

**Community Organization and Institution Building  
(Community and the Environment)  
RPTS 605**

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Course Meeting Time: W 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Room 409i AGLS  
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

Environmental problems and their effects surround our everyday life. From local creek pollution, to climate change driven floods and disasters, the world is in a constant quest of improving its quality of life while protecting and even enhancing its natural resources. Many of the approaches used to search for this quest are conducted at the macro societal level. Yet, perhaps even more, are conducted day by day at the community level. This will be the emphasis of this course.

Communities are fundamental units of social organization. They are the arenas of social interaction where most important relationships are structured by the presence of informal and formal organizations. We all are, and will continue to be citizens in one or more communities. We are born into, are socialized by and die within the boundaries of our communities. Study of community and critical themes within them, provides an opportunity to examine how community-level processes play a role in promoting environmental action.

Using a multidisciplinary approach the course will examine contemporary manifestations of community (or lack there of), the forces shaping communities, the social and cultural diversity of communities, how these forces re-structure communities, and community responses to these changes. We will examine the ways in which communities organize and create social institutions that are responsive to the needs of individuals, families, and communities.

**TEACHING PHILOSOPHY**

According to Robert Booth Power, author of *The Dance with Community*, the intellectual struggle going on in our universities and communities today is about recognizing that our impoverished neighborhoods and the people that live in them are important to us all, and ignoring them by stereotyping, often results in a loss of our core principles of who we are as a country. Hence, the course is designed to achieve a balanced development of the student and to orient students to do professional work with all types of communities, their residents, and their organizations and institutions regardless of circumstances.

**GENERAL COURSE STRUCTURE**

The course will be conducted in a lecture and seminar format. A lecture will be conducted at the beginning of each class to clarify the context of the discussion. Then the students assigned leading discussion that week will take over. Overall there will be much more interaction than lecture. As such, the focus of the semester's work will be on reading, assimilating, writing about, presenting, and discussing material relevant to course issues. It is imperative that students come prepared to

be active participants in class. This preparation will require that the assigned materials be read before class.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To provide an overview of the current causes of environmental issues.
2. To provide an overview of major environmental issues affecting the world.
3. To provide an overview of current societal-level environmental responses to those issues.
4. To provide a systematic and advanced overview of the different theoretical and applied notions associated with community and community organizations and how these relate to responses to environmental problems.
5. To develop the student's interest in the political-economic, socio-cultural, and socio-ecological forces that influences the processes of community organization and development and the participants in these processes.
6. To gain a better understanding of the factors promoting change in communities.
7. To develop an understanding of how social organization and local institutions can help mitigate (or worsen) the consequence of change at a local level
8. To develop critical reading and thinking skills necessary to apply theory and knowledge to better understand and support communities around the world.
9. To encourage students to explore the development of a personal philosophy and style of community and advocacy practice consistent with the discipline's philosophy, values, and ethics.

### **COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

Upon completion of this course, students are expected to have achieved a basic level of competency to:

1. Understand the causes and consequences of current environmental issues;
2. Understand what the world at the macro societal level is doing to mitigate environmental issues;
3. Define and apply the various concepts and theories of power, participation, collaboration, resilience, and agency and how these are useful in the mitigation of environmental problems;
4. Demonstrate ability to analyze a community as a part of an interactive socio-ecosystem;
5. Define community issues, assess needs, propose alternative interventions and appropriate courses of action as well as the current research methods in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the collective efforts; and
6. Develop a broad view of systems related to social groups and apply this knowledge in working with other professionals in promoting community organization and development, social planning, social action and institutional change.

### **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Seminar participants should complete various assignments which will determine the course grade. These assignments will allow course participants to earn 100 points distributed the following way:

#### **Reading summary:** 30% (total)

Students are expected bring a summary of the assigned readings every day we meet in class. This is expected even the day that students cannot make it to class (in which case they will send via email before the class begins). The summary **should not be longer than 2 pages** and it should include only the material assigned for that week. Students should bring a printed copy of this summary and turn in to the professor before class begins. I will not accept summaries after this time.

