

Environmental Sociology

Development Sociology 3240

Spring 2020

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

Instructor

John Zinda

jaz65@cornell.edu

251A Warren Hall

Office Hours: Thursdays 3:00pm-4:30pm or by
appointment

Teaching Assistant

Ryan Nehring

rln53@cornell.edu

142 Warren Hall

Office Hours: Fridays, 1:00pm-3:00pm

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. 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 one can use to test those claims
- 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

This year, we are fortunate to have the Cornell Contemporary China Initiative lecture series on China's Environmental Transformations linked to this course. This is an extraordinary opportunity to have conversations with leading scholars on environmental issues in China. On five occasions, a visiting speaker will give a lecture. They will join us in class the following day. Lectures are on Monday afternoons, 4:30pm-6:00pm, in 64 Goldwin Smith Hall, and will be recorded.

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.

Texts

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 materials will be provided on Canvas. The reading load is comparable with other Development Sociology classes, though you may find it greater than you are used to if your major is in another field. All 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 in each 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 students start from different places and speaking in class makes some students uncomfortable. We will provide varied opportunities to show your there-ness: discussions, group activities, and your bluebook notebook. Each day you will receive a ✓+, ✓, or ✓- for participation, or a 0 if you are absent. The rubric below gives a broad sense of the aspects of participation to keep in mind. 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	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, does 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)	Expresses useful general impressions, well-founded opinions, relevant and clarifying questions, responses to classmates' points, 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 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.

Short Assignments

On 3 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 of content, strength of argumentation, and writing quality. We will provide a detailed rubric with the assignment.

Quizzes

Quizzes take three forms: announced quizzes on Canvas, reading guide hand-outs, and unannounced quizzes in class. Canvas quizzes either address readings or a CCCI lecture. Other small assignments may also count toward Quiz credit.

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. 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 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 CCCI and 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 master. For the test, you will be allowed to bring in one 8.5"×11" sheet of paper containing notes you have prepared.

The Numbers

NOTE: Do not rely on the Canvas tally, which may not accurately reflect your grade. To calculate your grade, use the figures below. You can also visit office hours to ask your current grade.

Assignment	Percent
Participation	10
Quizzes	10
Short Written Assignments (3•7 points)	21
Test	20
e-Zine Article:	39
Proposal	2
Annotated Bibliography	3
Full Draft	10
Peer Review	4
Revised Draft	20
Total	100

Assignment Submission

Every written assignment is due by 11:59PM on the date listed in the syllabus, uploaded into the appropriate dropbox on Canvas. Starting at midnight, 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, except in emergency circumstances (e.g., a health issue, a death in the family), 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 is 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.

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 Canvas; 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.*

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 devices 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 Canvas about once a week. These slides provide a broad outline; being attentive and taking notes in class will help you retain what we cover.

Additional Resources

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 early on. 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 607-254-4545.

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, <https://www.earscornell.org/>

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://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/academic-integrity/>.

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	Theme	Readings	Assignments, notes
21-Jan	Getting acquainted		
23-Jan	Nuts and Bolts	B&A 1	Canvas Poll Due
28-Jan		Shapiro Ch 1	
30-Jan	People, Land, and Development	B&A 5, New York Times	
4-Feb		Shapiro Ch 2; Zhang et al. 2017	
6-Feb	The Human Nature of Nature	B&A 9. Skip 259-263, 273-279; Angelo & Jerolmack	SA 1 Due
10-Feb	CCCI. Michael Hathaway. Transforming More-than-human Economies in Southwest China: The role of the Matsutake Mushroom		
11-Feb		TBA	
13-Feb	Consuming the Earth, Consuming Ourselves	B&A 2 49-56; Schor 2	
17-Feb	CCCI. Mindi Schneider. The Pork Fix: African Swine Fever and the Opportunity of Crisis in China's Pork Industry		
18-Feb		Liboiron; Heglar; Schor 4	SA 2 Due
20-Feb	Beyond Monologues	B&A 4 107-124	Bring a laptop or tablet!
25-Feb	BREAK		
27-Feb	Making Stuff, Making Money, Making a Mess	Schmidt; B&A 3 78-95	Proposal Due ; Sign up for office visit
3-Mar		B&A 3 95-106; Freudenburg	
5-Mar	Governing the Ecological Society	B&A 12 345-356, 361-362, 246-250	
9-Mar	CCCI. Anna Ahlers. Governing the Ecological Society - Insights from China's 'War on Air Pollution'		
10-Mar		Shapiro Ch. 3; Ahlers & Shen	
12-Mar	Religion & Environmental Action	Ellingson	SA 3 Due
16-Mar	CCCI. Emily Yeh. Shielding the Mountains: Environmentalism and articulations of nature in Tibet		
17-Mar		Shapiro Ch. 4	
19-Mar	Environmental Values & Opinions	B&A 7	Biblio Due , Bring a laptop or tablet!
24-Mar		B&A 8: 220-246, 250-251	
26-Mar	Environmental Movements	Lemann, Obach, B&A 337-340	
31-Mar	BREAK		
2-Apr	BREAK		
7-Apr		McAdam; Adler-Bell; NBC News	
9-Apr	Confronting Environmental Injustices	Shapiro Ch. 6	Full Draft Due
14-Apr		B&A 6	
16-Apr	Disasters, Risk, and Vulnerability	B&A 10 284-296; Edwards	Peer Review Due
20-Apr	CCCI. Bin Xu. The Politics of Compassion: The Sichuan Earthquake and Civic Engagement in China		
21-Apr		Shapiro Ch. 5	
23-Apr		B&A 10 296-311; Ritchie; NPR	
28-Apr	What Next?	TBA	Review Questions due
30-Apr		Review	Final Article Due
5-May	What have we made?	Classmates' Articles	
10-May	Final Exam		9:00 AM, location TBA