

Sociology 235: Environmental Sociology
Spring 2021, Class number 41829, 3 credits
Syllabus and Course Outline

Professor Amanda Bertana

Class Meeting: Online asynchronous

Office Hours: T/R: 12:30-2:30 PM, W: 10-11:30 (*online*)

Webex Link: [\[REDACTED\]](#)

Office Location: Office hours will be held online

Email: bertanaa1@southernct.edu

This is an asynchronous online class. This means all instruction will be administered online in Blackboard. Students will be able to access all course materials online. In order to keep us all on the same pace, I will make readings and assignment submissions available every Monday. **All assignments are due on blackboard.** Please keep track of due dates specified on the syllabus.

Note regarding office hours and email:

I will hold office hours every **Tuesday and Thursday, from 12:30 to 2:30 pm and Wednesday 10-11:30 am.** I can be reached at <https://southernct.webex.com/meet/bertanaa1> during this time frame. If you cannot make these hours, please feel free to email me and we can schedule a time to meet. You should see this as a resource to which you have access in order to seek clarification, to discuss issues both with the material and the functioning of the class, or simply to make your views known about specific topics and readings. Please use them!

You can also contact me by email at any point during the semester. I will try to reply to your messages promptly. However, you should always allow 24-72 hours for my replies. **Therefore, you should not wait until the last minute to ask me important questions.**

I encourage you to write your emails in a formal manner with a salutation (Dear) and closing (Sincerely, Best, Thank you, etc.) We have become accustomed to writing quick informal communication as if we are speaking to our friends at all times. Please see your email correspondence with me as an opportunity to develop your professional communication.

Sociology Mission Statement:

The Department of Sociology inspires Southern students to explore our dynamic society by embracing a social curiosity and recognizing the impact of large and small scale social forces. In addition to supporting Southern students in pursuit of their passions and dreams, the Department of Sociology faculty members prepare students to be productive citizens, capable of enhancing the quality of life in Connecticut, the United States, and across the world. Through curriculum and experiential opportunities sociology students develop skills that are marketable and can change lives for the better. Our students' intellectual journey includes rigorous coursework in social science research, sociological theory and social diversity. Students gain and apply sociological insight in service learning, internship, independent study, student research, and volunteer opportunities. Southern sociology students are poised to challenge the status quo as well as present new and evolving visions of the world.

Required Texts:

Gould, Kenneth and Tammy Lewis. 2020. *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*; 3rd Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

*All other readings will be made available to you on Blackboard.

Course Summary:

This course is designed to introduce you to the sub-discipline of environmental sociology. Throughout the semester we will explore the interactions between the natural and the human-built environment. We will discuss factors of human society that have caused degradation of ecological systems. In order to understand contemporary environmental problems, we must critically look at the values and priorities of society that drive human actions. We will end on a high note by exploring how social movements have emerged in response to environmental degradation. We will specifically focus on the motivations and measures individuals, groups, and nations take to curb and/or prevent further environmental degradation.

Student Learning Objectives:

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

- 1) Identify core concepts, theories, and perspectives in the study of environmental sociology
- 2) Critically analyze the reciprocal relationship between human society and the natural environment
- 3) Critically view and analyze environmental problems associated within contemporary society
- 4) Understand changes in the natural environment through a sociological perspective
- 5) Understand how global trade relationships impacts environmental harms in developed and less developed countries
- 6) Explore the origins and impacts of environmental movements seeking environmental justice
- 7) Develop already existing critically thinking skills

This course fulfills the Tier 2, Social Structure, Conflict, and Consensus category of our general education requirements, the Liberal Education Program. The purpose of the Social Structure, Conflict, and Consensus category is to develop student understanding of social conflicts and their sources, and of possible means for seeking resolution. An understanding of the relationships among competing interest groups, power dynamics, conflicts, and potential resolutions of such conflicts is necessary to engage with a diverse society.

The main objectives of this category are:

- 1) Institutions and Power Dynamics – Understanding the normative structure, function, and historical context of institutions (e.g. family, government, economy, education, or religion, etc..) and how social power influences and is influenced by them.
- 2) Sources of Social Conflict – Examining how social conflicts evolve.
- 3) Variety of Perspectives – Recognizing the role of multiple perspectives in understanding conflict and seeking consensus.
- 4) Specific Social Conflict – Exploring extensively at least one significant social conflict.

