

Sociology 2077: Environment and Society (Spring 2015)

Instructor: Elizabeth Bittel

Class Location/Time: T/R 11:00 am – 12:15 pm @ HUMN 135

Instructors Office: Armory Trailer #269 (Map is posted to D2L under “Content” → “Course Materials & Extras” → “Office Hours Map”)

Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:00 - 2:00 pm, and by appointment

Email: Elizabeth.Bittel@colorado.edu

The world will not evolve past its current state of crisis by using the same thinking that created the situation. – Albert Einstein

This course examines the relationship between human societies and the natural world. A key component of understanding and addressing environmental problems lies in our ability to look closely at the values we hold as individuals and as a society. In understanding how these values manifest in the environmental problems we now face, we can begin to address the "root of the problem" and work more effectively for long-term change in this area.

Few, if any individuals or societies would claim that they want anything less than a clean, healthy environment for themselves, their children, and future generations. Yet if we look at the current state of air quality, water quality, damage to the ozone layer, the growing scientific evidence for global warming, and our increased use of disposable products and low-mileage vehicles, we have to ask why there is such a ‘disconnect’ between the environmental quality we say we want, and the current state of the environment.

As sociology is a discipline that examines the world from a 'larger picture' perspective, understanding the natural environment from a sociological perspective entails looking closely at what we value collectively and individually, and the decisions and policies that result from those values. A sociological perspective on the environment also looks at the reciprocal relationship between humans and their environment – how individuals and societies affect both the natural and built environments, as well as the impacts of these environments on human communities. This interaction is at the heart of the study of environmental sociology.

Social scientists, in general, and sociologists, in particular, believe that effective change in any part of the social world (in this case, addressing environmental problems) cannot happen without an in-depth understanding of the individual and social beliefs, values, and actions that create and shape our relationship with the natural world. Our attitudes toward the land, and plant and animal species, are intimately connected to the health or ill health of our physical environment.

Learning Objectives

In order to explore the reciprocal relationship between humans and their environment, this course has been designed with specific learning objectives to help you develop an in-depth understanding in these areas. Completion of this course will allow you to:

Describe basic sociological perspectives, and how these perspectives apply to our relationship with the built and natural environments.

- Assess the impact of the built and natural environments on human behavior, social organizations, and social movements.
- Be able to discuss current literature in the field of environmental sociology.
- Critically examine the relationship of consumption patterns to existing environmental problems.
- Identify patterns of social organization and their impacts on resource use.
- Describe the role of technology in environmental problems.
- Compare and contrast historical patterns of land use and their impacts on low-income and minority populations.
- Identify key environmental policies guiding both conservation and development.

Warning

This class requires you to read, sometimes a lot. You will need to read. You are expected to read! If you don't like reading, or don't want to, you shouldn't take this class. You will most likely fail the class if you don't work on the material that has been chosen. You can be a fast reader or a slow one, have a lot of interest and time for the class, or not, but you will need to make the time, develop fast reading strategies, and read the assigned content. And while reading, you need to take notes: write down key words and concepts of each paper, the author's argument, the cornerstone information. Keep brief, simple, and organized notes about what you read. **If you read and don't write anything you are wasting your time.** And bring the reading and/or your notes to class so that you can engage with them during lecture. Although laptops are not allowed in class, I will let you look back at readings if you ask. If, by the end of each reading, you can identify the main points and explain why it has been assigned for the unit, you should be in good shape!

You also need to **take notes during class**. Note taking means more than passively copying the content of the slides (which may or may not be used). Slides are often titles meant to organize lectures. Most often they are not content, they have no intrinsic value and will not help you write a paper or prepare for an exam. Make good use of your time and take notes, when you read, watch a movie, or sit in lecture. Otherwise you are throwing time (and money) out of the window.

All instructors require students to come prepared to class. When you don't, rather than a discussion, the class turns into a lecture. If you find it boring and wish your instructor involved you more in the class, then come prepared with questions about the readings, with ideas, comments, concerns. Be actor of your education, not passive recipient!

Teaching Delivery

This class will incorporate several teaching methods. Each of these methods is important to the learning process in this course. Some of the more common methods to be used in this class are as follows.

- **Lectures:** Traditional lecture will be used to assure that all students are fully aware of the information the professor wishes the students to grasp.
- **Guest Lectures:** Multiple guest speakers (TBD) are scheduled to join us during the semester. The guest lectures are to be highly regarded. A handout will be distributed that day and is to be returned by the beginning of the following class. The handout will be graded.
- **Films and Videos:** Films and videos will be shown throughout the course to provide visually interpretive examples for several course topics. These screenings are to be treated as lectures for the course and should be taken as serious subject matter.
- **Class & Group Discussions:** Even though the class is fairly large, students are required to participate in discussion of the daily topics by providing their insights and asking questions for clarification or rhetorical contemplation. Discussion may be conducted in small groups and as a whole class.

