

Sociology 3480:  
**Environmental  
Sociology**

Summer 2014, Section 090, class  
number 16868, 3 credits, no  
prerequisites  
**Syllabus and Course Outline**

Instructor: Amanda Bertana, M.A.

Class Meetings: MW 10:00-12:00

Office Hours: by email and by  
appointment

Office: BSS-332

Email: amanda.bertana@soc.utah.edu

**Required Texts:**

**Gould and Lewis. 2009. *Twenty  
Lessons in Environmental Sociology*,**  
Oxford U. Press. ISBN:  
9780195371123\*

**Roberts, J. Timmons and Bradley  
Parks. 2007. *A Climate of Injustice*,**  
MIT Press. ISBN: 9780262681612 #

**Ryan, John C. and Alan Thein Durning. 1997. *Stuff: The Secret Life of Everyday Things*,** Northwest Environment  
Watch. ISBN: 1886093040\*

\* = a paper copy of this book will be on reserve at the U of U's Marriot Library

# = you can obtain online access to this book via the U of U's Marriot Library

**All supplemental readings will be provided on Canvas.**

**Course Summary:**

This course is designed to introduce you to the subdiscipline of environmental sociology. Throughout the semester we will explore the interactions between society and the natural environment. More specifically, we will discuss factors in human society that have caused degradation of ecological systems, and the measures taken to repair and/or prevent further degradation. Since environmental sociology is multidisciplinary we will draw upon a variety of readings from other disciplines including economics, anthropology, history, and ecology.

**Course Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- Identify core concepts, theories, and perspectives in the study of environmental sociology
- Critically view and analyze environmental problems associated with contemporary society
- Understand changes in the natural environment through a sociological perspective
- Explore the origins and impacts of environmental movements seeking environmental justice
- Critically understand and analyze the complexities between human society and the natural environment

**Evaluation Methods and Criteria:**

The final course grade will be determined by your performance on:

Attendance (50 points total, 25% of your grade)

5 Reading Summaries (10 points each, 50 points total, 25% of your grade)

1 short paper (100 points 50% of your grade)



**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

**Reading Summaries**

Five times during the term, each student must turn in a three-page (double-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.

**Final Paper Environmental Project**

8-10-page double spaced 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. Start thinking now of what you would like to do. You will be provided further guidelines as the due date approaches. Since some of you will enact a change for 2 weeks the guidelines will be posted 3 weeks before the due date.

**ADA NOTICE:**

“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.” <http://www.oeo.utah.edu/ada/guide/faculty/>

**Schedule for Environmental Sociology**

Week 1: **Environmental Ethics: Deep Ecology and Bioregionalism**

Week 2: **Technological Optimism: Ecological Modernization Theory and the Environmental Kuznets Curve**

Week 3: **Growth Imperatives: Treadmill of Production Theory and Urban Sprawl**

Week 4: **Do we consume too much?: Consumption and the Jevons Paradox**

Week 5: **Humans and the Ecosystem: The Metabolic Rift and Structural Human Ecology**

Week 6: **Environmental Inequalities: Ecologically Unequal Exchange and Environmental Racism**

Week 7: **Macro and Micro Environmental Movements: International Cooperation and Human Agency**

**\*\*Note:** The syllabus is not a binding legal contract. It may be modified by the instructor when the student is given reasonable notice of the modification.

**\*\*\*There is NO comprehensive final exam in this course.**