In addition to covering these objectives, this course will also reemphasize at least three Tier 1 competencies: Critical Thinking, Written Communication, and interpersonal effectiveness.

Netiquette—Online behavior expectations:

Discussion threads and e-mails are all equivalent to classrooms, and student behavior within this environment shall conform to the Student Code.

- 1) Remember this is a professional setting. Use proper grammar and spelling. Make sure you can back up what you are saying with facts and data.
- 2) Respect others. Take care to respect the opinions of others, and honor their privacy.
- 3) Review what you wrote and try to interpret it objectively. When we speak face to face and are misunderstood, we have an on-the-spot opportunity to rephrase our words. In writing, we must strive twice as hard to be understood, as we do not have the benefit of modifying or elaborating in real time. All caps (“I’M SHOUTING”) and exclamation points (“Give me a break!!!”) can be misinterpreted as intense anger or humor without the appropriate context.

- 4) Forgive and forget. If you're offended by something another student says online, keep in mind that you may have misunderstood their intentions. Give them the benefit of the doubt.

Addressing Sexual Misconduct:

At Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU), we are committed to creating a community of respect, civility, and honor. Your health and safety are a top priority! In line with this mission, we enforce Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 which prohibits acts of sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual exploitation), intimate partner violence (dating violence and domestic violence) and stalking at educational institutions. Acts of sexual misconduct and intimate partner violence are a violation of Southern Connecticut State University policy and state law. We encourage you to report any incidents of sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence or stalking and/or utilize the support and advocacy services available to you. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Paula Rice, 203-392-5568, or the Office of Student Conduct and Civic Responsibility, Christopher Piscitelli, 203-392-6188. For support and confidential consultation, contact the SCSU Counseling Services, 203-392-5475; SCSU Health Services, 203-392-6300; SCSU Marriage and Family Clinic, 203-392-6413. To report to the police, contact the University Police, 203-392-5375. Please refer to the reporting guidelines for complete list of available resources <https://inside.southernct.edu/sexual-misconduct/reporting-students>.

Academic Misconduct:

Academic misconduct, also called academic dishonesty, includes cheating, plagiarism and other academically dishonest acts. Examples of what constitutes academic misconduct are presented in the Faculty Senate Policy on Academic Misconduct and appears in the Student Handbook. Sanctions for academic misconduct in this course are under the purview of your instructor and may include penalties such as the assignment of a failing grade in this course and request for disciplinary charges to be brought against you by the Office of Judicial Affairs. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Department of Sociology and the College of Arts and Science. Please refer to the Student Code for full elaboration of student academic and behavioral misconduct policies <https://inside.southernct.edu/sites/default/files/a/sites/student-conduct/StudentCodeofConductrevised6.16.16.pdf>.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement:

Southern Connecticut State University provides reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, for students with documented disabilities on an individualized basis. If you are a student with a documented disability, the University's Disability Resource Center (DRC) can work with you to determine appropriate accommodations. Before you receive accommodations in this class, you will need to make an appointment with the **Disability Resource Center located at EN C-105A (203-392-6828)**. To discuss your approved accommodations with me or other concerns, such as medical emergencies or arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment to meet as soon as possible. I can be reached telephone or video call to answer any of your questions.

Wellness Statement:

Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive at Southern Connecticut State University. For helpful resources contact the **Counseling Center in Engleman Hall B219, 203-392-5475**.

Veterans Center:

If you are a student veteran, Southern Connecticut State University has a Veterans Support Center on campus. **The center is located in Engleman Hall, Room A014 and is open Monday-Friday from**

8:30 AM to 6:00 PM. For more information about the resources they provide to our student veterans, please visit <https://inside.southernct.edu/veterans-services>.

Sexuality and Gender Equality (SAGE) Center:

The SAGE Center is committed to providing a positive academic, cultural, and social environment where the LGBTQ+ community at Southern can learn, grow, and thrive. **They are located at Adanti Student Center, Room 324 and is open Monday-Friday from 8 AM-5 PM.** For more information about the resources they offer, along with a list of ongoing events, please visit <https://inside.southernct.edu/sage-center>.

