

## Syllabus

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### SOC 332: Society & Environment, Fall 2016

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**Course Description:** This course provides an introduction to the study of human-environment relationships specifically on the connection between environmental challenges and social challenges.

**Prerequisite:** SOC 101, Sophomore Standing

**Contribution to University Learning Goals:** SOC 332 contributes to five learning goals:

- (1) Quantitative reasoning: SOC 332 requires an understanding of the scale of environmental change we are currently experiencing (e.g., trends relating to greenhouse gas emissions). These data will be presented in graphs, tables, and text and available in reports, websites, and documentary films.
- (2) Information literacy: SOC 332 requires students to understand the quantitative and qualitative data presented in course readings, lectures, and films. Your ability to do so will be assessed on exams and through your written work. Memos require students to illustrate a position in line with or against evidence provided in class.
- (3) Critical and creative thinking: SOC 332 encourages critical analyses of environmental problems and social solutions to these problems. Students are exposed to differing perspectives and will be guided through the process of evaluating these perspectives and relating the evaluation to our knowledge of power. Your skills in critical thinking will be assessed through the memos, group presentation and report, and your class participation.
- (4) Depth, breadth, and integration of learning: The environment is not just “out there” but also all around us. In SOC 332 you will participate in a series of in-class workshops designed to facilitate your ability to incorporate the critical perspectives from class into a real-world setting.
- (5) Communication: SOC 332 cultivates improved communications skills through the use of written memos documenting your reaction to course readings, communicating the findings of your work to your fellow students in a formal presentation, and reporting out to the class from small group discussions.

### Learning Goals, Course Topics, and Assessment Criteria

|     | <i>At the end of course, students should be able to:</i>  | <i>This objective will be evaluated primarily by:</i>   |
|-----|---|---|
| LG1 | Understand and convey evidence of environmental issues  | The main course project requires you to research and document an environmental issue. The oral presentation or blog is a chance to convey evidence to others.   |
| LG2 | Recognize and evaluate claims based on quantitative and qualitative data                                    | Preparing all components of the course project requires you to discern the quality of the qualitative and quantitative information used to make your arguments. |
| LG3 | Demonstrate capacity to think critically and creatively about human-environment interactions                | The final report should demonstrate your evolving opinions and ability to think out-of-the-box about addressing eco-social issues.                              |
| LG4 | Present, in oral and written form, formally and informally, knowledge about human-environment interactions. | Memos, oral presentation, blog, discussion, and final report.   |

**Required Readings:** *Readings are available through the library and Blackboard.*

**Course Format:** The instructional core of this course depends on student participation. This class will offer students a mix of learning opportunities. There will be lectures, but also expect small group discussions, student-led discussion, documentary films, and guest presentations to enrich our learning experience. My aim is to encourage active learning and

to provide a mix of learning opportunities to help students gain an appreciation for sociological inquiry and analyses of environment / society issues.

### Assignments and Evaluation:

| Course Requirements          | Value | Important Dates   |
|------------------------------|-------|---|
| Midterm exam                 | 15%   | October 6   |
| Final (in class) exam        | 15%   | December 1  |
| Group project                | 40%   |   |
| 1: introduction to the issue | 5%    | October 11  |
| 2: problem statement         | 5%    | October 25  |
| 3: final paper               | 20%   | November 24   |
| Presentation/ blog           | 10%   | TBA   |
| Memos                        | 10%   | Dates: Sept 6, Sept 22, Oct 18, Nov 1, Nov 15                                       |
| Attendance                   | 10%   | -   |
| Workshops                    | 10%   | Dates: Aug 25, Sept 8, Sept 15, Oct 6, Oct 13, Oct 20, Oct 27, Nov 3, Nov 17, Dec 8 |

