



University of Wisconsin
Stevens Point

STEVENS POINT • MARSHFIELD • WAUSAU

SOC 355: Environmental Sociology (3cr.) SPRING 2024

Instructor

Ann Herda-Rapp, Ph.D.
Professor of Sociology

Contact info

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B327 Science Building (Stevens Point office)

Course meeting time, days, section number, location

9:30-10:45 TR, sect. W01, room 243, main academic building, Wausau campus

Office hours

12:30-1:30 Mon., Stevens Point office or by Zoom (email instructor for link)
11:00-12:00 Tues., Wausau office or by Zoom (email instructor for link)
11:00-12:00 Wed., Stevens Point office or by Zoom (email instructor for link)
12:30-1:30 Thurs., Wausau office or by Zoom (email instructor for link)
Or by appointment

Course description, overview, and learning outcomes

[From the UWSP course catalog] Socio-cultural foundations of our relationship with the natural environment. Relationship between environmental degradation and social, political, and economic structures. Beliefs and values about the environment and their expression in various forms of environmentalism and environmental movements. Presentation of environmental issues in cultural, political, and scientific domains. Bachelor: ER, SS; Associate: SER

Our objective in this course is to understand the socio-cultural foundations of our relationship with the natural environment. The course examines the relationship between environmental degradation and social, political and economic structures. We will explore our beliefs and values about the environment and their expression in various forms of environmentalism and environmental movements. We will also explore environmental issues, how they are shaped by socio-cultural forces such as the media and science, how they move into the realm of public consideration and public policy.

This course fulfills the requirement for “Social Sciences” (SS) and “Environmental Responsibility” (ER) in the UWSP General Education Program (GEP) (for a bachelor degree) and the “Individual, Social, and Environmental Responsibility (SER) requirement (for the associate degree), with course-specific student learning outcomes. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Explain or apply major concepts, methods, or theories used in the social sciences to investigate, analyze, or predict human behavior. (SS LO1)
- Examine and explain how social, cultural, or political institutions influence individuals or groups. (SS LO2)
- Identify interactions between human society and the natural environment. (ER LO1)
- Analyze the individual, social, cultural, and ecological factors that influence environmental sustainability. (ER LO2)
- Evaluate competing claims that inform environmental debates. (ER LO3)
- Engage in active learning to explore ethical, social, and/or environmental issues. (SER LO1)

This course will also meet the Associate degree's depth requirement for students who have completed SOC 101. Students can work with their advisor to record that the requirement was met.

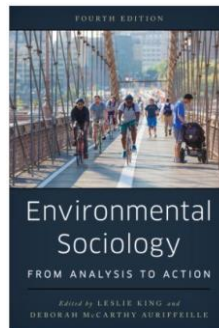
By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- Recognize human impacts on the environment.
- Possess an understanding of environmental sociology theory.
- Recognize the origins and forms of environmental social movements.
- Develop an understanding of the social structural context of environmental challenges.

Required Texts

The following materials are **required** reading for this course. The text is available through the university's textbook rental program.

King, Leslie and Deborah McCarthy Auriffeille, eds. 2020. *Environmental Sociology: From Analysis to Action*, 4th Edition. Rowman & Littlefield: Lanham, MD.



***Additional required readings will be in Canvas.

Course Requirements / Graded Material: See the Course Organization and Schedule (pgs. 3-5) for all due dates.

Total course points = 364 total points

- **Exams** = 200 total points
 - Exam 1: 100 pts.
 - Final Exam: 100 pts.

Two in-class essay exams will be administered during the semester. Each exam will require students to draw from course readings and any other posted course materials for that unit/portion of the course. The final exam will be comprehensive, drawing from material from the whole semester. Makeup exams are permitted in *emergency* cases only. Documentation of the emergency must be provided to the instructor.

- **Local Environmental Issues Research Paper and Presentation** = 100 total points
 - Research paper: 75 pts.
 - Presentation: 25 pts.

Students will choose and research a local environmental issue from a list of potential issues. Students will focus on how and by whom the issue is presented to the public, what we can know about the issue, and conclusions we can draw. These are contentious local environmental issues, with people (claims-makers) – some of whom may be “environmentalists”, some of whom may not – arguing vehemently from various sides and using various tools from their toolkit to make their case and prevail. Sources will be both local and national/international, including the websites and reports of environmental organizations, interest groups, industry groups, government agencies, etc., as well as newspaper and magazine sources. Students will produce a 3200-4800 word (about 10-12 double-spaced pages) paper and create and present a PowerPoint presentation on their issue. A full description of the assignment is posted in Canvas. Due dates are included in the Course Organization and Schedule.