The Writing Center:

Writing is a tool of discovery, self-expression, and social justice. The purpose of the Writing Center at Southern Connecticut State University is to provide a curricular structure and an educational environment, in which students and faculty can gain the skills and support they need to be successful writers, and writing mentors. **For more information about the resources they offer, please visit <https://inside.southernct.edu/writing-center>.**

Note Regarding When to Cite:

You must cite when: You directly quote from an outside source. The cited text should always be placed in quotation marks [“”] or block quoted followed by (Author year, p. #). Use a block quote when your citation is over two lines in length. Block quotes should always be single-spaced and indented beyond the normal margins.

You must cite when: You are paraphrasing or citing an idea. When you paraphrase quotation marks are not necessary, but the paraphrased section should always be followed by (Author year)

If you have questions about proper citation formatting, visit <https://owl.purdue.edu>.

Evaluation Methods and Criteria:

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

Ecological footprint post	x	5 points	=	5 points possible
5 Reading responses	x	5 points each	=	25 points possible
Environmental change post	x	5 points	=	5 points possible
Environmental change paper	x	25 points	=	25 points possible
Gross National Happiness post	x	5 points	=	5 points possible
Environmental (in)justice case study proposal	x	10 points	=	10 points possible
Environmental (in)justice case study	x	25 points	=	25 points possible
TOTAL			=	100 points possible
Potential Extra Credit Points	x	5 points	=	5 points possible

Grading Scale:

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

Ecological footprint post:

The purpose of the ecological footprint quiz is to introduce you to the socio-environmental connections in your own life. It will also get you started on thinking about your environmental change project. **You are required to take the ecological footprint quiz at <https://www.footprintcalculator.org> and post a video response on Blackboard.**

In your video response you should:

- 1) Tell us how many Earths everyone would need if everyone lived like you.
- 2) Where was your largest consumption area?
- 3) Did you expect to have this be your largest consumption area? Why or why not?

Reading responses:

Beginning week 2, you are required to submit **five 500 word reading responses** throughout the semester. **Three reading responses are due by Week 7. The remaining two are due after Week 7. *Each reading response is due on the Friday of that week by midnight.** I encourage you to use these responses as a way to critically engage with the material and draw connections between weeks. You can also use these responses as a way to ask questions about the material.

In the responses you should:

- 1) Criticize or praise the readings (and media sources if applicable for that week), find points of similarity or divergence, question the key ideas or concepts, point out weaknesses, relate the readings to your own personal experiences, examine their underlying values and assumptions, compare them to other readings, etc. The key point is to critically and thoughtfully engage with and respond/react to the ideas in the required readings; the posting should not be merely a summary or restatement of the author's points.
- 2) Quotes from the readings, and/or references to specific sections or passages (with page numbers) will be necessary evidence of your engagement. **This means that quotes and page numbers should be included in every response. There should be NO more than 2 direct quotes, which should NOT exceed 5 lines.**
- 3) Your reading response should address the broad topic for that week. For example, if the week is "Metabolic Rift," your response should focus on the metabolic rift in general.

Environmental change video post:

The purpose of the video post is to share your environmental change progression with your colleagues.

In your response you should:

- 1) Tell us the change you have made
- 2) Tell us why you chose this specific change
- 3) Are there any obstacles you are experiencing with the change?

Environmental change paper:

5-6 page double spaced paper not including bibliography.

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.

Further details and example papers are available on Blackboard.

Gross National Happiness post:

The purpose of the Gross National Happiness survey is to introduce you to alternative measurements of development. It will also get you thinking about the purpose of development. **You are required to take the Gross National Happiness survey at <https://survey.happycounts.org/survey/directToSurvey> and post a video response on Blackboard.**

In your video response you should:

- 1) Tell us what category you scored lowest in
- 2) In your opinion, what measures could be taken to enhance happiness FOR EVERYONE in this specific category?
- 3) What is an advantage of measuring development according to happiness rather than GDP?

Environmental (in)justice case study proposal:

The purpose of the proposal is to ensure that you get started on your project and have the opportunity to receive feedback about the projection of your case study. Your case study proposal should consist of a 400-page proposal of what you intend to do your paper on and an annotated bibliography.

In your proposal you should:

- 1) Briefly explain the topic of your paper
- 2) Provide an annotated bibliography of 5 sources. **Three of your sources should be peer reviewed resources.**

Environmental (in)justice case study:

5-7 page double spaced paper not including your bibliography

This assignment allows you to explore a case of environmental justice, locally, nationally, or globally that **we have not covered in class**. I will provide you with resources where you can identify an environmental case. However, you are not confined to these sources.

