

Environmental Sociology
MW 5:15PM-6:35PM

Instructor: Dr. Rebecca Schewe

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Course Description

Our lives and society are closely tied to the environment and natural resources, and through our daily actions we can both cause environmental degradation and support environmental solutions. In this course we will examine the ways in which our contemporary society depends on natural resources from around the world and the ways that social institutions create environmental problems and attempt to solve them.

Course Objective

When this course is completed you will have a deeper understanding of the relationship between society and the natural environment and be able to describe the major theoretical concepts in environmental sociology. You will be able to describe several major environmental concerns facing society and the strengths and shortcomings of proposed solutions. You will be able to critically evaluate others' writing and research and be more confident in your own writing.

Course Overview

Our course can be divided into four major sections: Introduction, Causes, Consequences, and Responses. I will lecture occasionally, but the class is primarily built around discussion.

We will begin the course with an introduction to some key concepts and theories that will be important throughout the course. This prologue will begin to answer the question: what is environmental sociology? We will introduce some of the major questions that are important to environmental sociology.

In **Causes** we will introduce the treadmills of production and consumption, examining the environmental reality of our high consumption society. We will also introduce key issues of population and the environment and talk about the role of government and market in the environment. We will investigate how social institutions shape the environment.

In **Consequences** we will explore how people understand the environment and natural resources and the social consequences of environmental problems. We will answer questions such as: what is nature? Why are environmental problems not evenly distributed? We will investigate how the environment shapes society.

In **Responses**, we will explore solutions to environmental problems and ways in which our society can become more ecologically balanced. We will introduce a variety of different proposed solutions such as sustainable development and evaluate them based on our new knowledge.

Required Readings

The following books are required and can be purchased at the university bookstore:

Fruedenberg, William R., Robert Grambling, Shirley Laska, and Kai Erikson. 2009. *Catastrophe in the Making: The Engineering of Katrina and the Disasters of Tomorrow*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.

Gould, Kenneth A., and Tammy L. Lewis. 2009. *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wilbur, Tom. 2012. *Under the Surface: Fracking, Fortunes, and the Fate of the Marcellus Shale*. 1 edition. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Additional readings will be posted on the course website (Blackboard) and can be downloaded for reading and printing.

Course Requirements and Grading

Careful reading and participation are mandatory for this course. Classroom time will primarily focus on discussion of the readings supplemented by lectures and presentations. Because the course is discussion-based, it is absolutely necessary for you to complete the readings each week and be prepared to discuss them. Paper assignments, quizzes, and presentations will complement the readings and discussion.

Grades will be assessed as follows:

- Participation (10%)
- Class Discussion Leader (15%)
- Reading Discussion Papers (20%; 5% each)
- “My Footprint Diary” Activity (20%)
- Final paper (30%)
 - Thesis and outline (5%)
 - Rough draft and Peer Review (5%)
 - Final draft (25%)

A =	93+
A- =	90-92
B+ =	87-89
B =	84-86
B- =	80-83
C+ =	77-79
C =	74-76
C- =	70-73
D =	60-69
F =	Below 60

Extra Credit: No extra credit will be given in this course.

Late Policy: All assignments will be turned in online through the Blackboard system. Assignments must be submitted before the start of class on the day they are due. For each day that an assignment is late I will subtract 10 points from the assignment’s grade. Assignments will not be accepted more than five days late. All students are required to take exams during the scheduled time, makeup exams will not be given unless required by a specific university policy.

Grade Appeals: If you have questions about a grade, please follow the following procedure:

1) **WAIT.** No grade appeals or inquiries will be considered within 48 hours of the student receiving the grade. First give yourself time to cool off and consider the grade and comments carefully during the 48 hour waiting period, 2) send an email inquiry detailing your questions and/or concerns to both the professor and TA using your SU email and following the course email policy, 3) the TA will respond within 24 hours to either answer your inquiry via email or schedule a time for a meeting, 4) if a meeting is needed, you should meet with the TA first to discuss your inquiry, 5) if a meeting with the TA does not resolve your inquiry, the TA will send an email to both the student and professor to schedule a meeting, 6) if the follow-up meeting is unable to resolve your inquiry you may submit grade inquiries through the department chair and appropriate university channels.