#### **Class participation:** 15% (total)

Given the format of this course, students are expected to actively participate in the discussion emerging from covered material. The instructor of the course will constantly be mindful of the levels of participation displayed by all the students in the classroom. If students are shy or have a hard time voicing their thoughts, they are encouraged to talk to the instructor for help. Students who are not participating will receive email notifications so they know they need to participate more. After an initial email is issued, students will lose 5% of their grade every time they receive consequent emails informing them of their poor participation.

#### **Leading discussion:** 15%

Students will lead discussion once a semester. Creativity is encouraged when leading discussion as well as professionalism. More details about the task will be discussed during the first weeks of class.

#### **Reflection paper:** 15%

Students are to turn in a reflection paper on the day they lead discussion. Notice that *this is not a summary* paper. This paper should be between 3 and 5 pages long double spaced font size 12. The paper should include references to all the readings covered that week and should provide a standpoint about the topic covered.

#### **Term paper:** 25%

A final paper is due on May 4<sup>th</sup>. This paper should focus on a topic covered in class and hopefully related to the student's area of interest. The paper should be between 12-15 pages long double-spaced font size 12. More details about the final paper will be provided during the semester.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy Statement**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you would like to be considered for disability accommodations, you must first register with Disability Services and provide medical documentation to support your request for consideration. Disability Services is currently located at the White Creek complex on west campus. For additional information, call 979-845-1637 or visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>.

### **Aggie Honor Code**

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do.”

Upon accepting admission to Texas A&M University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor System. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the Texas A&M University Community from the requirements or the process of the Honor System. For additional information please visit: [www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/](http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/)

## Reading List

*Week 1 (January 17): Introduction to course (no readings)*

### Societal-Level Causes of and Responses to Contemporary Environmental Issues

*Week 2 (January 24): Population and Modern Consumption*

- Hartman, B. (1995). Chapter 2: The Malthusian Orthodoxy. Pp.13-40 in *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs: The Global Politics of Population Control*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- Bates, D. (2015). Chapter 8: Population, Demography, and the Environment. Pp. 118-136 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*, Second Edition. Gould, K. & Lewis, T. (eds). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bell, M. (2012). Chapter 2: Consumption and Materialism. Pp. 40-64 in *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Press.
- Ritzer, G. (2005). Chapter 1: A Tour of New Means of Consumption. Pp. 1-23 in *Revolutionizing the Means of Consumption: Enchanting a Disenchanted World*, Second Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Press.

*Week 3 (January 31): The Growth Machine and The Treadmill of Production*

- Molotch, H. (1976). The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place. *American Journal of Sociology* 82 (1976): 309–18, 326–332.
- Freudenburg, W., Gramling, R., Laska, S., & Erikson, K. (2009). Chapter 4: The Growth Machine Comes to New Orleans. Pp. 55-66 in *Catastrophe in the Making: The Engineering of Katrina and the Disasters of Tomorrow*. Washington DC: Island Press.
- Freudenburg, W., Gramling, R., Laska, S., & Erikson, K. (2009). Chapter 5: A Helpful Explosion. Pp. 67-89 in *Catastrophe in the Making: The Engineering of Katrina and the Disasters of Tomorrow*. Washington DC: Island Press.
- Gould, K., Pellow, D. & Schnaiberg, A. (2004). Interrogating the Treadmill of Production: Everything You Wanted to Know About the Treadmill but Were Afraid to Ask. *Organization & Environment* 17: 296- 316.
- Schnaiberg, A. (2015). Chapter 4: Labor Productivity and the Environment. Pp. 67-76 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*, Second Edition. Gould, K. & Lewis, T. (eds). New York: Oxford University Press.

