of campus resources, including

- Your college's Academic Advising or Student Services Office
- Cornell Learning Strategies Center at 255-6310, <http://lsc.cornell.edu>
- Cornell Health at 255-5155, <https://health.cornell.edu/>
- Peer Support - Empathy Assistance & Referral Service at 255-EARS, <http://orgsync.rso.cornell.edu/org/ears>

Academic Integrity

Students enrolled in this course are expected to abide by the University's Code of Academic Integrity. If you have not already done so, I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the code so that you understand clearly what constitutes plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism and cheating of any kind on an examination or assignment will have serious consequences, including a possible automatic "F" for the course. The Code of Academic Integrity and information on "Acknowledging the Work of Others" can be found at <http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/aic.cfm>.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism, as well as our own manual review. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the [Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site](#).

Class Schedule

Date	Week, Theme	Readings	Assignments
25-Jan	1, Why?		
30-Jan	2, Nuts and Bolts	B&A Ch 1	
1-Feb		Shapiro Ch 1	
6-Feb	3, People, Land, and Development	B&A Ch 5	
8-Feb		Shapiro Ch 2: pp. 34-38, 44-57; Zhang et al.	SA1 Values & Factual Claims
13-Feb	4, Consuming Things, Consuming Ourselves	B&A Ch 2: 49-56; Schor	
15-Feb		Shapiro Ch 2: 38-44; Perdue & Pavela 2012; Whoriskey	SA1 Due; SA2 Interests
20-Feb	BREAK		
22-Feb		Szasz; Schor	SA2 Due; Proposal
27-Feb	5, Making Stuff, Making Money, Making a Mess	B&A Ch 3: 78-95; Schmidt	
1-Mar		B&A Ch 3: 95-106; Freudenburg	Proposal due; SA3 Narrative
6-Mar	6, Governing the Ecological Society	B&A 345-356, 361-362, 246-250	
8-Mar		Shapiro Ch. 3	SA3 Due; Biblio
13-Mar	7, Science, Technology, & Accountability	B&A 107-124; Zehner; Hakim	
15-Mar		McCright & Dunlap; Dembicki 2017	Biblio Due; SA4 Political Opportunity Structures
20-Mar	8, The Human Nature of Nature	B&A Ch 9: 252-258, 264-272, 279-282; Angelo & Jerolmack	
22-Mar		Purdy; Oreskes & Conway	SA4 Due; Full Draft
27-Mar	9, Environmental Values and Opinions	B&A Ch. 8: 220-246, 250-251	
29-Mar		Shapiro Ch. 4	
3-Apr	BREAK		
5-Apr	BREAK		
10-Apr	10, Disasters, Risk, and Vulnerability	B&A Ch 10	
12-Apr		Ritchie, FRONTLINE	Full Draft Due; Peer Review
17-Apr	11, Confronting Environmental Injustices	B&A Ch 6; B&A 337-340	
19-Apr		Shapiro Ch. 6	Peer Review Due; Final Article
24-Apr	12, Environmental Movements	Brulle; Lemann	
26-Apr		Shapiro Ch. 5	
1-May	13, What Next?	B&A Ch 13	Final Article Due
3-May		Review	Review Questions
8-May	14, What have we made?	Classmates' Articles	
TBA	Final Exam		

Detailed Contents

Week 2: Nuts and Bolts

Tuesday, January 30

Bell and Ashwood, Ch. 1.

Thursday, February 1

Shapiro, Ch. 1.

Week 3: People, Land, and Development

Tuesday, February 6

Bell & Ashwood, Ch. 5.

Thursday, February 8

Shapiro, Ch 2: pp. 34-38 (to Rise of the Middle Class), 44-57 (Land Use Changes to end).

Zhang, Zhiming, John Aloysius Zinda, and Wenqing Li. 2017. "Forest Transitions in Chinese Villages: Explaining Community-Level Variation under the Returning Farmland to Forest Program." *Land Use Policy* 64:245-57.

Week 4: Consuming the Earth, Consuming Ourselves

Tuesday, February 13

Bell & Ashwood, Ch. 2, 49-56 (stop at Consumption, Modern Style).

Schor, Juliet. 2010. Chapter 2 in *Plenitude: The New Economics of True Wealth*. New York: Penguin Press.

Thursday, February 15

Perdue, Robert Todd and Gregory Pavela. 2012.

"Addictive Economies and Coal Dependency Methods of Extraction and Socioeconomic Outcomes in West Virginia, 1997-2009." *Organization & Environment* 25(4):368-84.

Shapiro, Ch. 2: pp. 38-44 (Rise of the Middle Class to Land Use Changes).

Whoriskey, Peter. 2016. "The Batteries in Your Favorite Devices Are Literally Covering Chinese Villages in Black Soot." *Washington Post*, October 2.

(<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/business/batteries/graphite-mining-pollution-in-china/>).

