

Environmental Sociology

Global Development 3240

Spring 2023

Tuesday/Thursday, 9:40-10:55am, A106 Corson-Mudd

Instructor

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Make an appointment:

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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. 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, struggle over, and work out environmental concerns. We will probe how environmental injustices, demographic change, economic activity, government action, social movements, and changing ways of thinking shape human-environmental relationships. Through our conversations, we will explore possibilities for 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
- 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.

Texts

Gould, Kenneth A., and Tammy L. Lewis. 2020. *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*. 3rd edition. Oxford University Press.

Méndez, Michael. 2020. *Climate Change from the Streets: How Conflict and Collaboration Strengthen the Environmental Justice Movement*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Other materials will be provided on Canvas.

Note: Both are on reserve at the Mann Library. If you use an electronic version, you will be responsible for locating content indicated by page numbers in the paper edition. Do not use earlier editions of Twenty Lessons: several chapters are new to this edition.

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 need to come to class fully prepared, participate thoughtfully, and do a good job on assignments.

Attendance & Blue Book

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 to enable you to learn through both lectures and varied individual and group exercises. Part of your grade combines of attendance and engagement in a notebook we provide to you.

The attendance part works like this: for each class meeting, you have a grade that can range up to 1 if you are present, but is 0 if you are absent. We understand that illness, emergency, and other circumstances can keep you from attending every class. The lowest 2 will be dropped, effectively allowing 2 absences without penalty. If you experience circumstances that cause you to be absent beyond these 2, please reach out to us.

The blue book part works like this: Now and then we will pose a question or prompt, which you will respond to in your blue book. Sometimes, these will be quiz-like questions, graded for accuracy. Other times, you will get credit for a complete response. We will tell you which is the case. Full credit is 1 for the day; partial credit is some fraction of 1.

The blue book is not just for these prompts, though. It's for us to have a dialogue. Have a question? Ask it. Have an experience to share or a comment you didn't get to make? Share it. Have a concern about something that happened in class? Tell us. At least once a week, we will go through the blue books and respond as needed. It's a great place for us to get to know each other and deepen our learning.

Short Assignments

On 2 occasions you will receive a prompt to write a short paper (less than 1,000 words). Short assignments will apply ideas we have discussed or read about. Some will contribute to developing ideas for your final article. They will be graded on fulfillment of the prompt, strength of argumentation, and writing quality. We will provide a detailed rubric.

Reading Guides & Miscellaneous Assignments

To help you work through readings, we provide reading guides, either on paper or in the Canvas quiz function. Completing other small assignments and class polls also contributes to this item.

Group Reviews

At several points in the semester, we will assign group activities to take stock of what we have learned so far and integrate material from different segments of the course.

The e-Zine

The field of environmental sociology emerged in efforts to understand how people struggle over public health hazards, weighing conservation against development, 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 and integrity. This work will culminate an online publication on Medium, in which you will have the option to include your article.

Assignment Submission

Every written assignment is due by 5:00PM on the date listed in the syllabus, uploaded into the appropriate dropbox on Canvas. It is your responsibility to make sure it is effectively submitted.

We understand that various situations arise that make it difficult to meet assignment deadlines. Should you meet with such a situation and need extra time, please reach out to us as soon as you can.

The Numbers

NOTE: DO NOT rely on the automatic calculation in Canvas, which will not accurately reflect your grade. To calculate your grade, use the figures below. We will periodically provide estimates of your current total grade on Canvas.

Assignment	Percent
Blue Book & Attendance	10
Reading Guides & Misc. Assignments	25
Short Assignments (4, 6 points)	10
Group Reviews	15
e-Zine Project:	40
Proposal	1
Concept Resource Summary	6
Full Draft	8
Peer Review	2
Presentation	3
Revised Article	20
Total	100

Letter	Range	Point
A+	97-100	100
A	94-96	95
A-	90-93	92
B+	87-89	88
B	84-86	85
B-	80-83	82
C+	77-79	78
C	74-76	75
C-	70-73	72
D+	67-69	68
D	64-66	65
D-	60-63	62
F	0-59	55

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 everybody's learning. That requires that all students have an equitable chance to pay attention and take part in dialogue and that we can communicate without difficulty. Our approach is based on our experiences of what does and does not help make this possible.