Additional Details About Assignments

Participation: Attendance and participation in class is mandatory. Each student will be given one excused absence that will not affect his/her grade. After one absence, each additional absence will begin to reduce the participation portion of your grade by one letter grade. Classroom participation will be based on your active participation in discussion through answering “reading checks” at the start of class, asking questions, offering insights from the readings, or other discussion of course content. If you are shy or nervous in the classroom, you can supplement your participation through the Blackboard discussion board.

Reading Checks: We will begin each class with a brief written activity to verify that you have completed the assigned readings and to spur discussion. These reading checks will constitute 50% of your participation grade.

Class Discussion Leader: One time during the semester you will be responsible for leading class discussion. You should prepare a short response to the readings and a series of discussion questions. You can also bring in additional materials, an activity, or multimedia materials that are appropriate. Please discuss these with me prior to the class. You can use the reading response papers from other students for inspiration.

Reading Response Papers: Four times during the semester you must write a short (1-2 page single spaced) response to the day’s assigned readings. You must complete one reading response paper during each section of the course (i.e. introduction, causes, consequences, and the responses) to make sure that you are engaging with the readings throughout the entire course. The response paper should summarize the reading and key points, offer a critical response and comment on the reading, and two or three points to stimulate discussion. This must be posted to Blackboard by noon the day before the class discussion of the reading.

“My Footprint Diary” Activity: For this short paper (3-4 pages double spaced) you can choose one of two options. For the first, you can go “car free” for three days and write a reflection on your experience and the impact of your fossil fuel use. For the second, you can choose a favorite possession/belonging and write a reflection on the item, its production, and its environmental impacts. For each of the activities, remember to relate it to the course readings and material.

Research Paper: You will develop an 8-10 page (double spaced) research paper on a topic related to course material. The paper should be formatted in American Sociological Association style. Your evaluation will include a rough draft and peer review. You will also be graded on a final paper draft.

Conduct Ground Rules

This class will involve many debates and discussions. We will not always all agree, and that is fine, but it is important for each of us to be respectful and appropriate. If you ever feel uncomfortable with comments from another student or from me, please let me know as soon as possible and we will find a solution. **I absolutely do not tolerate bullying or bigotry of any kind in my classroom.** Racial, ethnic, gender, religious, sexual orientation, or other slurs or derogatory language will result in you being asked to leave class immediately and will be resolved according to the University guidelines for resolution of discrimination and harassment.

Academic Integrity

Syracuse University's Academic Integrity Policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Students should be familiar with the policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about course-specific expectations, as well as about university policy. The university policy governs appropriate citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. The policy also prohibits students from submitting the same written work in more than one class without receiving written authorization in advance from both instructors. The presumptive penalty for a first offense by an undergraduate student is course failure, accompanied by a transcript notation indicating that the failure resulted from a violation of Academic Integrity Policy. The standard sanction for a first offense by a graduate student is suspension or expulsion. For more information and the complete policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>.

Course Specific Expectations: Academic misconduct will not be tolerated and will be reported to the Academic Integrity office and addressed according to university policy. I have a zero-tolerance policy and all suspected violations will be punished with either a zero on the assignment and/or course failure. Plagiarism and cheating are never the right choice. Please read the University policies dealing with plagiarism and understand that plagiarism includes both copying the exact wording from someone else and also using an author's ideas without giving a citation. You are responsible for understanding what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it. If you have questions about how to cite a source, understanding what plagiarism is, or how to avoid plagiarism, please ask me for help. Learning how to build up your own ideas and to combine them with good citations is an important skill, and I want to help you develop that skill. **Collaboration on homework or lab assignments is NOT PERMITTED** except with the express, written permission of the instructor.