### **Assignments may be evaluated in percentages. The letter grades associated are as follows:**

|            |            |                  |
|------------|------------|------------------|
| A: 94-100% | C+: 77-79% | F: 59% and below |
| A-: 90-93% | C: 74-76%  |                  |
| B+: 87-89% | C-: 69-73% |                  |
| B: 84-86%  | D+: 67-68% |                  |
| B-: 80-83% | D: 60-66%  |                  |

*1. Environmental Issues Project:* In pairs, you will focus on an environmental issue of your choosing (if you prefer to work alone that is allowed. Please see me). Issues might include (but are not limited to): wildlife / wilderness preservation, local environmental threats, the environmental impacts of fashion, green consumerism, climate activism, or environmental racism. The written components should be presented in a formal writing style, emulating one of the articles / chapters from class. The project will include the following components: **(40% total)**

- Component 1, Description of the issue: Your first assignment is to do your homework on the issue! You can use websites, books, news articles, and academic literature. What is the history? Is this a local issue? International? This should be at least 1-page long and provide peer-reviewed references (two for the social elements, two for the ecological elements) using Chicago or ASA format. You may do the research in pairs but turn in separate assignments. [Due October 1]. **5%**
- Component 2, Problem statement: Work with your partner to find quantitative evidence of the nature of the issue/problem, both environmental and in terms of impacts on (or from) humans. You will present this evidence in a 1-2 page document, providing evidence in tabular and/or graphical form as well as text, to introduce the reader to the environmental issue and its human impacts / causes. Sources should be cited in the same format used for C-1. You may turn in one assignment per pair group. [Due October 15]. **5%**
- Component 3, Final report. The final project will bring in material from components 1 and 2 (revised based on feedback) and add an additional component described briefly here. Titled, "discussion of [the issue]" the final section should first summarize briefly the material from C-1 and C-2. Then, a subtitled section called "theoretical framework" should introduce the theoretical framework you feel is best able to allow you to analyze how the problem emerged, how to address it, which actors and institutions ought to be engaged in its resolution, and other relevant information. The remainder should be broken down into three sections (how to address the issue? Who should be responsible? Concluding or additional remarks) plus a references cited section. The report should be approx. 6 pages in total. The paper should be double-spaced, have at least one inch margins, 12 pt. font, be well organized, and free of typos and grammatical errors (double-sided printing is OK). More details will be provided in class. Turn in one report from your pair group. [Due November 24] **20%**
- Presentation or Op-Ed: You and your partner can choose to either present what you learned in a formal presentation in class, or to write an Op-Ed. In either case, your work should provide sufficient background into the

issue you focused on, introduce possible solutions and critique / evaluate those solutions. The oral presentation should be 10-15 minutes long. Op-Eds should be no longer than 800 words and written for a general audience. [Presentations will take place in the last two weeks of the semester, Op-Eds due the final week of class], **10%**

2. *Exams*: You are required to write two in-class short answer / essay exams for this course. The exams will cover assigned readings, lecture material, in-class films, class exercises, and handouts. The first exam will be written on **October 6** and is worth **15% of your grade**. The midterm is designed to identify for both students and the instructor the concepts that require greater explanation. The second exam is worth **15%** and will be written on **December 1**.

3. *Class Participation*: Your overall class participation mark is worth **20%** of your final grade. Your participation mark is a combined weight of your memos (10%) and your attendance and participation in class (10%). **Memos** will be submitted on five dates throughout the semester (**Sept 6, Sept 20, Oct 18, Nov 1, Nov 15**). These informal assignments should be your own personal, informal reactions to the course material. The purpose of the memo is to integrate course material with your own life, and for you to give us feedback on how the course is going for you. The content of the memos should focus on both the course material and your experiences, but are otherwise open to you. For example, you might describe your reaction to a reading, class discussion, time spent in service work, or report an event in your life or a conversation with a friend or family member about course material – whatever is happening in your mind that week. Memos can be anywhere from a paragraph to a page long and should be typed. You will receive 2% per memo done but memos will not be graded. Memos (without names) may be read in class to stimulate discussion or illustrate a diversity of perspectives. If you prefer not to have your memo read aloud, just indicate this at the top of the page.

