

Sociology 2113 WDE: Environmental Sociology (2021)

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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: online (D2L course site)
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.

This is a fully online class, and as such, in-class lectures are not offered. In place of this, weekly quizzes will test your comprehension of the assigned readings, each of which introduce you to different perspectives in environmental sociology. The three assignments through the term will allow you to explore topics according to your own interests. 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) Weekly Quizzes	(40%)
(2) Assignment #1: Article Review	(20%)
(4) Assignment #2: Newspaper Assignment	(20%)
(4) Assignment #3: Microsociological Perspectives Assignment	<u>(20%)</u>

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.

Evaluations and Assignments:

1. Weekly Quizzes (40%): In a given week, you will have access to the readings at the beginning of the week (Monday), and a short quiz will be available on the D2L site by Tuesday @ 8:30am. You will have until Friday @ 4:30 pm to complete the quiz (10 questions, multiple choice and true/false) that demonstrates your understanding of the readings. These should not be too difficult provided you have carefully read the material for the week. *Students must work on these on their own... evidence of collaboration or other forms of cheating will result in a zero grade.*
2. Assignment #1: Article Review (20%): (DUE FEB 1)
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 (~20 pages long), and have been published after 2010. Short review articles or book reviews do not count. Read the article, and provide a brief, 3 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. Assignment #2 Newspaper Assignment (20%): (DUE MARCH 8)
Choose a news story on some kind of environmental issue from a mainstream Canadian newspaper (e.g., *Globe and Mail*, *National Post*) from the past few years (2018-present). You might find the *Nexis Uni* database useful in searching this out. This news article will be your source of “data” that you are to analyze from a sociological framework. Choose one of the main sociological perspectives encountered in the course (e.g. frame analysis, ecological modernization, risk society, etc) to help analyze the story sociologically. How does your chosen theoretical perspective shed light on the issue, and help understand it better, through that particular sociological lens? This assignment can be a maximum of 3 pages, with 1 page of references (again, ASA style). Be sure to provide references for the sociological perspectives used, as well as the newspaper article itself.
4. Assignment #3: Microsociological Perspectives Assignment (20%) (DUE APRIL 16)
Later on in the term, I will provide the class with some open-ended essay style questions in relation to the readings from the MPES volume. These questions ask students to compare and contrast the readings along certain conceptual themes. This will also be a maximum of 3 pages + 1 page additional for references.

COURSE SCHEDULE:**January 11 – Welcome to the Course!**Easy warm up

1. Read ESTC, chapter 1
2. Weekly Quiz due: Jan 15 @ 4:30pm

January 18 – The Human Nature Relationship and Environmentalism

1. Read ESTC, chapters 2&3
2. Weekly quiz due: Jan 22 @ 4:30pm

January 25 – Realism vs Constructionism

1. Read ESTC, chapter 4
2. 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]
3. Weekly Quiz due: Jan 29 @ 4:30pm

February 1 – Scarcity, Treadmill of Production, and the Risk Society

1. Read ESTC, chapter 5, 6
2. **Assignment #1 Due today by 11:59pm! *******
3. Quiz due: Feb 5 @ 4:30pm

February 8 - Ecological Modernization and Globalization

1. Read ESTC, chapters 7, 8
2. Quiz due: Feb 12 @ 4:30pm

February 15 – Study Break!**February 22 – Science/Knowledge and Disaster/Resilience**

1. Read ESTC. Chapters 9,10
2. Quiz due: Feb 26 @ 4:30pm

March 1 - Human-Nature Relations and Hybridity

1. Read ESTC, Chapter 11
2. Murdoch, Jonathan. 2001. “Ecologising Sociology: Actor-Network Theory, Co-construction, and the Problem of Human Exemptionalism,” *Sociology*, 35(1): 111-133. Available through LU library, sociological abstracts database.
3. Quiz due: March 5 @ 4:30pm

March 8 – Microsociological Approaches to Environmental Sociology

1. Read MPES, Introduction, chapters 7 & 11
2. Quiz due: March 12 @ 4:30pm
3. **Assignment 2 due today by 11:59 pm! *******

March 15 – Framing and Constructing Nature and the Environment

1. Read MPES. Chapters 1 & 10
2. Quiz due: March 19 @ 4:30pm

March 22 – Social Identity, Pragmatism, and the Environment

1. Read MPES, Chapters 5 & 6
2. Quiz Due: March 26 @ 4:30pm

March 29 – Human-Animal Relationships

1. Read MPES Chapters 8 & 9
2. Quiz due: April 2 @ 4:30pm

April 5 – Microsociological Approaches to Environmental Conflicts

1. Read MPES Chapters 12 & 13
2. Quiz due: April 9 @ 4:30pm

April 12 – Finish Assignment #3

1. **Submit assignment #3 due April 16 by 11:59 pm *******

Thank you and have a great summer break!

POLICY ON LATE WORK:

1. Since you have a full one week window, quizzes cannot be completed late. Uncompleted quizzes result in a zero grade.
2. Assignments will be penalized 10% for each business day late.

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.