

SOC/ENVST 3480-001:

Environmental Sociology

Spring 2014

**Meeting Time: T, TH 2:00 PM-
3:20 PM**

3 Credits

Location: Marriott Library 1150

Instructor: Dr. Brett Clark

Email: brett.clark@soc.utah.edu

Office: Room: 405, BEH S
Building

Office Phone: 801-581-7108

Office Hours: T, TH 3:30-5:00 PM, and by appointment

Website: Canvas site for the class



Course Description and Goals:

This course will provide an introduction to some of the key areas of research in the subdiscipline of environmental sociology, a field of inquiry that focuses on the relationship between society and the biophysical environment. Note, the focus of the course is on “macro,” rather than “micro,” research and on the “natural,” rather than the “built,” environment. This course will engage issues and concepts from a diversity of disciplines including anthropology, biology, ecology, economics, geography, history, and (of course) sociology. It will consider social relationships associated with both the global and local level, as well as urban and rural localities. We will explore how human societies affect the environment, and how human societies are shaped by the environment, as well as how we come to recognize and understand changing environmental conditions. We will examine the major theoretical perspectives within environmental sociology to establish the various approaches to and the understandings of the relationship between society and nature.

At the end of the class, the student will be able:

- 1) to establish how and why environmental sociology arose as a field of study within sociology;
- 2) to explicate the concepts and ideas associated with the major theories within environmental sociology;
- 3) to employ the particulars of environmental sociology as conceptual tools to study social relationships with nature;
- 4) to evaluate and distinguish the different theories in their applicability to the social and natural world;
- 5) to demonstrate how knowledge from other sciences has informed environmental sociology;
- 6) to compare and contrast the approaches and questions of different disciplines on environmental issues;
- 7) to develop a sociological lens for engaging in environmental analysis, which identifies particular social drivers of ecological crisis and contemplates what social changes are necessary to address environmental problems.

Required Texts:

The following books are available at the University of Utah Bookstore. Additional readings (articles and book chapters) are available at the website listed at the top of the syllabus.

John Bellamy Foster, *The Vulnerable Planet*

Christopher D. Cook, *Diet for a Dead Planet*

J. Timmons Roberts and Bradley C. Parks, *A Climate of Injustice*

David Naguib Pellow, *Resisting Global Toxics*

Maude Barlow, *Blue Covenant*

Christopher Wells, *Car Country*

Sandra Steingraber, *Living Downstream*

Requirements and Evaluation:

This class will include discussion and critical reflection. You should bring your books, notes, questions, summaries, reflections, and comments to class. This material will serve as the basis for your contribution to the class discussion.

Papers and exams must be turned in during the class period on the day they are due. **Do not email the instructor papers and exams.** Late papers are automatically reduced by 20%. There will be several *unannounced*, in-class reading quizzes.

Your final grade will be based on the following criteria:

(20%) Reading Quizzes. During the term, several, short, in-class reading quizzes will be given.

(10%) In-Class Activities, Group Discussions, Short Reaction Papers, etc. Throughout the course, there will be numerous in-class activities that are part of your grade. For instance, we will divide into small groups for discussion. Within these groups, specific questions will be addressed. The ideas of the group will be recorded by individuals within the group and turned in at the end of class.

(20%) Reading Summaries. Five times during the term, each student must turn in a two-page (single-spaced) critical reflection/summary of the weekly readings. These papers should address all the readings for the week, engage the major arguments within the readings, and critically assess the discussion. In the summary it may be helpful to apply or extend the arguments to specific ecological problems. At the end of the reading summaries, students should include a few questions to ask the class to stimulate discussion. The reading summaries are due at the beginning of class on Thursday of the selected week, starting week 2 of the semester.

(20%) Environmental Project (involves a short proposal and paper). The environmental project for this class involves you making some change in your lifestyle that reduces your impact on the natural environment or serves to bring about environmentally positive social change. This exercise is intended to be a challenging and educational project whereby you can experience the social structural and cultural factors that constrain and/or facilitate widespread social change along ecologically sensitive lines. You will select what type of change in your life you would like to make. Some examples of changes include becoming a vegetarian or vegan, giving up driving a car, using public transportation, purchasing only locally produced products, reducing your use of electricity, etc. You may also choose to engage in some form of environmental activism (such as working with an environmental organization, attending a rally, etc.). The length of time you will need to continue with this behavior depends on the difficulty entailed. For some projects, I expect that a few weeks will typically be a sufficient amount of time for most types of lifestyle changes, although some may be much shorter (for example, giving up electricity for one or two days would