*Week 4 (February 7): Environmental Movements*

- Dunlap, R. & Mertig, A. (1992). Chapter 1: The Evolution of the US Environmental Movement from 1970 to 1990: An Overview. Pp. 1-10 in *American Environmentalism: The US Environmental Movement 1970-1990*. Dunlap, R. and Mertig, A. (edRRadas.). Washington DC: Taylor and Francis.
- Brulle, R. (2015). Chapter 16: US Environmental Movements. Pp. 263-282 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*, Second Edition. Gould, K. & Lewis, T. (eds). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lewis, T. (2015). Chapter 18: Environmental Movements in the Global South. Pp. 300-314 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*, Second Edition. Gould, K. & Lewis, T. (eds). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kareiva, P. & Marvier, M. (2012). What is Conservation Science? *BioScience* 62 (11): 962-969.
- \*Schelhas, J. & Pfeffer, M. (2008). Chapter 1: Parks and Protected Areas in the Process of Environmental Globalization. Pp. 1-24 in *Saving Forests, Protecting People? Environmental Conservation in Central America*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

- \*Bevington, D. (2009). Chapter 1: The Rise of Grassroots Biodiversity Activism and the Rebirth of Environmentalism. Pp. 1-13 in *The Rebirth of Environmentalism, Grassroots Activism from the Spotted Owl to the Polar Bear*.

### **Community-Level Factors Associated with Management of Environmental Issues**

*Week 5 (February 14): Writing Lecture*

*Week 6 (February 21): Community Development and the Environment*

- Bridger, J. & Luloff, A.E. (1999). Toward an Interactional Approach to Sustainable Community Development. *Journal of Rural Studies* 15(4): 377-387.
- Rogers, M. & Ryan, R. (2001). The Triple Bottom Line for Sustainable Community Development. *Local Environment* 6(3): 279-289.
- Matarrita-Cascante, D. & Brennan, M.A. (2012). Conceptualizing Community Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. *Community Development* 43(3): 293-305.
- Matarrita-Cascante, D., Lee, J.H., Nam, J.W. (in review). What Should Any Community Development Intervention Achieve?

*Week 7 (February 28): Power and the Environment*

- Polsby, N.W. (1960). How to study community power: The pluralist alternative. *The Journal of Politics* 22(3): 474-484.
- Gaventa, J. (1980). Chapter 1: Power and participation. Pp. 1-32 in *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Gaventa, J. (1980). Chapter 3: The Impact of Industrial Power: The Shaping of a Company Valley. Pp. 47-83 in *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Njaya, F., Donda, S. & Béné, C. (2012). Analysis of Power in Fisheries Co-Management: Experiences from Malawi. *Society and Natural Resources* 25(7): 652-666.
- \*Borrini-Feyerabend, G., Pimbert, M., Farvar, M.T., Kothari, A., Renard, Y. (2007). *Sharing Power: A Global Guide to Collaborative Management of Natural Resources*. Earthscan, London.
- \*McCright, A. & Dunlap, R. E. (2011). Cool Dudes: The Denial of Climate Change Among Conservative White Males in the United States. *Global Environmental Change* 21(4): 1163-1172.

*Week 8 (March 7): Education, Community, and the Environment*

- Uzell, D. (1999). Education for Environmental Action in the Community: New Roles and Relationships. *Cambridge Journal of Education* 29(3): 397-413.
- Doyle, R. & Krasny, M. (2003). Participatory Rural Appraisal as an Approach to Environmental Education in Urban Community Gardens. *Environmental Education Research* 9(1): 91-115.
- Tal, R. (2004). Community-based Environmental Education – A Case Study of Teacher-Parent Collaboration. *Environmental Education Research* 10(4): 523-543.
- Portman, M. & Teff-Seker, Y. (2017). Community-Level Environmental Projects as Learning Tools for Planners: A Case Study of Graduate Planning Students. *Environmental Education Research* 23(3): 415-435.
- \*Corral-Verdugo, V. & Armendariz, L. (2000). The “New Environmental Paradigm” in a Mexican Community. *The Journal of Environmental Education* 31(3): 25-31.

