Prerequisite

Students are not expected to have any background in sociology or in environmental science.

Course Descriptive

This course is an introduction to environmental sociology. Basically, environmental sociology is a new and emerging diverse and multidisciplinary study that covers a wide range of topics. Sociologists identified that environmental-related issues we face in modern society have gone far beyond technical and scientific issues, but are actually always profound and intractable social issues. In this sense, environmental sociology is the study of how social systems will interact with ecosystems. This course will take a social scientific approach to explore the relationship between man and nature, especially between social systems and ecosystems.

In general, the course mainly consists of four sections. In the first section, we will introduce and explain both micro and macro-level contemporary theories in environmental sociology. In the following section, we will thoroughly examine the systemic causes of environmental disruption. In the third section, we will address the consequences of environmental disruption on for social systems (e.g. vulnerability, and environmental inequality). Finally, we will focus on the collective responses to environmental disruption (e.g. environmental movements, environmental governance, and environmental justice) at the local, regional, national and transnational level. Specifically, we will critically discuss and analyze how the broad-scale social changes exerts great influence on local environmental conditions as well as the global ecosystem from a comparative perspective.

Course Objectives

The main objectives of this course are to provide a broad overview of the patterns, factors and processes of environmental disruptions and help students develop a sociological perspective on environmental issues.

The specific goals of this course are listed as followed:

- To acquaint students with the ideas, concepts and research approach on contemporary environmental issues from a sociological perspective;
- To offer students a wide exposure to how social changes (e.g. the economic, political, demographic, cultural as well as ideological institutions), in the past and the present, have impact on environmental issues.
- To have more in-depth understanding of the consequences of environmental disruptions on social systems, theoretically and empirically.
- To improve critical thinking ability on the analysis of the collective response to the environmental disruptions at the local and international level.
Required Textbook/Readings


PPT will be available on the Blackboard/Vista course website.

In addition, there will be a special program *Journey to Planet Earth* with ten 50-minute digitalized episodes involved in this course. The program produced by Emmy Award-winning filmmakers Marilyn and Hal Weiner of PBS is designed to explore “the fragile relationship between people and the world they inhabit” in the global era, and provide a snapshot of the new and emerging economy that relies on renewable resources. More details about the introduction of this program are available at [http://www.pbs.org/journeytoplanetearth/about/index.html](http://www.pbs.org/journeytoplanetearth/about/index.html).

Students are expected to complete watching one episode per week.

Teaching & Learning Methods

**WebCT**

Access: [www.webct.utah.edu](http://www.webct.utah.edu)
Log in: uNID and password.

All of course syllabus and reading materials are available on Blackboard/Vista of the WebCT. If any questions about use of WebCT, please call the campus helpdesk at (801-581-4000).

Evaluation Methods and Criteria

**Weekly Discussions**

There will be 10 weekly discussions required to be posted on the Web-CT discussion boards. Each student is expected to post at least 1 comment on the discussion thread based on that week’s readings. The weekly discussions will provide opportunities to encourage students to be able to critically think. The weekly will be accessible from 8:00 am on Wednesday to midnight on Friday, and worth 10% of your final grade.

**Weekly Quizzes**

There will be 10 weekly quizzes posted on the Web-CT assessment boards. Each Student is expected to complete about 1 quiz per week. The weekly quizzes are designed for students to demonstrate their individual mastery of knowledge corresponding to that week’s reading materials. Please note that there will no make-up quizzes even under emergency situations. The quizzes will be worth 10% of your final grade.

**Exams**

There will be two exams. The midterm exam will cover the materials of the first half of class, and the final exam will cover the materials of the second half of class. Both the two exams will
constitute of three parts: multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions. The exams will be posted on Web-CT at 9:00 am on the first day of the week the exam is scheduled. Students will have 4 hours to complete the exams during the week before Friday Midnight. Each exam will be worth 30% of your final grade.

Please note make-up exams will only be allowed in the case of natural disaster, hospitalization or death of immediate family members. Written proof of such emergency situations is required. All make up exams will be given at the testing center during the week of the final exam. Students who have to take make-up exams at the testing center should email me in advance to make arrangements.

**Paper**
There will be one 4 single-spaced pages (Times New Roman, 12-point font) research paper required in this course. The research paper will help students to gain insightful perspectives and in-depth information about a specific topic related to the content of environmental sociology. The research paper exam will be worth 20% of your final grade.

Please send your research paper by midnight on the due day. Any late paper will NOT be accepted.

**Grading**

Weekly discussion: 10%
Weekly quizzes: 20%
Midterm Exam: 25%
Final Exam: 25%
Research paper: 20%

Final letter grades will be guided by the following scales:

A+ (97-100)
A (93-96)
A- (90-92)
B+ (87-89)
B (83-86)
B- (80-82)
C+ (77-79)
C (73-76)
C- (70-72)
D+ (67-69)
D (63-66)
D- (60-62)
E (<60)
**American With Disability Act (ADA):** University guidelines for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) require the following to be included in all syllabi:

“The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternate format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.”