In your case study you should:

- 1) Explain your chosen issue
 - a. What is the setting of this case of environmental injustice?
 - b. What environmental injuries have occurred?
 - c. What “intersectionality” created environmental vulnerability in this setting?
- 2) Explain why this is an example of environmental injustice. Be specific. This means use outside SCHOLARLY sources rationalizing your reasoning
 - a. What is *unjust* in this case?
- 3) Identify the key actors involved in the conflict. What does each group want?
 - a. Who are the stakeholders in this case?
 - b. What shapes their perception of the case?
 - c. What have different stakeholder groups done (or not done) in response to the problems in this case?
- 4) Describe the actions (in your opinion) that need to be taken to create a situation of justice
 - a. What would help redress (in other words, remedy or set right) this case of environmental injustice at the local level?
 - b. What would help prevent similar cases of environmental injustice in the future?
- 5) **You have the option to work with a partner for the case study, but you MUST notify me no later than week 7 if you would like to work in pairs. You are more than welcome to find your own partner, or I can partner you up if you are looking for someone**

*****Potential extra credit points:**

You have the opportunity to earn 5 points extra credit throughout the semester by “asking for help.” If you take a reading response, the environmental change paper, or the final paper to the Writing Center and sign up for a tutoring session you will earn 5 points extra credit. **Directions on how to sign up for a tutoring session are available here: <https://inside.southernct.edu/writing-center/undergraduate/tutoring>.**

*****Note about Credit Hours:**

Students are expected to spend a minimum of two hours weekly on out-of-class preparation for each credit hour they carry. **This is equivalent to 6 hours each week.**

Where will we find these 6 hours each week?

We all wear multiple hats and juggle varying roles and responsibilities at home, work, and in the community. Your role as a student is vital but comes with its own requirements and daily demands. To manage these responsibilities, you'll need a well-considered plan. One of the keys to successfully completing this course is having a plan that will serve as a guide for your time management. To help you visualize this, create a study schedule to for when you will devote time to this course.

*****Note about video lectures:**

You are expected to watch the video lectures prior to doing the readings. **The lectures are not intended to go over the readings, but complement the readings by giving you the foundation to critically analyze the readings for your reading responses.**

Reading Schedule for Environmental Sociology:

Week 1: Week of January 2: Go Over Syllabus; What is the status of the environmental world?

- **Ecological Footprint Quiz Video Post due Friday, January 29th by midnight**
- Take the Ecological Footprint Quiz <https://www.footprintcalculator.org>
- Read "What is the Anthropocene and are We In It?" at <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/what-is-the-anthropocene-and-are-we-in-it-164801414/>

Week 2: February 1: What is Environmental Sociology?

- Listen to "The Death of the Northern White Rhino, and Our Guilt," at <https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/takeaway/segments/death-northern-white-rhino-and-our-guilt>
- Gould and Lewis, Introduction & Chpt. 1
- Catton, William R. Jr. and Riley E. Dunlap. 1978. "Environmental Sociology: A New Paradigm." *The American Sociologist* 13:41-49.

Week 3: February 8: Foundational theories in Environmental Sociology: Ecological Modernization Theory

- Gould and Lewis, pgs. 28-33 & Chpt. 7
- Mol, Arthur P.J. 2010. "Ecological modernization as a social theory of environmental reform." *The International Handbook of Environmental Sociology* p. 63-76.

Week 4: February 15: Foundational theories in Environmental Sociology: Treadmill of Production

- Gould and Lewis, pgs 34-40 & Chpt. 3
- 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.
- Watch *The Lorax* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8V06ZOQu0k>

Week 5: February 22: Foundational theories in Environmental Sociology: Metabolic Rift Theory

- **Environmental Change Post due Friday, February 27th at midnight**
- Watch *Greening the Global Food System* at https://fod-infobase-com.scsu.idm.oclc.org/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=186568

- Gould and Lewis pgs 40-43; Chpt. 13
- Longo, Stefano B. 2012. "Mediterranean Rift: Socio-Ecological Transformations in the Sicilian Bluefin Tuna Fishery." *Critical Sociology* 38(3):417-436.