- **Quizzes** – 8 @ 8 points = 64 total points
Nine in-class quizzes will be administered; I will drop your lowest quiz grade at the end of the semester. Quizzes will be on one topic and usually the quiz will be administered when we start a topic (see the Course Organization and Schedule). Each quiz will consist of 4 multiple choice questions, each worth 2 points, for a total of 8 points. The quiz will be on the *reading* assigned for that topic (for

the associated readings, see the middle column of the Course Organization and Schedule, below). You may use any notes you took during the quiz; you may not use the reading itself. Time for the quiz will be limited to 10 minutes. Anyone coming in after the quiz has already started may take the quiz but only with the amount of time remaining for the quiz. If you are not present by the time the quiz is completed in class, a zero will be recorded; no makeup quizzes will be given.

Grade Scale

All grades will be recorded in Canvas. Final course grades will be based on total points earned and break down to these cut points:

Letter grade	Percentage	Total points earned
A	93-100%	339-364
A-	90-92.99%	328-338
B+	87-89.99%	317-327
B	83-86.99%	303-316
B-	80-82.99%	292-302
C+	77-79.99%	281-291
C	73-76.99%	266-280
C-	70-72.99%	255-265
D+	67-69.99%	244-254
D	60-66.99%	219-243
F	59.99% or lower	218 or fewer

Each assignment carries a specific point value from which a student could determine a letter grade for the purposes of knowing how they did on the assignment. For example, to earn 63 (which is 84%) of the 75 points available on the research paper would be to earn a B. However, points only (not letter grades) are entered into the gradebook and final grades are calculated based on total points earned in the course.

Course Organization and Schedule

You should **read the readings listed below for the first date listed for a given topic**, unless otherwise noted. You should come to class having read the assigned readings and fully prepared to discuss them. I suggest you outline each reading – detailing the reading’s thesis and its supporting points – as you read.

Any readings listed below as posted in Canvas can be found in the Modules section of our Canvas site.

This schedule of readings and assignments is **subject to change** at the instructor’s discretion.

DATE	TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENT	OTHER ASSIGNMENTS
1/23	Intro. to course		
1/25	Intro to sociology and environmental sociology	<i>Environmental Sociology</i> chapters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction 	
1/30, 2/1	TOPIC 1: The environment, political economy, and the structure of society	<i>Environmental Sociology</i> chapters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 (Longo and Clausen) • 14 (Beamish) 	In-Class Quiz #1 – on TOPIC 1 [Jan. 31 is the last day to drop a class without it showing on transcripts – FYI.]

DATE	TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENT	OTHER ASSIGNMENTS
2/6, 2/8	TOPIC 2: The social construction of Nature	<i>Environmental Sociology</i> chapter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 (Angelo and Jerolmack) Readings in Canvas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “What’s Wild?” (Dizard) “Of Time, Space and Birds” (Čapek) 	In-Class Quiz #2 – on TOPIC 2
2/13, 2/15	TOPIC 3: Spectrums of environmentalism	Readings in Canvas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Environmental Movement Organizations and Political Strategy” (Dreiling and Wolf) “How Protecting Trees Can Fight Gentrification” (Tracey) – read PDF or use link in Canvas to read online 	In-Class Quiz #3 – on TOPIC 3
2/20, 2/22	TOPIC 4: Early American environmentalism	Readings in Canvas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “American Environmentalism” (Taylor) 	In-Class Quiz #4 – on TOPIC 4 Discuss “Local Environmental Issues Research Paper and Presentation” in class on 2/22.
2/27	TOPIC 5: The emergence of “the environment”		Watch Act 1 of <i>A Fierce Green Fire</i> (link in Canvas)
2/29, 3/5, 3/7	TOPIC 6: Institutionalized, professionalized environmentalism	Readings in Canvas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Foundation Funding of the Environmental Movement” (Jenkins, Carmichael, Brulle, and Boughton) “2022 NGO and Foundation Transparency Report Card” (Green 2.0) – read pgs. 2-12, 149-153, and 175-176 	In-Class Quiz #5 – on TOPIC 6 Watch Act 2 of <i>A Fierce Green Fire</i> (link in Canvas)
3/12	TOPIC 7: “Deep Ecology” and alternative environmentalism	Readings in Canvas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Monkey wrenchers keep on going” (Shelton) 	Watch Act 3 of <i>A Fierce Green Fire</i> (link in Canvas)
3/14	EXAM 1 – On all material covered in the introductions and Topics 1-7.		
3/19, 3/21	No class – spring break the week of 3/18		
3/26, 3/28, 4/2, 4/4	TOPIC 8: The new environmentalism: Connecting issues of work, social class, race, gender, globalization, and environmental inequity	<i>Environmental Sociology</i> chapters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 (Faber) 10 (Bryson, McPhillips, and Robinson) Readings in Canvas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Demographic Studies Reveal a Pattern of Environmental Injustice” (Mohai and Bryant) “Harvesting Poison” (Clarren) “The Environment ... is Where We Live” (Shephard and Ring) “Wisconsin Cleanup Shifts Toxic PFAS Burden to Alabama Black Belt” (Goldstein) 	In-Class Quiz #6 – on TOPIC 8 Watch <i>Thirst for Justice</i> (link in Canvas) Post Research Paper “crowd-sourced sources” to the Discussion section in Canvas by 11:59 p.m., 3/27 [April 5 is the last day to drop a class (though the class still appears in your transcript as a Withdrawal) – FYI.]
4/9, 4/11	TOPIC 9: The social construction of environmental problems	Readings in Canvas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excerpt from “Up and Down with Ecology” (Downs) “Social Construction of Environmental Issues and Problems” (Hannigan) 	In-Class Quiz #7 – on TOPIC 9