TurnItIn.com

All assignments will be evaluated using TurnItIn.com to check for instances of plagiarism or other cheating. I encourage you to "pre-check" your work yourself using TurnItIn so that you can be sure you have not inaccurately cited or used existing work.

Technology in the Classroom

Laptops, cell phones, recording devices, and/or tablets will not be allowed during class unless they are needed for a documented learning disability or have been permitted for a specific assignment. If you are using an electronic version of a reading, you must discuss this with me in advance.

Blackboard

This class will rely heavily on the Blackboard system for readings, assignments, and discussion boards. Students are expected to be familiar with the Blackboard system and any questions should be directed to the ITS Help Desk: (315) 443-2677. You are responsible for meeting all deadlines for assignments through Blackboard and you should allow adequate time for trouble-shooting software or system issues. **I will not accept technology-related problems as an excuse for late or incomplete work.**

Email Policy

Email to instructors should be polite and appropriate. Please include a clear topic in the subject line, a proper greeting, and sign the message with your complete name. Please take the time to proofread your email and make sure that it is suitable for a professor. You should allow 24 hours for a response to messages, and I will answer email during normal weekday business hours. Email is the most appropriate way to reach me with brief questions, expected absences, and technical questions. For significant substantive questions about course material I encourage you to attend office hours. If email does not adhere to these standards, I reserve the right not to respond.

Religious Holiday Observances

Syracuse University recognizes the diverse faith traditions represented among its campus community and supports the rights of faculty, staff, and students to observe these traditions.

Faculty are asked to make appropriate accommodation for students' observance needs by providing an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirement that is missed because of an absence due to a religious observance, **provided the instructor has been notified no later than the end of the second week of classes.**

Student Athletes

Student athletes are obligated to meet both their academic and athletic commitments. It is your responsibility to provide a letter from the Student-Athlete Support Services confirming your status as a student athlete and your anticipated travel schedule. All arrangements for assignments and letters requesting accommodations must be made in **advance of the travel** and must be **confirmed in writing** via email with the instructor.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), located in Room 309 of 804 University Avenue, or call [\(315\) 443-4498](tel:3154434498) for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue students with documented Disabilities Accommodation Authorization Letters, as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible. For more information, see <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu/faculty-staff/contact-us/>

Campus Resources

The Writing Center: The writing center offers classes and one-on-one meetings to help you with any kind of writing. Call (315) 443-5289 or go to <http://wc.syr.edu/> for more information.

Student Support Services: If you have, or think you might have, a special need that requires accommodations, Student Support Services can offer help. Call 315-443-3867 or go to <http://oss.syr.edu/> for more information. Please also let me know.

Counseling Services: Sometimes we all need a little extra help. If you ever want to talk to someone about your health, stress, depression, or problems, the University offers counseling services. Please call 315.443.4715 or go to <http://counselingcenter.syr.edu/> for more information.

Sexual Assault Services: If you have been sexually assaulted or if you have questions concerning sexual assault or abuse, the Counseling Center offers information and support. Please call 315-443-4715 or http://counselingcenter.syr.edu/SexualAssaultRelationshipViolence/sexual_assault.html for more information.

Technology Help Desk: The ITS Help Desk can help you solve many computing problems, including help with the Blackboard system. Please call (315) 443-2677 or email help@syr.edu for assistance.

Key Dates:

Sept 16: Last day for section 1 Reading Response Paper

Oct 14: Last day for section 2 Reading Response Paper

Oct 26: My Footprint Diary due

Nov 4: Last day for section 3 Reading Response Paper

Nov 18: Outline and annotated bibliography due

Dec 7: Last day for section 4 Reading Response Paper

Dec 9: Rough draft due and peer review

Dec 14: Final paper due by 5PM

Readings must be completed BEFORE the date indicated.

