OVERVIEW: This course provides an overview of the subdiscipline of Environmental Sociology. Emerging in the early 1970s, Environmental Sociology represents a relatively new area of inquiry, with its focus an extension of earlier Sociology through inclusion of the physical context as related to social factors.

From its formative years, Environmental Sociology has drawn heavily from Human Ecology, Urban Sociology, Rural Sociology, as well as work by Human Geographers and Ecological and Cultural Anthropologists. Important linkages are also found with Urban Planning and Environmental Psychology.

Reflecting this multidisciplinarity, within Environmental Sociology the “environment” reflects both natural and built contexts. In both cases, researchers aim to examine how society effects the environment, as well as how the environment effects, and reflects, society. Topics of inquiry include public environmental opinion, environmentalism as a social movement, human-induced environmental decline, social response to natural disasters, and social dimensions of the built environment. Also reflecting the multidisciplinarity nature of Environmental Sociology, our readings represent classic contributions and more recent academic research from a range of intellectual perspectives.

SPECIFIC AIDS: Following this course, students should be familiar with:

♦ several theoretical perspectives used within Environmental Sociology to examine interactions between societal and environmental contexts;
♦ specific examples of recent social science research on the social dimensions of environmental context, including public opinion, the social construction of environmental issues, and the social distribution of risk;
♦ many resources available to researchers examining society-environment interactions.

READINGS: The weekly readings represent journal articles and book excerpts offering a glimpse of both classic contributions and current research on each topic. The weekly readings are available as PDF files from http://sobek.colorado.edu/~hunterlm/SOCY5007/

DISCUSSION LIST: Please subscribe to the email discussion list used for this class. Please also use the list to distribute comments and information relevant to our topics of discussion! To send to the list, email: soc-socy5001@lists.colorado.edu. In addition, I will use the list to distribute ‘provocations’ (see below) on each Sunday by noon.
EVALUATION: The grade for this course will be based upon:

**Percentage of final score**

- Weekly Article Summaries & “Provocations” 20
- Class Participation 15
- Summary Paper and Presentation (due May 2) 30
- Final “Comprehensive” Exam (date TBD) 35

**Weekly Article Summaries / Provocations:**
Each student will be responsible for a *brief* summary of each of the assigned readings, in addition to questions and/or comments on the week’s reading material (“provocations”). The summaries are to be submitted to Lori by Sunday 1:00 p.m., the day prior to class meeting.

The “provocations” are to be submitted to the discussion list, via email, by Sunday 1:00 p.m. the day prior to class meeting. It is hoped that this will help us focus on common critiques, concerns, questions during our Monday afternoon session.

**Class Participation:**
Intellectual discourse is central to the learning process and to this course. However, class participation is not based strictly on *quantity*, but also *quality*. Remember to ground your comments in the material we are reading, and to respect other points of view.

**Summary Paper and Class Presentation:**
On Monday, March 7, students will commit to a particular topic on which to focus more in-depth in a 12-15 page, double-spaced, summary paper. The paper should critically review existing research and knowledge. Papers are due Monday, April 25th, when students will also offer a short class presentation of the material.

**Final “Comprehensive” Exam:**
On a pre-arranged date during finals week, students will be given two questions, each to be answered within 5-7 pages, double-spaced. The questions will be handed out at 8:00 a.m., to be returned by 5:00 p.m. The format is designed to reflect what could be expected from a doctoral comprehensive examination.

*Please come see me, call me, or send an E-mail, if you have any questions, concerns, or problems!*

**Detailed Schedule**

**Week 1 JAN 10**
- Introductions;
- Review syllabus;
- Handout/discussion of relevant printed resources and electronic discussion lists;
- Sign up for weeks in which to co-facilitate with Lori.
This week’s readings begin with an overview of the subdiscipline’s development, followed by several of the key texts outlining stages of evolution in the field. We close with a piece discussing the distinctions and commonalities between Environmental Sociology and Natural Resource Sociology.


*Other readings of potential interest:*


There are also several introductory texts which may be of interest as a foundation for this course:


WEEK 4 JAN 31 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE SOCIETY-ENVIRONMENT RELATIONSHIP: PART I

We begin our review of various perspectives with an overview of theory as related to the natural environment presented within the recent Handbook of Environmental Sociology. We then, over the next 2 weeks, review core pieces related to human ecology, the “treadmill of production,” ecological modernization, classic Sociological theory, social construction, and political ecology..


Human Ecology


Political Ecology


Ecological Marxism


Other readings of potential interest


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**THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE HUMAN-ENVIRONMENT RELATIONSHIP: PART II**

*Treadmill of Production:*


*Ecological Modernization*


**Conjoint Constitution**


**Ecofeminism**


**General Application**


**Other readings of potential interest:**


A collection of writings by Allan Schnaiberg and colleagues on the *Treadmill of Production* is available at: [http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/people/schnaibergpapers.html](http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/people/schnaibergpapers.html)


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**Week 6 - Feb 14 - Social Construction**


_Other readings of potential interest:_


**Week 7, Feb 21 - Environment Concern: Measurement and International Perspectives**

_This is a core area of Environmental Sociology and we could easily spend an entire semester on these issues. Still, during the 3 weeks devoted to this topic, we cover research related to the measurement of environmental concern, as well as reviewing various examples of environmental attitude research especially as related to value bases and the role of context._


_The debate over the postmaterialist thesis_

CASE STUDY: "GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTALISM: A CHALLENGE FOR THE POSTMATERIALIST THESIS?"


Other readings of potential interest:


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**WEEK 8 FEB 28 ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES, OPINION & CONCERN: PREDICTORS**

*During the second week on this topic, we narrow consideration to specific populations (i.e. immigrants) and specific topics (i.e., restoration, pesticides, recycling, climate change, and biodiversity).*


*Other readings of potential interest:*


**Week 9 March 7 Environmental Opinion, & Concern: Disconnects**


Other readings of potential interest:


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**WEEK 10 MARCH 14 ENVIRONMENTALISM AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

Another core area within Environmental Sociology, here we review the emergence and social dynamics of the environmental movement, including organizational and political aspects.


Other readings of potential interest:


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**WEEK 11  MARCH 21  SPRING BREAK**

**WEEK 12  MARCH 28  ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE I: THE EVIDENCE**

*Environmental Justice has arguably become the ‘hottest’ topic in Environmental Sociology. We spend two weeks covering work in this area, beginning with an overview of environmental justice by Bullard and Johnson. The remainder of this week’s articles reflect the myriad empirical examinations of the social distribution of various forms of environmental hazards. As you review these readings, critically consider methodologies and theoretical underpinnings.*

Please read: [http://www.epa.gov/envjustice/History/](http://www.epa.gov/envjustice/History/) as a short foundation on the EJ movement.

  

  
  


*Other readings of potential interest:*


**WEEK 13 APR 4 SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS**

♦ Kathleen Tierney, Guest Speaker
♦ Readings to be announced by mid-March.
During this second week on environmental justice, we review work that aims to take us beyond ‘traditional’ EJ studies both theoretically and methodologically.


Other readings of potential interest:


**Frameworks:**

**Examples of research:**

**Other readings of potential interest**

Various responses to Hardin’s essay: [http://www.sciencemag.org/sciext/sotp/commons.shtml#essay](http://www.sciencemag.org/sciext/sotp/commons.shtml#essay)