DATE	TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENT	OTHER ASSIGNMENTS
4/16, 4/18	TOPIC 10: The role of the media and public relations in constructing environmental issues	<i>Environmental Sociology</i> chapters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 (MacKendrick) Readings in Canvas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Media and ‘Undone Science’ in West Virginia’s Elk River Chemical Spill” (Bray) 	In-Class Quiz #8 – on TOPIC 10
4/23, 4/25	TOPIC 11: The role of science in constructing environmental issues and perceptions of risk	Readings in Canvas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What’s in the Water in Woods Cross?” (Guerin) • “The Social Construction of Cancer” (Steingraber) • “Science in Environmental Conflicts” (Ozawa) 	In-Class Quiz #9 – on TOPIC 11
4/30	TOPIC 12: Fracking – a case study	Readings in Canvas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Fear of Fracking” (Hannigan) 	
5/2, 5/7, 5/9	IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS: Student research on local environmental issues		Research papers AND presentation PowerPoint slides due in Canvas by 11:59 p.m., 5/1
5/15	FINAL EXAM – 8:00-10:00		

Course Policies

Canvas

All students will be required to use Canvas to do the following:

- To access required material, including...
 - The course syllabus
 - Assigned readings not included in the course text
 - Lecture outlines for each topic. Students will bring lecture outlines to class for note-taking.
 - Links to films and websites
- To submit their research paper and presentation
- To access grades

Paper and Presentation Formats

The research paper and presentation must follow the guidelines, including for citations, laid out in in the assignment description posted in Canvas.

Use of Technology

Laptops and phones may not be used during class. If a student has an accommodation plan that permits such use, they should speak with the instructor to make arrangements.

Any form of audio or video recording in the classroom is strictly prohibited. If a student has a legitimate need to record the instructor’s lecture in audio or video format, then the student shall obtain the pertinent accommodation authorization **AND** the instructor’s permission beforehand.

Class Participation

Students are encouraged to participate in class. Very often students are presented with discussion topics or other opportunities to contribute to the class, which is designed to help students connect what they have learned in the classroom and their lives as members of various communities. I value class discussion and interactive learning, and expect students to be actively involved.

Classroom Etiquette

The classroom is a learning environment and community, and as such, it is expected that students do their best to minimize disruptions that can distract from their learning and that of their peers. Students are expected to come to class on time and not to leave except in the case of emergency situations.

The instructor reserves the right to request a student to leave the classroom or have the security personnel remove the student from the classroom if the student behaves in a way that interferes with the academic or administrative functions of the class.

Academic Integrity

At UW-Stevens Point and, in all courses, we place great emphasis on academic integrity and honesty. Plagiarism, fabrication, cheating, helping others commit these acts, and any form of dishonesty compromise the educational process and devalue the achievements of all students. All work you submit must be original and completed individually, by you, and without the use of ChatGPT or other AI writing tools. Always acknowledge your sources, cite appropriately, and give credit where it's due. If instances of alleged academic dishonesty are identified, appropriate actions will be taken in accordance with the institution's policies (See <https://www3.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/stu-academic.aspx> - click on "Academic Misconduct," then "UWSP Chapter 14 – Academic Misconduct"). If you are unsure if something might be considered academic misconduct, you are struggling to understand the content or an assignment, or you have fallen behind for whatever reason, please contact me as soon as possible. By nurturing a community of support, honesty, and respect, we ensure that academic pursuits and your experiences at UW-Stevens Point are both meaningful and genuine.

Diversity and Inclusion

UWSP supports an inclusive learning environment where diversity and individual differences are understood, respected, and appreciated. These differences include race/ethnicity, gender, class, political view, religion, color, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital or family status, as well as personality, learning styles, and life experiences. We expect that students, faculty, administrators, and staff will respect differences and demonstrate diligence in understanding how other peoples' perspectives, behaviors, experiences, and worldviews may be different from their own.

Disability Support Services

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Students who have a disability and require classroom and/or exam accommodations, should register with the Disability Resource Center and then contact me at the beginning of the course. More information can be found here:

<https://www.uwsp.edu/disability-resource-center/>.

Attendance

Attendance is not figured into the grade explicitly, though attendance records will be kept for financial aid reporting purposes. Since a significant portion of the material is conveyed during class time, failure to attend will affect one's grade. Those who miss class are responsible for accessing the missed material; missed material will not be made available from the instructor.