Students are encouraged to attend class and attendance will be taken since the course is premised on active participation. *Lecture notes will not be available from the instructor*. If you miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining notes from a fellow student. Your grade is an average of my assessment and your own self-evaluation.

4. *Workshops*: Several times in the semester, we will have in-class workshops on Thursdays, intended to make clear the concepts from the reading and lecture for the week. Your grade on the workshop will simply be a pass (1%) or fail (0%). A pass is earned by coming to class and actively participating. Dates of workshops are listed above. **10%**

**Late Penalties**: Writing assignments (memos and project work) handed in after the due dates specified will receive a 10% penalty per day.

**Classroom Etiquette**: These rules are provided to create a learning environment that feels comfortable for everyone – your instructor included! Students who fail to follow these guidelines may be asked to leave class.

1. **Punctuality**: Unless you have provided me with a valid reason to the alternative, I expect you to arrive by 9:10 and to stay until 10:25. If this will be a problem on a consistent basis, please speak to me privately.
2. **Listening**: Please do your best to save conversations until you are not in class. It is distracting for your fellow students and your instructor.
3. **Cell phones**: Unless you are a parent or an emergency responder, please turn off and do not use your phones in class.
4. **Reading**: Your informed participation in class depends on your commitment to doing readings in advance. Class will largely be spent discussing the reading together, rather than your instructor lecturing.

**Disability**: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit or call the Access Center (Washington Building 217: 509-335-3417) to schedule an appointment with an Access Advisor. All accommodations **MUST** be approved through the Access Center.

**Academic Integrity**: The Internet makes it increasingly hard to plagiarize intentionally without getting caught. Still, many students may unintentionally plagiarize materials. If you are in doubt, ask a peer, TA, or your instructor. Plagiarizing material will, in most cases, result in receiving a failing grade. Please familiarize yourself with the library's resources: <http://libraries.wsu.edu/library-instruction/plagiarism>. We can review this material in class if a large number of students are in doubt.

No electronic devices during tests are allowed. Cheating on an exam generally results in a "0" for the course. Do not look at other people's work when you are writing your test.

\*If you are found cheating or plagiarizing, you will receive a failing grade for the course.

**WSU Safety:** Washington State University is committed to maintaining a safe environment for its faculty, staff, and students. Safety is the responsibility of every member of the campus community and individuals should know the appropriate actions to take when an emergency arises. In support of our commitment to the safety of the campus community, the University has developed a Campus Safety Plan (<http://safetyplan.wsu.edu>). It is highly recommended that you visit this website as well as the University emergency management website (<http://oem.wsu.edu/emergencies>) to become familiar with the information provided.

**What you can expect from your Instructor and TA:** As your instructor I will do my best to provide a classroom environment that fosters stimulating discussion and where all students feel comfortable participating to the best of their ability. Outside the classroom I will be available to meet during office hours and I will attempt to accommodate students who cannot make it during that time. My intention is for this class to provide you with a sociological perspective on human-environment interactions. With respect to assignments, I will work with the TA to return your work to you within one week and will give you several opportunities to revise your work based on comments from your instructors and peers.

### COURSE SCHEDULE

(\*subject to change, see Blackboard site for up-to-date version)