*Week 9 (March 21): Community Participation and the Environment*

- Arnstein, S. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 35(4): 216-224.
- Campbell, L. & Vianio-Mattila, A. (2003). Participatory and Community-based Conservation: Opportunities Missed for Lessons Learned? *Human Ecology* 31(3):417-437.
- Nelson, F. & Agrawal, A. (2008). Patronage or Participation? Community-based Natural Resource Management Reform in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Development and Change* 39(4): 557-585.
- Cornwall, A. (2008). Unpacking "Participation": Models, Meanings and Practices. *Community Development Journal* 43(3): 269-283.
- \*Rouillard, J., Reeves, A., Heal, K., & Ball. (2014). The Role of Public Participation in Encouraging Changes in Rural Land Use to Reduce Flood Risk. *Land Use Policy* 38: 637-645.
- \*Schreckenber, K. & Luttrell, C. (2009). Participatory Forest Management: A Route to Poverty Reduction? *International Forestry Review* 11(2): 221-238.

*Week 10 (March 28): Community Agency and Collaboration and the Environment*

- Matarrita-Cascante, D., Brennan, M., & Luloff, A.E. (2010). Community Agency and Sustainable Tourism Development: The Case of La Fortuna, Costa Rica. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 18(6): 735-756.
- Newman, L., & Dale, A. (2005). The Role of Agency in Sustainable Local Community Development. *Local Environment* 10(5): 477-486.
- Selin, S., & Chavez, D. (1995). Developing a Collaborative Model for Environmental Planning and Management. *Environmental Management* 19(2): 189-195.
- Buckles, D., & Rusnak, G. (1999). Conflict and Collaboration in Natural Resource Management. Downloaded from:  
[http://commdev.org/userfiles/files/1439\\_file\\_conflict\\_and\\_collaboration.pdf](http://commdev.org/userfiles/files/1439_file_conflict_and_collaboration.pdf)
- \*Jamal, T., & Stronza, A. (2009). Collaboration Theory and Tourism Practice in Protected Areas: Stakeholders, Structuring and Sustainability. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 17(2): 169-189.

*Week 11 (April 4): Leadership and the Environment*

- Burns, J. M. (1978). The Power in Leadership. Pp. 9-28 in *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Heifetz, R. (1994). Values in Leadership. Pp. 13-27 in *Leadership Without Easy Answers*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
- Kirk, P. & Shutte, A.M. (2004). Community Leadership Development. *Community Development Journal* 39(3): 234-251.
- Egri, C. & Herman, S. (2000). Leadership in the North American Environmental Sector: Values, Leadership Styles, and Contexts of Environmental Leaders and their Organizations. *Academy of Management Journal* 43(4): 571-604.
- \*Alexander, J., Comfort, M., Weiner, B., & Bogue, R. 2001. Leadership in collaborative health partnerships. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership* 12(2): 159-175.
- \*Kahn, S. (1991). Leaders. Pp. 21-49 in *Organizing: A Guide for Grass Roots Leaders*. Washington DC: NASW Press.
- \*Korsching, P., Allen, J., Vogt, R., & Sapp, S. (2007). Community Leaders, Business Ownership, and Support of Entrepreneurship Development: The Role of Macro entrepreneurs. *Community Development, The Journal of the Community Development Society*, 38(4): 28-45.
- \*Wildavsky, A. (1989). A Cultural Theory of Leadership. Pp 87-113 in *Leadership and Politics*, Bryan Jones (ed.). Lawrence, KS: The University of Kansas Press.
- \* Hackman, J. R. & Walton, R.E. (1986). Chapter 3 Leading Groups in Organizations. Pp. 72-116 in *Designing Effective Work Groups*, Paul Goodman (ed). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

\*O'Brien, Hassinger, E., Brown, R., & Pinkerton, J. (1991). The social networks of leaders in more or less viable communities. *Rural Sociology* 56(4): 699-716.