Teaching Perspective

My goal as your instructor is to produce an environment where we can learn the most, become better informed, question assumptions, and creatively develop ideas and strategies. I want the classroom to be an environment where dialogue can take place in an open and respectful manner. If you have something to ask or add, please do so in a manner for the whole class to hear. My office hours and email are the best ways to reach me outside of class time. If you are having an issue, have a lingering question, or really – need anything, please get in touch with me as soon as your issue arises. I will do everything in my power to help you, but the first step is for you to ask for help!

Course Material

- **Required text:** *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*. Ed. 4. 2011. Michael Mayerfeld Bell. (Listed in the Course Schedule as “Bell Ch. __”)
- **Additional readings:** All additional readings will be supplied on D2L. (“Content” → “Week #”; refer to Course Schedule). It is your responsibility to make sure you can access the assigned readings that are on D2L in a timely manner. The course schedule is a living document, and may be changed throughout the semester. Any updates to the Course Schedule will be made apparent both in class and through D2L news updates.
- **Films:** There are multiple movies and videos to watch during the semester. These will be posted on D2L (“Content” → “Films”). I will post movies on D2L or post the link to access them online. Movies are to be taken as seriously as the readings and have to be watched before class.

Course Policies

- **Attendance, Participation, and Reading Assignments:** Students are expected to attend every class, participate in group and class discussions, and actively engage in the course lectures. Completion of the assigned readings is absolutely critical to your success in this class and your final grade will greatly depend upon you having read, thought about, and written about the readings. The assigned readings should be completed prior to coming to class. Some classes will be spent going over readings, sometimes in detail, while others will focus on other material. Students are expected to have done the reading before each class.
- **Missing an Exam or Class:** If you know you are missing an exam due to an athletic engagement, religious observance, court appearance, or family problem on a date that we take a test or have an assignment due please let me know at least three weeks in advance. We will discuss an alternate date. However, regardless of the reason you cannot make up writing responses or class activities that are collected for credit. If you missed a class due to a medical emergency make sure to provide a medical certificate when you come back and I will do all I can to help you catch up with the class.

Classroom Policies

1. Never request that another student in the class speak on behalf of a group (e.g., African Americans, Jewish People, Latino/as, Asian Americans, men, women, lesbians/gays, rape survivors, etc.).
2. Do not use your phones, iPods, tablets, or other electronic gadgets during class (including for text messaging or checking the web for something). If you do so, I will ask you to stop once. Then I will ask you to leave the classroom.
3. **I do not allow laptop use during class.** If a student has a reason that s/he believes s/he must use a laptop during class, please talk to me privately about this. To use a laptop every day, I must receive a letter from campus letting me know that you need to use a laptop every day. However, if such a letter is provided and I approve it, using your laptop for anything other than taking notes may result in you not being able to use it anymore.
4. Kindly refrain from becoming involved in separate conversations or making comments under your breath during lecture and class discussions.
5. Students are responsible for regularly checking their CU Boulder e-mails from me and D2L announcements.
6. In all emails to me, make sure that "SOCY 2077" is in the subject line.
7. Expect to be challenged in this class both in the reading assignments as well as the level of engagement expected from you.
8. You are expected to come on time and to stay until the end of the allotted period unless you have excused yourself ahead of time. Students coming and going during class time is distracting for the whole class. You do not need to raise your hand to use the restroom.
9. Become familiar with the Desire2Learn (D2L) website immediately. If there are technical problems, please call ITS at 303-735-4357. (To access D2L, go to <https://learn.colorado.edu> ; Login with your identikey; Your courses can be accessed from the "My Courses" section on "My Home.")
10. You are expected to attend every class. However, strict attendance will not be taken, but your final grade would be greatly affected if you miss too many classes. When attendance is taken, it will be in the form of checking for in-class assignments being handed in.
11. Grades: Grades are awarded on the basis of quality of work turned in and what is

subsequently earned; not the grade that a student feels they “deserve.” You are encouraged to see me early on in the semester if you are concerned about your grades. There is no extra credit in this course and I will not curve the grades.

Graded Work – Your final grade will consist of the following assignments and assessments