probably be sufficient). The key point is that the behavior must be a change—i.e., it cannot be something you already do. The project does not require that you are successful at making the change, only that you make a sincere attempt at it. You will be required to make a short proposal (1-2 pages) of what you intend to do (basically laying out the ground rules and duration of time you think appropriate) and explaining briefly why it is important for the environment. I may require that you make some modifications to the plan (for example, choose a different activity or change the duration of time). Once I have approved the proposal you should implement the change and keep a journal of your experiences (note that you are not required to turn in this journal), which will help when you write your paper. You may find the change quite difficult and you may have failures at certain points—that is part of the learning experience. We will discuss the expectations for this paper in class; however, here are some general expectations for the paper: it should be 10 double-spaced pages, examining (1) the details of the lifestyle modification you made, (2) the environmental significance of the lifestyle modification (including citation of appropriate sources [both popular and peer-reviewed] to back up your claims), and (3) what you learned from the experience. Throughout the paper, you will focus on the social relations and structures associated with this project. Your paper must include at a minimum 8 peer-reviewed references. You will be graded on how creative you are in developing and implementing your project and how well you research and write your paper. You should speak to me (or send me an email) to seek clarification if you are uncertain how to proceed or just want to discuss any options you are considering. We will regularly discuss how your projects are going in class. I will post one or two examples of past proposals. **Proposal is due January 17. Paper is due: March 21.**

(30%) Final Essay Exam. A 15-page research paper is due in class on **May 1**. The final essay exam is designed to elicit a comprehensive, detailed, and critical response to the course materials for the entire term. The assignment will be discussed and distributed later in the term.

Grading Scale:

A+ 98-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	
A 94-97	B 84-86	C 74-76	D 64-66	
A- 90-93	B- 80-83	C- 70-73	D- 60-63	F <60

Academic Misconduct:

Per University of Utah regulations (Policy # 6-400). “A student who engages in academic misconduct,” as defined in Part I.B. and including, but not limited to, cheating, falsification, or plagiarism, “may be subject to academic sanctions including but not limited to a grade reduction, failing grade, probation, suspension or dismissal from the program or the University, or revocation of the student's degree or certificate. Sanctions may also include community service, a written reprimand, and/or a written statement of misconduct that can be put into an appropriate record maintained for purposes of the profession or discipline for which the student is preparing.” Please refer to the Student Code for full elaboration of student academic and behavioral misconduct policies (<http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>).

Open Learning Environment: The intention and structure of university level courses are to provide open, thoughtful forums for a wide variety of topics and ideas. While discussing these topics, students shall not discriminate on the basis of “race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability or veteran status.”

ADA Statement: 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 information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

(www.hr.utah.edu/oc/ada/guide/faculty/)

Course Schedule:

Students must come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings for class. The additional readings for the class will be posted at the following website:

<http://sites.google.com/site/brettclarkphd/>. You should download the articles when they are assigned, as you will need these readings when writing your final paper.

Week 1

Topics: Introduction/Class Logistics/Development of Ecological Science/
Ecosystems/Social and Ecological Problems/Sustainability/Environmental History/
Environmental Sociology: History and Foundations/Anthropocene

Readings:

Catton, William R. Jr. and Riley E. Dunlap. 1978. "Environmental Sociology: A New Paradigm." *The American Sociologist* 13:41-49.

Dunlap, Riley E. and William R. Catton, Jr. 1979. "Environmental Sociology." *Annual Review of Sociology* 5: 243-273.

Rockström, Johan, Will Steffen, Kevin Noone, Åsa Persson, F. Stuart Chapin, III, Eric F. Lambin, Timothy M. Lenton, Marten Scheffer, Carl Folke, Hans Joachim Schellnhuber, Björn Nykvist, Cynthia A. de Wit, Terry Hughes, Sander van der Leeuw, Henning Rodhe, Sverker Sörlin, Peter K. Snyder, Robert Constanza, Uno Svedin, Malin Falkenmark, Louise Karlberg, Robert W. Corell, Victoria J. Fabry, James Hansen, Brian Walker, Diana Liverman, Katherine Richardson, Paul Crutzen, and Jonathan A. Foley. 2009. "A Safe Operating Space for Humanity." *Nature* 461 (24): 472–475.

Liu, Jianqun, Thomas Dietz, Stephen R. Carpenter, Carl Folke, Marian Alberti, Charles L. Redman, Stephen H. Schneider, Elinor Ostrom, Alice N. Pell, Jane Lubchenco, William W. Taylor, Zhiyun Ouyang, Peter Deadman, Timothy Kratz and William Provencher. 2007. "Coupled Human and Natural Systems." *Ambio* 36(8):639-649.

Week 2

Topics: Ecological Economics/Ecological Modernization/Environmental Kuznets Curve/
Decoupling/Dematerialization/Ecological Efficiency

*** Environmental project proposal is due Thursday.**

Readings:

Mol, Arthur P.J. and Martin Janicke. 2009. "The Origins and Theoretical Foundations of Ecological Modernisation Theory." Pp. 17-27 in *The Ecological Modernisation Reader*, edited by Arthur P.J. Mol, David A. Sonnenfeld, and Gert Spaargaren. London: Routledge.

