

Sociology 2113 WA: Environmental Sociology

Instructor: Dr. T. Puddephatt

Office: Ryan Building 2034

See outline for weekly due-dates/times

3-0; or 3-0

Sociology web-page address: <http://sociology.lakeheadu.ca>

Class Location: ATAC 2005

Office Hours: by appointment via email

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Logic of the Course

Environmental sociology is an increasingly important subject as the global climate crisis makes headlines around the world. Warming temperatures due to carbon emissions from fossil fuels, melting polar glaciers, rising sea levels and frequent flooding, pollution to our air and water, increased violent storms, droughts, and fires, and the crisis of energy are existential challenges as we face an uncertain future. Since these issues transcend national borders, no one group, organization, or nation can solve them on their own. The current ecological crisis is surely the result of human activity (most notably colonial expansion, expanding capitalism, industrial development, and global trade), and so understanding our cultural, political, economic, organizational, and collective practices toward the environment are central to solving these problems. Given this, environmental sociologists try to understand how people conceive of, reconstruct, and act toward nature, with an eye to ensuring these human-nature relationships are made more sustainable. Understanding the human point of view toward nature, and obtaining realistic models of our social-ecological behaviour are essential if we are to build policies that are successful in positively reshaping our collective habits.

This course is meant as (1) a broad introduction to a variety of perspectives in environmental sociology, as well as (2) an invitation to my more specific interests in the potential of micro-sociological theories of the environment. We begin with an overview of environmental sociology and its relation to broader environmental movements. We then consider the realist vs. constructionist approaches to environmental sociology, frame analysis, treadmill of production, risk society, ecological modernization, globalization, science and environment, natural disasters and resilience, hybridity, and actor-network theory. The final section of the course introduces microsociological approaches to environmental sociology, reviewing theoretical perspectives such as symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, and social pragmatism to consider the problems of constructing nature symbolically, the possibilities of environmental identity, politics and social movements, animal-human relations, and the social psychology of environmental conflicts. By the end of the course, you will be introduced to a variety of perspectives in environmental sociology, have a good understanding of microsociological approaches, and have a chance to apply such theories while exploring environmental topics of interest to you.

Evaluation Scheme:

(1) Group Assignments	(25%)
(2) Assignment #1: Article Review [DUE FEB 2]	(20%)
(4) Midterm Test	(25%)
(4) Final Exam	(30%)
Final = (100%)	

Required readings:

1. Young, Nathan. 2015. *Environmental Sociology for the Twenty-First Century*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press. (in syllabus I call this *ESTC*)
2. Brewster, Bradley and Antony Puddephatt (eds.) 2017. *Microsociological Perspectives for*

Environmental Sociology. Routledge Press. (in syllabus I call this *MPES*)

3. Further supplementary readings can be obtained by searching the “sociological abstracts” database via Lakehead University (LU) library. Anything remaining that is needed can be found posted on D2L before the week in question.

Evaluations and Assignments:

1. Group Work Assignments (25%)

Every one or two weeks, we will have group assignments that are provided to small groups of 3–4 students during class. Within the time given, you work together to answer the questions posed to you about the more recent readings. As such, it is essential that you keep up with the readings and attend class regularly so that you are able to contribute productively to your group. Recognizing that students will not always be able to attend every day, I will only count your top 5 grades toward the final (a weight of 5% for each assignment).

2. Assignment #1: Article Review (20%) DUE DATE FEB 02:

For this assignment, you are to use the *Sociological Abstracts* database through LU library to locate a full-length article on a topic of environmental sociology that is of interest to you. The article must be full length (around 20 pages), published after 2015. Short review articles or book reviews do not count. Read the article, and provide a maximum 4 page (double spaced, times new roman 12 point font) summary and review of its central aims, arguments, and evidence, before providing your own short critical evaluation (whether positive or negative). You may attach one additional page for references. References must accord to the ASA citation format:
(see https://www.lakeheadu.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/92/ASA_Style_4th_ed_0.pdf)

3. Midterm Exam (25%)

There will be a midterm exam with questions about the material covered up to the date of the exam itself (March 2). This will be administered in-class, and will be comprised of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and essay style questions.

4. Final Exam (30%)

The final exam will be held in the examination period at the end of term (date to be determined), where it will cover material from the entire term. It will be comprised of a mix of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and essay style questions.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

WEEK 1: INTRO

January 10 – **Welcome to the Course!**

- Meet and discuss syllabus and course expectations

January 12 -- Read ESTC, chapter 1

WEEK 2: The Human Nature Relationship and Environmentalism

January 17 – Read ESTC, chapter 2

January 19 - read ESTC, chapter 3

WEEK 3: Realism vs Constructionism

January 24 -- Read ESTC, chapter 4

January 26 -- Read Burningham, Kate, and Geoff Cooper. (1999). "Being Constructive: Social Constructivism and the Environment," *Sociology*, 33(2): 297-316. [available via sociological abstracts database, LU library]

WEEK 4: Scarcity, Treadmill of Production, and the Risk Society

January 31 -- Read ESTC, chapter 5

February 2 – Read ESTC, chapter 6

1. **Assignment #1 Due! *******

WEEK 5: Ecological Modernization and Globalization

February 7 – read ESTC chapter 7

February 9 – read ESTC chapter 8

WEEK 6: Science/Knowledge and Disaster/Resilience

Feb 14 -- Read ESTC, Chapter 9

Feb 16 – Read ESTC, Chapter 10

WEEK 7: Reading Week!