Course Citizenship. We want this to be a place where everybody is able to share their reasoning and experiences so that together we can come to fuller understanding. This is hard to achieve. To do it, we need to facilitate discussion thoughtfully, and you need to participate mindfully. As a course citizen, we expect you to make a good faith effort to listen and express yourself in ways that build people up. That includes making it known when something said in class strikes you as hurtful or harmful. It also includes being willing to let your own assumptions be questioned. At any time, please let us know if you think we could do a better job facilitating this.

Communication. 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. *We are available and eager to help you succeed, so please do not hesitate to reach out to us.* When doing so, please communicate clearly and with courtesy. We will do our best to respond to email 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. *To ensure that we promptly identify your email, please include the text "GDEV 3240" in the header.*

Office Hours. We will hold in-person office hours during the times listed. If you need to meet outside scheduled office hours, use the link above or email us to make an appointment. *If you have questions about content or assignments, please ask them during class so we can all benefit from clarification.*

Lecture Slides. We will post lecture slides on Canvas about once a week, after presenting them. Slides provide a broad outline; being attentive and taking notes in class will help you retain what we cover.

Meeting Your Needs

Students with Disabilities: Your access in this course is important to us. If you have or think you may have a disability, please contact Student Disability Services for a confidential discussion:

sds_cu@cornell.edu, 607-254-4545, <https://sds.cornell.edu>. Please request your accommodation letter early in the semester, or as soon as you become registered with SDS, so that we have adequate time to arrange your approved academic accommodations.

Once SDS approves your accommodation letter, it will be emailed to both you and the instructor. Please follow up with me to discuss the necessary logistics of your accommodations. If you experience any access barriers in this course, such as with printed content, graphics, online materials, or any communication barriers, reach out to me or your SDS counselor right away. If you need an immediate accommodation, please speak with me after class or send an email message to me and SDS at sds_cu@cornell.edu.

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/>
- Cornell Writing Center <https://knight.as.cornell.edu/wc>

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

Segment	Date	Theme	Readings	Assignments Due
Getting Started	24-Jan	Getting started		
	26-Jan	Environmental Sociology & Environmental Justice	20 Lessons Introduction; 20 Lessons 10: Environmental Inequality and Environmental Justice	
Land	31-Jan	Human Ecology	20 Lessons 8: Population, Demography, and the Environment	
	2-Feb	Political Ecology	Robbins Ch1, 5; Singh & Sharma 2022; OPTIONAL: Robbins Ch7	
	7-Feb	Land Change	Zinda & Zhang 2019	
	9-Feb	Nature	Angelo & Jerolmack	
	14-Feb	Indigenous Ecologies	20 Lessons 3: The State and Policy; Whyte; Healy & Baker	
	16-Feb	Sustainable Development	20 Lessons 20: Sust Dev & Tourism	
	21-Feb	Consumption	Liboiron; Shove	SA1
	23-Feb	Consumption	20 Lessons 11: Sociology of Environmental Health; Bernstein 2017	
	28-Feb	Break		
Air	2-Mar	Treadmills	20 Lessons 2: Theories in Environmental Sociology	
	7-Mar		Summing up & Writing	
	9-Mar	Treadmills	Lewis; Einhorn & Andreoni	Proposal
	14-Mar	Ecological Modernization	20 Lessons 15: Climate Change; Robbins	
	16-Mar	Beyond ToP & EMT	Freudenburg	SA2
	21-Mar	Social Movements	20 Lessons 18: Environmental Social Movements	
	23-Mar	Social Movements	Obach; Brulle & Roberts	Concept Resource
	28-Mar	Climate Justice Movements	Mendez 1	
	30-Mar	Climate Justice Movements	Mendez 2	
	11-Apr	Climate Justice Movements	20 Lessons 19: Environmental Movements in the Global South; Mendez Ch6	
	13-Apr		Summing up & Writing	Speed Presentations
Water	18-Apr	Disaster	20 Lessons 14: Understanding Disaster Vulnerability	Full Draft
	20-Apr	Disaster	Grineski etal 2017	
	25-Apr	Disaster	Tierney 1-2	
	27-Apr	Disaster	Tierney 3; Kohari	
	2-May	Disaster	Tierney 5	
	4-May	Disaster	Summing up & Writing	Peer Review
	9-May	Wrapping Up	20 Lessons Conclusion	
	TBD			Final Article