Mol, Arthur P.J. 1997. "Ecological Modernization: Industrial Transformations and Environmental Reform." Pp. 138-149 in *The International Handbook of Environmental Sociology*, edited by Michael Redclift and Graham Woodgate. Northampton, Mass.: Edward Elgar.

Mol, Arthur P.J. 2002. "Ecological Modernization and the Global Economy." *Global Environmental Politics* 2(2):92-115.

Huber, Joseph. 2009. "Upstreaming Environmental Action." Pp. 334-345 in *The Ecological Modernisation Reader*, edited by Arthur Mol, Gert Spaargaren, and David Sonnenfeld. London: Routledge.

York, Richard and Eugene A. Rosa. 2003. "Key Challenges to Ecological Modernization Theory: Institutional Efficacy, Case Study Evidence, Units of Analysis, and the Pace of Eco-efficiency." *Organization & Environment* 16(3):273-288.

Foster, John Bellamy. 2012. "The Planetary Rift and the New Human Exemptionalism: A Political-Economic Critique of Ecological Modernization Theory." *Organization and Environment* 25(3):1-27.

Week 3

Topics: Environmental History/Political Economy/Treadmill of Production

Readings:

Foster, John Bellamy. *The Vulnerable Planet*.

Gould, Kenneth A., David N. Pellow, and Allan Schnaiberg. 2004. "Interrogating the Treadmill of Production: Everything You Wanted to Know About the Treadmill but Were Afraid to Ask." *Organization & Environment* 17(3): 296-316.

Bell, Shannon Elizabeth and Richard York. 2010. "Community Economic Identity: The Coal Industry and Ideology Construction in West Virginia." *Rural Sociology* 75(1):111-143.

Barnosky, Anthony D. et al. 2012. "Approaching a Shift in the Earth's Biosphere." *Nature* 486:52-58.

Week 4

Topics: Political Economy/Treadmill of Production/Ecological Science/
Ecological and Business Cycles/ Sustainability and Food Production

Readings:

Cook, Christopher, *Diet for a Dead Planet*, Chapters 1-8.

Weis, Tony. 2007. "The Global Food Economy: Contradictions and Crises." Pp. 11-46 in *The Global Food Economy*. New York: Zed Books.

Heffernan, William D. 2000. "Concentration of Ownership and Control in Agriculture." Pp. 61-75 in *Hungry for Profit*, edited by Fred Magdoff, John Bellamy Foster, and Frederick H. Buttel. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Cordell, Dana, Jan-Olof Drangert, and Stuart White. 2009. "The Story of Phosphorus: Global Food Security and Food for Thought." *Global Environmental Change* 19:292-305.

Week 5

Topics: Food Production and Sustainability/Global Trade and Political Economy/
Metabolic Rift/Technological Development and the Environment

Readings:

Cook, Christopher, *Diet for a Dead Planet*, Chapters 9-13.

Foster, John Bellamy. 1999. "Marx's Theory of Metabolic Rift: Classical Foundation for Environmental Sociology." *American Journal of Sociology* 105(2): 366-405.

Longo, Stefano B. 2012. "Mediterranean Rift: Socio-Ecological Transformations in the Sicilian Bluefin Tuna Fishery." *Critical Sociology* 38(3):417-436.

Clark, Brett and Rebecca Clausen. 2008. "The Oceanic Crisis." *Monthly Review* 60(3):91-111.

Gunderson, Ryan. 2011. "The Metabolic Rifts of Livestock Agribusiness." *Organization & Environment* 24(4):404-422.

Week 6

Topics: Cities, Cars, and the Environment/Structured Environments/Organization of Space

Readings:

Christopher Wells, *Car Country* (first half).

Molotch, Harvey. 1976. "The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place." *American Journal of Sociology* 82(2):309-332.

Mumford, Lewis. *The Highway and the City*. (Chapters: "Landscape and Townscape" and "The Highway and the City.")

Week 7

Topics: Structured Environments and Landscapes/Pollution/Livable Landscapes/
Alternative Urban Development

Readings:

Christopher Wells, *Car Country* (second half).

Clement, Matthew Thomas. 2011. "The Town-Country Antithesis and the Environment: A Sociological Critique of a 'Real Utopian' Project." *Organization & Environment* 24(3):292-311.

Rudel, Thomas K. 2009. "How Do People Transform Landscapes? A Sociological Perspective on Urban Sprawl and Tropical Deforestation." *American Journal of Sociology* 115(1):129-154.

Week 8

Topics: World-System/Global Trade/Economic Development/Climate Change

Readings:

Roberts, J. Timmons and Bradley C. Parks. *A Climate of Injustice*. Chapters 1-4.