WEEK 8: Human-Nature Relations and Hybridity

February 28 -- Murdoch, Jonathan. 2001. "Ecologizing Sociology: Actor-Network Theory, Co-Construction, and the Problem of Human Exemptionalism," *Sociology* 35(1): 111-133. (available via Sociological Abstracts, LU Library).

March 2 – **MIDTERM EXAM (in class)**

WEEK 9: Microsociological Approaches to Environmental Sociology

March 7 -- MPES (introduction)

– Puddephatt, Antony. 2021. "Nature and the Environment in Interaction," pp 242-253 in Dirk Vom Lehn et. al. *Handbook of Symbolic Interaction*. UK: Routledge Press. (I will provide)

March 9 – MPES, chapter 11

WEEK 10: Framing and Constructing Nature and the Environment

March 14 -- Read MPES. Chapter 1

March 16 -- Read MPES Chapter 2

WEEK 11: Social Identity, Pragmatism, and the Environment

March 21 -- Read MPES, Chapter 5

March 23 – Read MPES, Chapter 6

WEEK 12: Human-Animal Relationships

March 28 -- Irvine, Leslie. 2004. "A Model of Animal Selfhood: Expanding Interactionist Possibilities," *Symbolic Interaction*, 27(1): 3-21. Available from Sociological Abstracts, LU library

March 30 -- read MPES, chapter 8

WEEK 13: Microsociological Approaches to Environmental Conflicts

April 4 -- Read MPES Chapter 4

April 6 – Read MPES Chapter 12

Thank you and have a great summer break!

Important Note on Academic Integrity:

As students it is your responsibility to know the rules regarding academic integrity, and to ensure you are not cheating. The following rules are a good guideline. For the full rules and procedures, please see: <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/student-life/student-conduct/academic-integrity/node/51239>

SECTION III: VIOLATIONS OF THIS ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE IDENTIFYING OFFENCES (BREACHES OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY)

The following list defines the domain of relevant acts that are offences under this Academic Integrity Code. The list is not meant to be exhaustive.

- a. **Plagiarism** – Presenting another’s ideas or phrasings as one’s own without proper acknowledgement. Examples include: copying and pasting from the internet, a printed source or other resource without proper acknowledgement; copying from another Student, whether past or present; using direct quotations or large sections of paraphrased material in an assignment without proper acknowledgement; submitting the same piece of work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor(s);
- b. **Possession or use of unauthorized materials** – Examples include: possessing or using unauthorized study materials or aids during a test or exam; copying from another’s test or exam paper; using an unauthorized electronic device or other aids during a test or exam; possessing or using any unauthorized items that are banned from the exam room or are not expressly stated as permitted on the exam paper; removal of resources from the library, or deliberate concealment of library resources; mutilating or altering an examination booklet or examination paper, or removing an examination booklet or examination paper or booklet from the examination room;
- c. **Facilitation** - Enabling another Student’s breach of Academic Integrity. Examples include: allowing one’s work to be copied by someone else; buying or selling of term papers, assignments, and/or submitting them as one’s own; buying or selling of tests or exams;
- d. **Forgery** – Submitting counterfeit documents or statements. Examples include: creating a transcript or other official document (e.g. language proficiency test results); creating or falsifying a medical note in order to gain an academic advantage (e.g. forging a doctor’s note in order to miss or rewrite an examination or test; or to get an extension on an assignment); misrepresenting academic credentials from other institutions or submitting false information for the purpose of gaining admission or credits;
- e. **Falsification** – Misrepresenting one’s self, one’s work or one’s relation to the University. Examples include: altering transcripts or other official documents; altering academic work or a grade on academic work after it has been marked and using the altered materials to have the recorded grade changed; any form of impersonation or accessing an impersonator for the purpose of an examination or test, either in person or electronically; submitting a take-home examination written, in whole or in part, by someone else; fabricating or falsifying laboratory or research data; submitting false information or false medical documentation to gain a postponement or advantage for any academic

work; providing a false signature for attendance at any class or assessment procedure where the signature is used as proof of authenticity or participation in the academic assessment;

f. Interference – Examples include: stealing, destroying or tampering with another Student's academic work; preventing another Student from completing a task for academic assessment;

g. Unauthorized collaboration or communication – Examples include: unauthorized collaborating between Students; communicating with anyone other than an invigilator during an examination or obtaining any non-authorized assistance during a test or examination; and

h. Unprofessional or Inappropriate Behaviour – Exhibiting unprofessional, inappropriate or dishonest behaviour relating to a field placement, practicum or internship including, but not necessarily limited to, the forging or falsification of a placement contract, etc.