**Readings posted on Blackboard are highlighted with an asterisk*

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS	SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
1 31-Aug	Course Overview	Twenty Lessons (intro)		
2-Sep	"Natural" Disaster	Twenty Lessons (under. Disaster vulnerability), Catastrophe (pg. 3-35)	*Freudenburg et al. 2008	
7-Sep	Labor day, no class			
9-Sep	Growth Machine Theory	*Molotch 1976, Catastrophe (pg. 55-89)		
14-Sep	Unexpected? Consequences	Catastrophe (pg. 111-134, 147-161)		
16-Sep	Environmental Sociology Theory	*Carson 1962, *Carolan 2013, *Buttel et al. 2002	*Buttel and Field 2002, *Foster 1999	Final day for Reading Response 1
2 21-Sep	Modern Consumption	*Bell 2012, *Twitchell 2000	*Ritzer 2005	
23-Sep	The Treadmill of Production	Twenty Lessons (Theories of env soci: read the section on Treadmill of Production, labor prod. And env.), *Schnaiberg and Gould 1994	*Gould et al. 2004	
28-Sep	Population and the Environment	Twenty Lessons (pop, demog, env), *Hartmann 1995, *Planet Money: A Bet on the Future of Humanity podcast	*Ehrlich 1968	
30-Sep	Science, Policy, and the Environment	Twenty Lessons (science of nature), *Sarewitz 2004		
5-Oct	Risk and Energy Development	*This American Life: Game Changer podcast, Under the Surface (prologue, chapter 1, chapter 2 up to page 48)	*Davis 2012, *Fisk 2013	
7-Oct	Risk and Energy Development	Under the Surface (complete chapter 2, chapter 3)		
12-Oct	Risk and Energy Development	Under the Surface (chapter 5)		
14-Oct	Risk and Energy Development	Under the Surface (chapter 6, chapter 7, epilogue)		Final day for Reading Response 2
3 19-Oct	Agriculture and the Environment	Twenty Lessons (from farms to factories), *Bell 2004	*Harrison 2008	
21-Oct	Agriculture and the Environment (part two)	*Jackson 2002, *Carolan 2011	*Kinchy 2012	
26-Oct	Environmental Racism	*Pellow 2002, *Bell 2012B, *Principles of Environmental Justice 1991		"My Footprint Diary" Due
28-Oct	Environmental Justice and Health	Twenty Lessons (env. Inequality and env justice,), Twenty Lessons (soci. Of env. health), *Sengupta	*Shriver and Kennedy 2005	

	2008			
2-Nov	Social Construction of Nature	*Cronon 1995, *Schaeffer 2015	*Stedman 2011, *Greider and Garkovich 1994	
4-Nov	Climate Change and Global Inequality	Twenty Lessons (climate change), *Denton 2002, *This American Life: Climate Changes, People Don't podcast	*Stuart et al. 2012	Final Day for Reading Response 3
4 9-Nov	American Environmental Movements & The Land Ethic	Twenty Lessons (US Env. Movements), *Leopold 1949	*Gottlieb 1993, *Nash 1989	
11-Nov	Disability and the Environment	*Ray 2009, *EcoDisablism		
16-Nov	EcoFeminism	*Mellor 1997, *Banerjee and Bell 2007	*Reuther 1975, *Merchant 1996	Outline and annotated bibliography due
18-Nov	Sustainable Development, Environmental Economics and Market Solutions	Twenty Lessons (paradox of sust. Dev), *Revell 2008, *Planet Money: Will Economic Growth Destroy the Planet? Podcast (50)	*Hopwood et al. 2005	
23-Nov	THANKSGIVING BREAK			
25-Nov	THANKSGIVING BREAK			
30-Nov	Radical Responses	*Lange 1990, *Talk of the Nation: No Impact Man podcast (54)		
2-Dec	Contemporary Activism	*Wilson 2012, *McKibben 2012, *Bond 2011		
7-Dec	International and Indigenous Responses	Twenty Lessons (indigenous cultures), *Tar Sands		Final Day for Reading Response 4
9-Dec	Peer Review			Rough Draft Due and Peer Review
14-Dec	Final Paper Due	By 5PM		Final Paper Due