Week 6: March 1: Key Concepts-Kuznets Curve and Jevons Paradox

- Dinda, Soumyananda. 2004. "Environmental Kuznets Curve Hypothesis: A Survey." *Ecological Economics* 49:431-455.
- York, R. 2012. "Do Alternative Energy Sources Displace Fossil Fuels?." *Nature Climate Change* 2: 441-443. doi:10.1038/nclimate1451.
- York, Richard and Julius Alexander McGee. 2016. "Understanding the Jevons Paradox." *Environmental Sociology* 2(1):77-87.

Week 7: March 8: CATCH UP WEEK

- Take this time to catch up on your reading if you are behind
- **If you have not done three reading summaries yet, you can turn one in for the readings from Weeks 2-6.**

Week 8: March 15: The Foundations of Environmental (In)Justice

- **Environmental Change Paper due Friday, March 19th at midnight**
- Gould and Lewis Chpt. 10
- Mohai, Paul, David Pellow, and J. Timmons Roberts. 2009 "Environmental Justice," *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 34:405-430.

Week 9: March 22: Environmental Injustice and Colonization

- Watch *Tales of a Toxic Nation* at <https://vimeo.com/258337365>
- Voyles, Traci Brynne. 2015. "Introduction." In *Wastelanding: Legacies of Uranium Mining in Navajo Country*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota University Press, pp 1-26.
- Gilio-Whitaker, Dina. 2020. "Genocide by Any Other Name," and "The Complicated Legacy of Western Expansion and the Industrial Revolution." In *As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock*. Boston: Beacon Press, pp 35-72.

Week 10: March 29: Global Environmental Inequality: The Environmental Price of Commodity Chains

- Dunway, Wilma and M. Cecilia Macabuac. 2007. "'The Shrimp Eat Better than We Do': Philippine Subsistence Fishing Households Sacrificed for the Global Chain." *Review* 30: 313-337.
- Niinimäki, Kirsi, Greg Peters, Helena Dahlbo, Patsy Perry, Timo Rissanen, and Alison Gwilt. 2020. "The Environmental Price of Fast Fashion." *Nature Reviews Earth and Environment* 1(4):189-200.
- Little, Peter and Cristina Lucier. 2017. "Global Electronic Waste, Third Party Certification Standards, and Resisting the Undoing of Environmental Justice Politics." *Human Organization* 76(3):204-14.

Week 11: April 5: Climate Change

- Watch Is It Too Late to Stop Climate Change? Well It's Complicated at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbR-5mHI6bo&feature=youtu.be>
- Gould and Lewis, Chpt. 15 & 16

Week 12: April 12: Environment and Development

- **Gross National Happiness post due Friday, April 17th at midnight**

- Take the Gross National Happiness Survey at <https://www.happycounts.org/take-the-happiness-survey.html>
- Gould and Lewis, Chpt. 20
- Schleicher, Judith, Marije Schaafsma, Neil Burgess, et al. 2018. "Poorer Without It? The Neglected Role of the Natural Environment in Poverty and Wellbeing." *Sustainable Development* 26:83– 98. doi: [10.1002/sd.1692](https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.1692).

Week 13: April 19: Environmental Social Movements

- **Environmental (in)justice case study proposal due Wednesday, April 21st at midnight**
- Watch *Chocolate in the Jungle* at https://fod-infobase-com.scsu.idm.oclc.org/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=189209&tScript=0
- Watch *Ndzou Camp* at https://fod-infobase-com.scsu.idm.oclc.org/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=189208&tScript=0
- Gould and Lewis, Chpt. 18 & 19

Week 14: April 26: Hashtag Activism

- Dauvergne, Peter. 2017. "Is the Power of Brand-Focused Activism Rising? The Case of Tropical Deforestation." *Journal of Environment and Development* 26(2):135-155.
- Lyon, Thomas P., and A. Wren Montgomery. 2013. "Tweetjacked: The impact of social media on corporate greenwash." *Journal of business ethics* 118(4): 747-757.

Week 15: May 3: Deep Ecology

- Devall, Bill. 2001. "The Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement 1960–2000—A Review." *Ethics and the Environment* 6(1): 18-41.
- Chew, Sing. 2021. "Introduction." In *Living Deep Ecology: A Bioregional Journey* by Bill Devall Lanham, MD: Lexington Books pp 1-16.
- Watch *Dear Future Generations: Sorry* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRLJscAlk1M>

Week 16: May 10: Finals Week

- **CASE STUDY DUE!**

****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.**