Thursday, February 22

Szasz, Andrew. 2007. *Shopping Our Way to Safety: How We Changed from Protecting the Environment to Protecting Ourselves*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press. Pp. 1-8, 99-103, 194-211.

Schor, Juliet. 2010. Chapter 4 in *Plenitude: The New Economics of True Wealth*. New York: Penguin Press.

Week 5: Making Stuff, Making Money, Making a Mess

Tuesday, February 27

Bell & Ashwood, Ch. 3, pp. 78-95.

Schmidt, Conrad. 2012 *Workers of the World Relax, Part II: Here we go again*

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5UyPowNuYI>)

& *Workers of the World Relax III: Alternatives to Growth*

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssz0zWHswZE>)

Thursday, March 1

Bell & Ashwood, Ch. 3, pp. 95-106 (The Constructed Market to end).

Freudenburg, William R. 2005. "Privileged Access, Privileged Accounts: Toward a Socially Structured Theory of Resources and Discourses." *Social Forces* 84 (1): 89-114.

Week 6: Governing the Ecological Society

Tuesday, March 6

Bell & Ashwood, pp. 345-356 (stop at Supplying Water in a Costa Rican Village), 361-362 (Governing Participation), 246-250 (Ecological Modernization).

Thursday, March 8

Shapiro, Ch. 3.

Week 7: Science, Technology, & Accountability

Tuesday, March 13

Bell & Ashwood, Ch. 4, pp. 107-124 (to The Black Box).

Zehner, Ozzie. 2013. "Unclean at Any Speed." *IEEE Spectrum: Technology, Engineering, and Science News*, June 30.

(<http://spectrum.ieee.org/energy/renewables/unclean-at-any-speed>).

Hakim, Danny. 2016. "Scientists Loved and Loathed by an Agrochemical Giant." *The New York Times*, December 31 (<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/31/business/scientists-loved-and-loathed-by-syngenta-an-agrochemical-giant.html>).

Oreskes, Naomi. Why We Should Believe in Science. https://www.ted.com/talks/naomi_oreskes_why_we_should_believe_in_science

Thursday, March 15 Guest Speaker: David Kay

McCright, Aaron M. and Riley E. Dunlap. 2010. "Anti-Reflexivity: The American Conservative Movement's Success in Undermining Climate Science and Policy." *Theory, Culture & Society* 27(2-3):100-133.

Dembicki, Geoff. 2017. "The Convenient Disappearance of Climate Change Denial in China." *Foreign Policy*.

(<https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/05/31/the-convenient-disappearance-of-climate-change-denial-in-china/>).

Week 8: The Human Nature of Nature

Tuesday, March 20

Bell & Ashwood, Ch. 9, pp. 252-260 (stop at Morton's Craniometry), 264-272 (Environment as a Social Construction to Tourism), 279-282 (Dialogue of Nature and Ideology to end).

Angelo, Hilary and Colin Jerolmack. 2012. "Nature's Looking Glass." *Contexts* 11(1):24-29.

Thursday, March 22

Purdy, Jedediah. 2016. "The New Nature." *Boston Review*, January 4 (<https://bostonreview.net/forum/jedediah-purdy-new-nature>). Read commentaries as well.

Oreskes, Naomi and Erik M. Conway. 2013. "The Collapse of Western Civilization: A View from the Future." *Daedalus* 142(1):40-58.

Week 9: Environmental Values and Opinions

Tuesday, March 27

Bell & Ashwood, Ch. 8: 220-246 (stop at Ecological Modernization), 250-251 (Dialogue of Environmental Concern).

Thursday, March 29

Shapiro, Ch. 4.

Week 10: Disasters, Risk, and Vulnerability

Tuesday, April 10

Bell & Ashwood, Ch. 10.

Thursday, April 12

Ritchie, Liesel Ashley, Duane A. Gill, and J. Steven Picou. 2011. "The BP Disaster as an Exxon Valdez Rerun." *Contexts* 10(3):30-35.

FRONTLINE. 2016. "Business of Disaster." (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/business-of-disaster/>).

Week 11: Confronting Environmental Injustices

Tuesday, April 17

Bell & Ashwood, Ch 6; B&A 337-340 (Double Politics and the Political Opportunity Structure).

Thursday, April 19

Shapiro, Ch. 6.

Week 12: Environmental Movements

Tuesday, April 24

Brulle, Robert J. 2015. Pp. 263-82 in *Twenty lessons in Environmental Sociology*, edited by K. A. Gould and T. L. Lewis. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lemann, Nicholas. 2013. "When the Earth Moved." *The New Yorker*, April 15.

(<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/04/15/when-the-earth-moved>)

Thursday, April 26

Shapiro, Ch. 5.

Week 13: What Next?

Tuesday, May 1

Bell and Ashwood, Ch. 13.

Thursday, May 3

Review.

Week 14: What have we made?

Tuesday, May 8

Classmates' articles.