

*Department of Sociology and Social Work
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point*

**Environmental Sociology
Sociology 355
Fall 2016**

Instructor: Krishna Roka
Email: krishna.roka@uwsp.edu
Office: CCC 478
Office hours:
 Tue: 1:00-2:00 PM
 Thurs: 1:00-2:00 PM

Class schedule:
 Tue: 9:35-10:50 AM
 Thurs: 9:35-10:50 AM
 Room: CCC 204

Course Overview

This is an introductory course on environmental sociology. The objective of the course is to explore the relationship between human world and the broader natural environment of which it is an integral part. There is a belief that the natural and social problems are separate; therefore, requiring independent solutions to address them. Recent researches have however shown us that they are in fact closely connected. Understanding this connection or interrelationship between environmental and social subjects is the core objective of the course. This connection makes environmental problems complex in nature demanding multidisciplinary approach to understand in order to solve them. While the focus of the course will be to look at the modern world, particularly developed societies, I have included examples from the developing countries as well to see the interconnectivity of environmental problems not only with the social world but also across nations and regions. This global perspective is fundamental to our understanding of environmental issues.

It is expected after taking the course you will be able to answer these questions: What does the environment, biodiversity, natural areas and climate change mean to humans/us? How do modern societies interact with the environment? How different societies treat the environment differently? Who suffers from environmental disasters? How did we end up here? What political-economic system would be better for the environment? How to deal with inequality and justice associated with environmental issues?

In addition to understanding the above questions, this course intends to help you appreciate the nexus between natural and social worlds. And our capacity to do good to the environment. It will shape your views on major environmental issues and make you adept in understanding environmental issues as a multidisciplinary topic. Furthermore, it will help you to understand how environmental issues are socially constructed across cultures, religions and regions.

Required reading (STUDENTS BUY IT)

- Edward O. Wilson. 2016. *Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life*. Liveright. \$17.74 Amazon.

Reference texts (available in the library)

- Kenneth A. Gould and Tammy L. Lewis. 2009. *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*. Oxford University Press.

Course Structure

The course is designed to stimulate your creative and analytical skills. Every week, I will present lecture on the key topics followed by a class discussion. Class presence and participation are therefore crucial for good grades. In addition to class lectures, there will be various assignments and activities.

1. **Class discussion (assigned chapter/article):** In the second week, I will divide the class into 10 groups. Each group will lead a class discussion (one per week) on the assigned reading materials for that week (book chapter or article or news report or video). The group will bring the synopsis of the reading materials along with questions and key concepts to discuss in the class. Rest of the class will read the assigned materials and participate in the online discussion forum created for each week. Materials for discussion will be available in D2L. Each student must submit **150 words** discussion comments on that week's reading materials and **THREE** questions for discussion. Your participation will be graded in the following manner: online forum 2 points/discussion (total 20) and class discussion and presentation 5 points.
2. **Classic book:** Each student will select a classic environmental book (before 2000s) and write a two-page report on the book. The report should include the main topics covered in the book and discuss how those topics have transformed, if at all, in the 21st century. In addition, each student will submit online a brief outline that describes the book, why you chose it and how it fits in the course.
3. **Final Group Project:** Each student will work in a group of 4-5 on a local environmental issue. The issue must be from WI. The project will focus on solving the issue by incorporating ideas and concepts discussed in the course. Each group will present their project to the class in week 15 and submit a 10-page report in week 16.
4. **Book review:** Each student will write a review (1000 words) for the book *Half Earth* which will be due on **Week 13**. Instructions and samples of book reviews are available in D2L website. The book for this assignment has been carefully selected to enhance your knowledge on the relationship of environmental issues with the broader society.
5. **Participation (in-class assignments):** Your active participation in class is important to enhance your analytical and oral communication skills. Participation allows you to clarify key concepts, explore new things and hear diverse perspectives of other students. I expect

everyone to come prepared to share their views of the course materials every week. In addition, there will be several classroom activities during the course that will be graded for class participation. Examples include:

- a. **Guest lecture:** I will try to invite a representative of a local environmental or agricultural organization to present a lecture on local issues. Each student will write a one page report of the lecture.
 - b. Discussion with a representative of a local student organization (environmental)
 - c. **Review papers:** Each student will write a two page review on the given topic. Each review should discuss how the assigned topic relates to the course materials and class discussion. Topics and materials for review along with instructions will be posted in D2L.
 - d. **Short quizzes:** There will be several random quizzes to gauge your understanding of the topics. The quizzes will count towards your attendance.
6. **Attendance (comment cards):** To record your attendance I will collect comment cards for each lecture. You will write a short- 2-3 sentence – comment pertaining to the content of the lecture and/or the reading materials. You can also any questions you have about that day’s topics. Please buy a pack of 3*5 card for use in class. The card should include your name and the date and should be submitted at the end of each lecture. I will grade random 10 cards; make sure you attend all lectures.
- Note: Do not turn in your friend’s cards when they are absent or ask other students to turn in your cards when you do not attend the lecture. Evidence of these practices will result in academic misconduct that will affect your grades.**
7. **Extra credits:** You may also earn extra credits (a total of **5 points**) by attending lectures and events outside the class. Submit a 1 page, single spaced review paper for each activity you attend. You will receive **1 point** for each event. Other ways to earn extra credits should be discussed with the instructor.

Grading Procedures

The final grade will be determined by your participation in class discussions and performance on the book review, review papers, reflective writing and group project.

Class discussion (10*2)	25%
Review papers (5*3)	15%
Group project/final paper	25%
Book review	15%
Classic book	10%
Class attendance (quizzes)	10%

Total	100%
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The final grade will be calculated using the following schedule

Course grade	Percentages
A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	84-89
B	80-83
C+	75-79
C	70-74
D	60-69
F	<60

Course Structure

Wk	Date	Topic	Readings and activities
1	Sep 6-9	Introduction What is environmental sociology?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An introduction to environmental sociology- Gould and Lewis (ereserve) Why environmental sociology? (d2l) Due: <i>One-page discussion on FIVE things you do to save the environment (bring to class on Thursday)</i>
2	Sep 12-16	Social construction of nature Theories of environmental sociology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theories in environmental sociology- Barbosa (ereserve) Create your social media message for review 1 (make a post on Facebook on THREE things people should do to help the environment- follow the post for a week and write a report) Extra reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>In a troubled African park, a battle over oil exploration</i>
3	Sep 19-23	The Treadmill of Production and Environmental Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The treadmill of production as an outcome of scientific methods (d2l) Class discussion 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enough is Enough (http://goo.gl/ysujUA) video Capitalism v environment (http://goo.gl/JeCpyq) Review 1: Facebook post and comments

4	Sep 26-30	Environmental problems and why it matters now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change is a social issue (http://chronicle.com/article/Climate-Change-Is-a-Social/234908) • Class discussion 2: Invasive species (online) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>How invasive species changed the great lakes forever_ Journal Sentinel</i> ○ <i>Invasive species (ereserve)</i> ○ <i>The true cost of coal (The Atlantic)</i>
5	Oct 3-7	Materialism, consumption and economics Money and Machines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental values survey • https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2010/jun/21/overconsumption-environment-relationships-annie-leonard • Racing Extinction- documentary • Class discussion 3: Industrialization and the environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>China's dirty pollution secret: the boom poisoned its soil and crops</i> ○ <i>Logging by number</i> ○ <i>Can coal ever be clean (ereserve)</i> <p>Review 2: Ecological footprint of three consumer goods you own</p>
6	Oct 10-14	Environment and poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toxic exposure- Taylor (ereserve) • <i>Martinez-Alier. 2013. The environmentalism of the poor. Geoforum (d2l)</i> • Final project proposal due (Oct 14) • Class discussion 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Roe, D., D. Thomas, J. Smith, M. Walpole and J. Elliott. 2011. Biodiversity and poverty: ten frequently asked questions- ten policy implications. IIED: Gatekeeper 150. (d2l)</i> ○ <i>Climate change and poverty (d2l)</i>
7	Oct 17-21	Population and environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Problem (chapter 1- One Child) page 7-18 • Mother: Caring for 7 Billion documentary • Class discussion 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>RAND. 1999. Population and environment: A complex relationship. RAND Policy Brief.</i> ○ <i>Growing our own food- Goodall (ereserve)</i>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review 3: Women and environment in poor countries (video) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPy3pLBZvuE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Palm oil is in everything http://goo.gl/gtnFYw
8	Oct 24-28	Food and agriculture and the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeding nine billion (ereserve) • From farms to factories- Edwards and Driscoll (ereserve) • Class discussion 6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>As dairy farms grow bigger, new concerns about pollution</i> ○ <i>Widely used insecticides are leaching into Midwest rivers</i> ○ <i>Are agriculture's most popular insecticides killing our bees?</i> ○ <i>Farming practices and climate change at root of Toledo water pollution</i>
9	Oct 31- Nov 4	Ecological cost of meat Environmental ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cowspiracy documentary • Environmental ethics (D2L) • Class discussion 7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>The great extinction</i> ○ <i>The next breadbasket (ereserve)</i> •
10	Nov 7-11	Environmentalism 350.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Seeing green-</i> chapter 15 (d2l) • Class discussion 8: Earth Days documentary (uwsp video) • Review 4: UWSP student organization •
11	Nov 14-18	Environmental crisis and responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous people and the environment (d2l) • Half-Earth book discussion • Book Review due
12	Nov 21-23	Sustainable societies The future is about energy (society and people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heartland water crisis • Optimistic environmentalism- future options • Class discussion 9: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Sustainable-</i> documentary ○ <p>Review 5: Environmental leaders</p>
13	Nov 28-Dec 2	Finding solutions to our environmental problems:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPR- Finally, some good news for manatees and green sea turtles • Class discussion 10:

		Biodiversity loss Climate change Sustainable food system Individuals Private sector Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Can eating meat be eco-friendly?</i> ○ <i>Urban nature: how to foster biodiversity in world's cities</i> ○ <i>San Francisco closer to turning zero-waste ambition into reality</i> ○ <i>How can we translate conservation research into actual conservation?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review 5: Environmental leaders
14	Dec 5-9	Paradigm shift: Top-bottom or bottom-top The future of environmental sociology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conclusion: unanswered questions and the future of environmental sociology- Gould and Lewis (ereserve) ● <i>Precision conservation</i> ● <i>Eco-puritans</i> ● <i>Composting of food waste</i> ● Final project reflection report (2 page) due
15	Dec 12-15	Group projects discussion (<i>mandatory attendance</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Project presentation ● Rewrite due* <p>(*get approval from the instructor)</p>
16	Dec 19-22		Group Project Report due

Class Policy

Attendance and participation: Class attendance and participation is important to this course. Both physical and mental presence during the class is critical to understand the topics in the course. There will be no excuse for absence, unless there was an emergency for which I will need a written explanation. During the course we will engage in discussing major concepts and active participation from students is highly encouraged. Despite the class size I will accommodate discussion when required. Late arrival and leaving early will be marked as absence and will result in negative grade.

Readings: Textbooks and other reading materials for the course have been carefully chosen. It is required for students to read them prior to the class. Reading assignments must be completed as required by the course.

Writing: For writing assignments, students must write clearly and concisely. Each paper should be written in a format with 1 inch margin, 12 size fonts, double spaced, use Times New Roman font and include sources. A high level of writing is expected for the course. Written papers with grammatical errors, inconclusive logics, drafts and poor structure are unacceptable and will result in poor grades. Students must become aware of plagiarism and cite sources used for the assignment. Any evidence of plagiarism will automatically result in an F grade. A high level of academic integrity is expected throughout the course. For the UWSP's policy on academic integrity and plagiarism visit this link:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/Academic%20Integrity%20Brochure.pdf>.

Late submission: All assignments must be submitted by the time mentioned in the course structure. Late submission will result in negative grades.

Use of technology: Use of technology in the classroom is not required for the course. Therefore, use of cell phones, tablet/ipad, computer and other electronic devices are not allowed in the class. Students using electronic devices during class will receive negative grades. No recording of lecture is permitted without the instructor's permission.

Meeting: I welcome students meeting to discuss course materials and assignments. There will be a sign-up sheet in my office for you to schedule a meeting time during my office hours. You can also contact me to schedule a meeting outside my office hours.

Safe environment: The class strives for a safe environment to promote knowledge sharing. Disrespectful, degrading, or offensive language will not be tolerated. Any personal experiences shared in the class should remain confidential.