**ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Environmental sociology is a field that includes many theoretical and methodological approaches. Above all, it recognizes there is an important and dynamic relationship between human social structures and the surroundings in which humans live. Environmental sociologists attend to ways the environment shapes social institutions and interactions as well as the way these affect the environment that surrounds us. Before the 1970s sociologists did not consider the environment a topic relevant in our discipline. Today it is one of the fastest growing subdisciplines. This course is designed to introduce students to important perspectives and debates in the field of environmental sociology. By examining case studies, we will consider the contribution sociology makes to the study of the environment and environmental problems. Particular attention will be paid to considering how environmental problems reflect and exacerbate ongoing social divisions in society related to class, gender, race, nationality, age, as well as between humans and nonhumans.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Our goal is to provide a foundation for an informed, critical approach to contemporary environmental issues in society. Ultimately, sociology is part of a larger attempt to gain a critical and reflexive grasp of what is taking place in society and how we should respond. This course will examine how sociology can contribute to an important large-scale debate taking place in our society today, the debate concerning our responsibility for the state of the natural environment and, indeed, of the planet itself.

**Grade breakup:**

Class participation and attendance 10%

Quizzes 20%

Mid-term exam 30%

Final Exam 40%

**READINGS**

**Required:**

1. Gould, K.A. and T.L. Lewis (eds.) (2009). Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

2. Guha, Ramachandra (2000). Environmentalism: A Global History. New York: Longman.

**Additional Recommended Readings:**

1. Humphrey, C. R., T. L. Lewis, and F. H. Buttel (2003). Environment, Energy, and Society: Exemplary Works. Thomson.

2. Frey, R. Scott , R. Scott (ed.) (2001). The Environment and Society Reader. Boston, London, Toronto: Allyn and Bacon.

3. Ken Conca, GeofFrey, R. Scott D. Dabelko (eds.) (2004). Green planet blues: Environmental politics from Stockholm to Johannesburg. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

4. Bell, Michael Mayerfeld (2004). An Invitation to Environmental Sociology. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge.

5. Gunter, Valerie and S. K. Smith (2007). Volatile Places: A Sociology of communities and environmental Controversies. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press.

6. Richard Peet, and Michael Watts (eds.) (2004). Liberation Ecologies, Second Edition: Environment, Development and Social Movements. London and New York: Routledge.

7. Paehlke, Robert C. (1989). Environmentalism and the future progressive politics. NewHaven: Yale University Press.

8. Eric Darier (ed.) (1999). Discourses of the Environment. Malden, Penn: Blackwell.

**READING SCHEDULE**

**Week 1 - Introduction**

January 12 – Introduction to Environmental Sociology

Twenty Lessons, Chapter 2

Freudenburg, William and Robert Gramling. 1989. ‘The Emergence of Environmental Sociology: Contributions of Riley E. Dunlap and William R. Catton.’ Sociological Inquiry 59.4: 439-452.

**Week2 – Foundations in Environmental Sociology I**

Catton, William and Riley Dunlap. 1978. ‘Environmental Sociology: A New Paradigm.’ *American Sociologist* 13: 41-49.

Elmi Mohamed, Abdullahi. 2010. ‘The Role of Environmental Resource Scarcity in the Somali Crisis’ in The Role of Democratic Governance versus Sectarian Politics in Somalia: Proceedings of the 9th Annual Conference on the Horn of Africa. Ulf Johansson Dahre, ed. Lund, Sweden, June 4-6, 2010, pp. 239-244.

**Week 3 – Foundations in Environmental Sociology II**

*Twenty Lessons*, Chapters 3 and 4.

Yard, Jaime. 2009. ‘Softwood Lumber & the Golden Spruce: Two Perspectives on the Material and Discursive Construction of British Columbian Forests.’ Topia: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies 21: 85-103.

Banerjee, Damayanti & Michael Mayerfeld Bell. 2005. ‘Ecogender: Locating Gender in Environmental Social Science.’ Society and Natural Resources 20: 3-19.

**Week 4 – Environmental Injustice(s)**

Twenty Lessons, Chapters 7 & 8

**Week 5 – Environmental Injustice(s) continued**

Twenty Lessons, Chapters 10, 11 & 12

**Week 6 – Consumption & Waste**

Corman, Lauren. 2011. ‘Getting their Hands Dirty: Racoons, Freegans and Urban ‘Trash.” Journal for Critical Animal Studies 9.3: 28-61.

Corbett, Julia. 2002. ‘A Faint Green Sell: Advertising and the Natural World.’ In Enviropop: Studies in Environmental Rhetoric and Popular Culture. Mark Meister & Phyllis Japp, eds. Westport, CT: Praeger, pp. 141-160.

**Week 7 – Consumption Continued**

Lock, Ineke and Satoshi Ikeda. 2005. ‘Clothes Encounters: Consumption, Culture, Ecology, and Economy.’ In Consuming Sustainability: Critical Social analyses of Ecological Change. Black Point, NS: Fernwood, pp. 20-46.

Twenty Lessons, Chapter 9

**Week 8**

Progress Review; Mid-term Exam

**Week 9 – Media Representations of the Environment**

Twenty Lessons, Chapter 6 & 9

Beder, Sharon. 1997. ‘Chapter Thirteen: Reporting on the Environment.’ Global Spin: The Corporate Assault on Environmentalism

**Week 10 – Climate Change**

Twenty Lessons, Chapter 14

**Week 11 – Labor & the Environment**

Twenty Lessons, chapters 5, 16 & 19

**Week 12 – Environmental Social Movements**

Twenty Lessons, Chapter 15 & 18

**Week 13 – Environmental Activism: Possibilities for Change**

Buttel, Frederick. 2003. ‘Environmental Sociology and the Explanation of Environmental Reform.’ Organization & Environment16: 306-344.

Twenty Lessons, chapter 17

**Week 14**

Twenty Lessons, Chapter 20

**Week 15**

Wrap up; Revision