|        | <b>Theme</b>   | <b>Reading, Due dates</b>  |
|--------|--|--|
| Week 1 | Introduction   | Aug 23: <b>No class</b> , instructor and TA at conference<br>Aug 25: Introduction to society & environment<br>READ: The Socio-Ecological Imagination. From <i>Environments, Natures, and Social Theory</i> . Located on Blackboard. <b>Pp. 1-7, 12-16</b> . Workshop #1: Clover Point and Turkey Creek |
| Week 2 | Theme I: Environmental issues<br>What's going on in Washington?<br>What problems are affecting us?<br>Why are some more visible than others? | Aug 30: Wildfires. Guest lecture, Dr. Matt Carroll. Reading(s) TBA.<br>Sept 1: Nuclear energy. Guest lecture. Katie Bittinger. Reading(s) TBA  |
| Week 3 | Theme I: Environmental issues<br>What's going on globally?   | Sept 6: Climate change basics, read the syllabus (not kidding)<br><b>Memo #1 due.</b><br>Sept 8: Syllabus review and Workshop #2   |
| Week 4 | Theme I: Environmental issues<br>What happens when concerns are ignored? How does this happen?   | Sept 13: READ: Harrison, J.L. 2014. Neoliberal Environmental Justice: Mainstream Ideas of Justice in Political Conflict over Agricultural Pesticides in the United States, <i>Environmental Politics</i> , 23:4: 650-669<br>Sept 15: Workshop #3   |
| Week 5 | Studying Human-Environment Interactions: documentation and evidence  | Sept 20: Library session at Terrell Library, Room 105 (9:10)<br>How to research and document environmental problems<br>Sept 22: Workday, picking your issue.<br><b>Memo #2 due</b>   |
| Week 6 | Midterm prep + midterm   | <b>Sept 27: Midterm prep</b><br><b>Sept 29: Midterm (readings, guest lectures, workshops)</b>  |
| Week 7 | Theme II: Causes of environmental issues.<br>State-capital relations   | Oct 4: The State and Policy, David N. Pellow. Chapter 3 from <i>Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology</i> .<br>*Film, Story of Stuff<br>Oct 6: Workshop #4   |
| Week 8 | Theme II: Causes of environmental issues.<br>Technology and governance   | Oct 11: Mol and Jänicke. Chapter 2.<br><b>*Component 1 Due</b><br>Oct 13: *Film clip: Mastering the Earth: <a href="https://vimeo.com/146445848">https://vimeo.com/146445848</a> and Workshop #5   |
| Week 9 | Theme II: Causes of environmental issues.  | Oct 18: Maniates, M.F. 2001. Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World? <i>Global Environmental Politics</i> , 1(3): 31-   |

|         |  |   |
|---------|--|---|
|         | The role of the individual   | 52.<br>*Film, the Lorax<br><b>Memo #3 due</b><br>Oct 20: Workshop #6  |
| Week 10 | Theme II: Causes of environmental issues.<br>How to theorize the role of the individual      | Oct 25: Kennedy, E.H. and NT. Krogman. 2008. Towards a Sociology of Consumerism. <i>International Journal of Sustainable Societies</i> . 1(2): 172-189.<br><b>*Component 2 Due</b><br>Oct 27: Workshop #7. Read Indoor air and energy consumption: Shove 2003 excerpt (on Blackboard) ahead of time. Due Nov 1. |
| Week 11 | Theme II: Causes of environmental issues.<br>The social organization of environmental issues | Nov 1: Consumption is socially organized: Southerton, Warde and Hand. 2004.<br><b>Memo #4 due</b><br>Nov 3: Workshop #8. Due Nov 8.   |
| Week 12 | Reporting on Environmental Issues and transition to theme III: How is inequality organized?  | Nov 8: Group project work day, tips on presenting, Op-Eds; Preparing component 3, parts 1 and 2<br>Nov 10: *Film, Inequality For All  |
| Week 13 | Theme III: How is inequality organized?<br>Lifestyle responses                               | Nov 22: Lifestyle change – voluntary simplicity. Reading TBA.<br><b>Memo #5 due</b><br>Nov 24: <b>Presentations, Component #3 due</b>   |
| Week 14 | <i>Thanksgiving Break</i>  |   |
| Week 15 | Exam Prep + Exam 2   | Nov 29: Exam review<br>Dec 1: <b>Final exam (readings, workshops since midterm)</b>   |
| Week 16 | New research in environmental sociology  | Dec 6: *Film, How to Change the World<br>Dec 8: Workshop #10, readings in class from <i>This Changes Everything</i><br><b>*OpEd due</b>   |