Hansen, James, Makiko Sato, and Reto Ruedy. 2012. "Perception of Climate Change." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (7 August)
<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2012/07/30/1205276109.full.pdf+html>

Lenton, Timothy M. et al. 2008. "Tipping Elements in the Earth's Climate System." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 105(6):1786-1793.

McCright, Aaron M. and Riley E. Dunlap. 2010. "Anti-Reflexivity: The American Conservative Movement's Success in Undermining Climate Science and Policy." *Theory, Culture and Society* 26:100-133.

York, Richard. 2012. "Do Alternative Energy Sources Displace Fossil Fuels?" *Nature Climate Change* 2(6):441-443.

Week 9

Topics: World-System/Global Inequalities/Energy and Ecology/International Cooperation/
Climate Change/Unequal Exchange

Readings:

Roberts, J. Timmons and Bradley C. Parks. *A Climate of Injustice*. Chapters 5-8.

Hansen, James. 2009. "How to Solve the Climate Problem." *The Nation* (December 30).

Hornborg, Alf. 2006. "Footprints in the Cotton Fields: The Industrial Revolution as Time-Space Appropriation and Environmental Load Displacement." *Ecological Economics* 59:74-81.

Jorgenson, Andrew K., Kelly Austin, and Christopher Dick. 2009. "Ecologically Unequal Exchange and the Resource Consumption/Environmental Degradation Paradox: A Panel Study of Less-Developed Countries, 1970-2000." *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 50: 263-284.

Rice, James. 2009. "The Transnational Organization of Production and Uneven Environmental Degradation and Change in the World Economy." *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 50:215-236.

Week 10

*** Environmental project is due Thursday.**

Topics: Water Scarcity/Food and Water Sustainability/Footprint Analysis

Readings:

Barlow, Maude. *Blue Covenant*. Chapters 1-3.

Doucette, Kitt. 2009. "An Ocean of Plastic." *Rolling Stone* (October 29):54-57.

Hoekstra, A.Y. and A.K. Chapagain. 2007. "Water Footprints of Nations: Water Use by People as a Function of Their Consumption Pattern." *Water Resources Management* 21(1):35-48.

Week 11

Topics: Water Scarcity/Water Pollution and Food Production/Social Movements/Health

Readings:

Barlow, Maude. *Blue Covenant*. Chapters 4-5.

Edwards, Bob and Adam Driscoll. 2009. "From Farms to Factories: The Environmental Consequences of Swine Industrialization in North Carolina." Pp. 153-175 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*, edited by Kenneth A. Gould and Tammy L. Lewis. New York: Oxford Press.

Tietz, Jeff. 2006. "Boss Hog." *Rolling Stone* (Dec. 14).

Week 12

Topics: Environmental Racism, Inequalities, and Justice/Global Trade of Toxins

Readings:

Pellow, David Naguib. *Resisting Global Toxics*. Chapters 1-3.

Downey, Liam and Brian Hawkins. 2008. "Race, Income, and Environmental Inequality in the United States." *Sociological Perspectives*: 51(4): 759-781.

Dunaway, Wilma A. and M. Cecilia Macabuac. 2007. "'The Shrimp Eat Better Than We Do': Philippine Subsistence Fishing Households Sacrificed for the Global Food Chain." *Review* XXX(4):313-337.

Mohai, Paul, David Pellow, and J. Timmons Roberts. 2009. "Environmental Justice." *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 34:405-430.

Week 13

Topics: Environmental Inequalities/Treadmill of Destruction/National Sacrifice Zones

Readings:

Pellow, David Naguib. *Resisting Global Toxics*. Chapters 4-7.

Malin, Stephanie A. and Peggy Petrzela. 2010. "Left in the Dust: Uranium's Legacy and Victims of Mill Tailings Exposure in Monticello, Utah." *Society and Natural Resources* 23: 1187-1200.

LaDuke, Winona. 1999. "Akwesasne: Mohawk Mother's Milk and PCBs." Pp. 11-23 in *All Our Relations*. Boston: South End Press.

Hooks, Greg and Chad Smith. 2004. "The Treadmill of Destruction: National Sacrifice Areas and Native Americans." *American Sociological Review* 69(4): 558-575.

Jorgenson, Andrew K., Brett Clark, and Jennifer Givens. 2012. "The Environmental Impacts of Militarization in Comparative Perspective: An Overlooked Relationship." *Nature and Culture* 7(3): 314-337.

Week 14

Topics: Environmental Sustainability and Health

Readings:

Sandra Steingraber, *Living Downstream*. (first half.)

Week 15

Topics: Ecological Challenges/Environmental Sustainability and Health/
Environmental Social Movements/Ecological Reform and Revolution

Readings:

Sandra Steingraber, *Living Downstream*. (first half.)

Final Exam (Final Essay Exam due in class).