*Week 12 (April 11): Community Resilience and the Environment*

- Matarrita-Cascante, D., Trejos, B., Qin, H., Joo, D., & Debner, S. (2017). Conceptualizing Community Resilience: Revisiting Conceptual Distinctions. *Community Development* 48(1): 105-123.
- Berkes, F. & Ross, H. (2013). Community Resilience: Toward an Integrated Approach. *Society and Natural Resources* 26(1): 5-20.
- Strickland-Munro, J., H. Allison and S.A. Moore. (2010). Using Resilience Concepts to Investigate the Impacts of Protected Area Tourism on Communities. *Annals of Tourism Research* 37(2): 499-519.
- Olsson, P., Folke, C. & Berkes, F. (2004). Adaptive Co-Management for Building Resilience in Social-Ecological systems. *Environmental Management* 34(1): 75-90.
- \*Matarrita-Cascante, D. & Trejos, B. (2013). Community Resilience in Changing Resource Dependent Communities: A Comparative Case Study. *Environment and Planning A* 45(6): 1387-1402.
- \*Adger, N.W. (2000). Social and Ecological Resilience: Are they related? *Progress in Human Geography* 24(3): 247-364.
- \*Magis, K. (2010). Community Resilience: An Indicator of Social Sustainability. *Society and Natural Resources* 23: 401: 416

### **Community Organizing**

*Week 13 (April 18): Conducting Assessment*

- Burdge, R. (2004). Chapter 1: Social impact assessment: Definition and historical trends (Pp. 3-11) in *The Concepts, Process, and Methods of Social Impact Assessment. Revised Edition*. Middletown, WI: Social Ecology Press.
- Burdge, R. (2004). Chapter 4: Defining social impact assessment variables for the SIA model (Pp. 41-52) in *The Concepts, Process, and Methods of Social Impact Assessment. Revised Edition*. Middletown, WI: Social Ecology Press.
- Beaulieu, Lionel J. nd. *Mapping the Assets of Your Community: A Key Component for Building Local Capacity*. Southern Rural Development Center, Mississippi State University. Available online at [http://srcd.msstate.edu/publications/227/227\\_asset\\_mapping.pdf](http://srcd.msstate.edu/publications/227/227_asset_mapping.pdf).
- Kelly, E.D. & Becker, B. (2000). Chapter 3: Where are we? Analysis of existing conditions in the community. Pp. 63-92 in *Community Planning: An Introduction to the Comprehensive Plan*. Washington, DC: Island Press.

*Week 14 (April 25): Organizing*

- Haggstrom, W. (2001). The tactics of organization building. Pp. 364-379 in *Strategies of Community Building*, Rothman J., Erlich J., & Tropman J. (eds.). Itasca: Peacock Publishers.
- Brown, M.J. (2006). Chapter 1: What is community organizing anyway? Pp. 3-22 in *Building Powerful Community Organizations, A Personal Guide to Creating Groups that Can Solve Problems and Change the World*. Arlington, MA: Long Haul Press.
- Brown, M.J. (2006). Chapters 6: How to recruit: The nuts and bolts. Pp. 147-186 in *Building Powerful Community Organizations, A Personal Guide to Creating Groups that Can Solve Problems and Change the World*. Arlington, MA: Long Haul Press.
- Brown, M.J. (2006). Chapters 12: Building community. Pp. 335-344 in *Building Powerful Community Organizations, A Personal Guide to Creating Groups that Can Solve Problems and Change the World*. Arlington, MA: Long Haul Press.



Kelly, E.D. & Becker, B. (2000). Chapter 5: Where do we want to go? Involving citizens in making a plan. Pp. 111-129 in *Community Planning: An Introduction to the Comprehensive Plan*. Washington, DC: Island Press.

\*McNeely, J. (1999). Community Building. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 27(6): 741-750.

*Week 15 (May 2): Challenges to Community Organizing*

Chávez, C. (1973). The Organizer's Tale. Pp. 545-552 in *Introduction to Chicano Studies*, Duran, L & Bernard, H. (eds.). New York: Macmillan Publishing.

Janis, I. (1983). Groupthink. Pp. 378-384 in *Perspectives on Behavior in Organizations*, Hackman, J.R., E. Lawler and L. Porter (eds.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Pilisuk, M., McAllister, J., & Rothman, J. (1996). Coming together for action: The challenges of contemporary grassroots community organizing. *Journal of Social Issues* 52(1): 15-37.

Campbell, D. & Erstein, N. (2010). Benefits and challenges in building a community youth development coalition. *REACH Issue Brief Series* 1: 1-8.