**Faculty Responsibilities**
According to the Faculty Code, it is the responsibility of the faculty to enforce responsible, respectful, trustful and professional classroom behaviors. Faculty members must competently perform their responsibilities as teachers.

**Student Responsibilities**
According to Student Code, “‘Academic misconduct’ includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information, as defined further below. It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct”. In order to ensure that the highest standards of academic conduct are promoted and supported at the University, students must adhere to generally accepted standards of academic honesty. Appropriate behavioral guidelines are outlined in the University of Utah student code at [http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html](http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html). Students should read the code carefully and be familiar with the content they are responsible for.
Weekly Schedule of Topics and Due Dates

Week 1 (January 9) Introduction to Environmental Sociology
Readings:
- ES: chapter 1 (p1-28)
- TLES: chapter 1 (p1-8)

Video:
Rivers of destiny

Part One  Theory: Realism or Constructivism
Week 2 (January 16) Environmental Sociology: A New Paradigm
Readings:
- ES: Chapter 2 (p29-66)
- TLES: Chapter 2 & 3 (p11-44)

Video:
Urban Explosion

Part Two: Systemic Causes of Environmental Disruption
Week 3 (January 23) Economic Factors: Production and Consumption
Readings:
- ES: Chapter 9 (p335-348)
- TLES: Chapter 5 & 6 (p59-84)

Video:
Land of plenty, land of want

Week 4 (January 30) Political Factors: State Politics and Policy
Readings:
- ES: Chapter 9 (p349-365)
- TLES: Chapter 4 (p 47-58)

Video:
On the brink

Week 5 (February 6) Demographic and Cultural Factors
Readings:
- ES: Chapter 5 (p 149-198)
- TLES: Chapter 9 (p107-124)

Video:
Seas of grass

Week 6 (February 13) Science, Technological Change and the Environment
Readings:
- ES: Chapter 6 (p 199-244)
- TLES: Chapter 7&8 (p85-106)

Video:
Unintentional Green City

Week 7 (February 20) President’s Day  No Class

Week 8 (February 27) Review & Midterm Exam
Part Three: Social Consequences of Environmental Disruption
Week 9 (March 6) Disaster Vulnerability, Reflexive Modernization and Risk Society
Readings:
- ES: Chapter 9 (p109-150)
- TLES: Chapter 13 & 14 (p176-208)
Video:
Hot zones

Week 10 Spring Break

Week 11 (March 20) Domestic/Global Environmental Inequality
Readings:
- TLES: Chapter 10,11 & 12 (p127-175)
Video:
Future conditional

Part Four: Collective Responses to Environmental Disruptions
Week 12 (March 27) Environmental Discourse Analysis
Readings:
- ES: Chapter 8 (p 289-334)
- TLES: Chapter 18 & 19 (p255-289)
Video:
State of the planet

Week 13 (April 2) Environmental Governance, Justice and Sustainability
Readings:
- ES: Chapter 7 (p245-290)
- TLES: Chapter 16 (p228-243)
Video:
State of the planet's wildlife

Week 14 (April 9) Environmental Movement in a Global World
Readings:
- TLES: Chapter 15 &17 (p211-227 & p244-254)
Video:
State of the ocean's animals

Week 15 (April 16) International Regimes and the Future of Environmental Sociology
Readings:
- ES: Chapter 10 (p366-397)
- TLES: Chapter 20 (p290-298)

Week 16 (April 23) Review & Final Exam

Week 17 (April 30) Final Paper Due by the midnight of May 4th.

Notes:
- Any changes about the syllabus throughout the semester will be announced on Web-CT.
Useful Further Resources

Optional textbooks

Websites
Earth First!  http://www.earthfirst.org/
Earth watch  http://www.earthwatch.org/
Earth Island  http://www.earthisland.org/
Earth Water  http://www.earth-water.org/
Earth Justice  http://www.earthjustice.org/
Environmental Defense Fund  http://www.edf.org/
Natural Resources Defense Council  http://www.nrdc.org/
Water keeper Alliance  http://www.waterkeeper.org/
Wilderness Society  http://www.wilderness.org/
World Wildlife Fund  http://www.worldwildlife.org/
World Resources Institute  http://www.wri.org/

Greenpeace  http://www.greenpeace.org/
League of Conservation Voters  http://www.lcv.org/
Nature Conservancy  http://www.nature.org/
National Parks & Conservation Association  http://www.npca.org
National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Page  http://www.nccecojustice.org/
U.S. Catholic Bishops' Environmental Justice Program  http://www.nccbuscc.org/
The Center for a New American Dream  http://www.newdream.org/

Grassroots Organizations:
MassPIRG  http://www.masspirg.org/
Sierra Club  http://www.sierraclub.org/
Student Environmental Action Coalition  http://www.seac.org/
Union of Concerned Scientists  http://www.ucsusa.org/
International Knowledge Community  http://onsustainability.com/