- **WRITING RESPONSES (40 points)**
 - These are short (a couple sentences, one paragraph at the most) answers written at the beginning of a class, answering a question about one or all of the readings and movies assigned for that day.
- **PROJECT A (50 Points)**
 - You will choose one of the two projects/experiments offered to you and write a 2-3 page paper to report and analyze your experience. You have the choice between a waste audit and doing an interview about environmental values. See the guideline posted on D2L for more information about what the assignments are and how you should organize your paper. To keep you on schedule, you will commit to one project and briefly describe when and how you will do it.
 - You will write one brief paragraph describing your plan and post it on D2L before Thursday, February 5th.
 - The paper is due on Dropbox before Thursday, March 20th at 11:30pm.
- **PROJECT B (50 Points)**
 - Sociological analysis of a movie or a book (50 points): Multiple movies and books are referenced for you to choose from. Choose a book or a movie you are particularly interested in and write a 2 page essay about it. This can be done at any time of the semester and will be submitted on Dropbox. See the guideline posted on D2L (under “documents”) for more information about how to organize your essay. Even though you could write and turn in your analysis next week, I encourage you to wait a little to become more familiar with the sociological concepts you could use in your analysis. Wait for the end of a sequence to write an essay on the topic to make sure you have a grasp on all the concepts that relate to that topic.
 - You have to commit (on dropbox) for a title before Thursday, March 5th.
 - The Analysis is due on Dropbox before Thursday, April 23rd at 11:30pm.
- **EXAMS (2*50=100 points)**
 - Two exams are scheduled during the semester. The exams consist of one take-home question (two page answer at most, worth 20 points) and a series of in-class short answers (2-3 questions, worth 30 points total). You will have three or four days to complete the take-home question before the day of the exam. The take-home question is due in Dropbox before the in-class exam starts. I will post potential exam questions weekly on D2L for you to prepare for the exam. I will then choose all exam questions from those questions previously posted. The exam will consist of 5-6 questions, which you will choose 2 or 3 from. Exam #1 will be on Thursday, April 2nd in class. Exam #2 will take place during our final exam slot during exam week (TBD).
Formatting for the take-home portions will be discussed before the exam is administered.
 - **YOU MUST BRING ONE LARGE BLUE BOOK FOR EACH EXAM.** The blue books will be collected from each student and redistributed prior to the administration of each exam.

- GUEST SPEAKER HANDOUTS (10 points each)
 - You will turn in a handout after each guest speaker's presentation. Handouts are to be turned in at the beginning of the following class at the latest.
- SYLLABUS QUIZ (10 points)
 - To be completed and returned to me by Tuesday, January 20th at the beginning of class.

Comments on Grading

I do not grade on a curve. Your final grade will reflect your success in demonstrating your knowledge of the material. To do well in this class, most of you will need to work hard and apply sustained effort over the course of the semester. That said, working hard does not guarantee an "A". Your final grade is based on the points you have earned throughout the semester. If you find that you are not doing as well as you would like in the course, please come talk to me as soon as possible. There will be no additional extra-credit at the end of the semester to boost low grades.

If you feel that you have been given an unfair grade on an assignment, you need to write a one page response as to why you would like to appeal the grade and hand it to me no more than one week after you received the grade. When appealing the grade, you need to be aware that the grade can be raised or lowered. Therefore, I only advise you to appeal grades if you feel there is a very clear miscalculation. You are responsible for keeping all materials that have been graded and returned to you. If you cannot provide these materials, your grade cannot be appealed. University policy prohibits discussions of grades over email to protect your privacy. If you want to discuss your grade, please come to office hours or make an appointment with me.

Syllabus Quiz	10
Writing Responses	40
Guest Speakers Handouts	30
Project A	50
Project B	50
Exams	100
Total	280

Although I do not take daily attendance, 70/280 points (30%) are basically attendance points (Writing Responses & Guest Speaker Handouts).

This is the basic criteria that will be used in assigning your grade for each assignment:

Letter Grade	Percentage of Grade	Description
A	90-100	Exceeds all required elements of an assignment, and the quality of the work is considerably greater than what was required. The quality of the work is considerably above the class average and impressive to the evaluator.
B	80-89	Meets all required elements of an assignment, and the quality of the work is better than what is required and demonstrated by the class average.
C	70-79	Meets all required elements of an assignment, no more, no less. Quality of assignment is satisfactory for college level work. Fails to meet all required elements of an assignment, and/or the quality of the assignment is less than satisfactory.
D	60-69	Fails to meet all required elements of an assignment, and/or the quality of the assignment is less than satisfactory.
F	Less than 59	Only meets some of the required elements of an assignment, and/or the quality of the assignment is considerably lower than satisfactory. 50% of points are not guaranteed. At this level points are only given if some elements of the assignment are met. If not, very low percentages are likely.
Zero	0	Fails to meet any of the required elements of an assignment, and/or the quality of the assignment is well below basic standards of writing, comprehension, and/or ability to follow instructions; assignment is late or incomplete; assignment is not turned in at all; assignment shows signs of plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty. If the later is the case, I will file a formal accusation through the honor code council.

Week # & Date	Sequence/Lecture Topic	Readings (textbook or D2L)	Movies	Work due/Deadlines
Week 1	Introduction / Environmental Problems & Society			
T 01/13	Welcome, Syllabus; Sociological Imagination	Gardner (95-98); Rich		
R 01/15	What is Environmental Sociology?	Bell Ch. 1		
Week 2	Consumption & Materialism			
T 01/20		Bell Ch. 2	"The Story of Stuff"	
R 01/22		Shor ("Keeping up")	"The Century of Self"	
Week 3	Money and Machines			
T 01/27		Bell Ch. 3	Pr. Al Bartlett's exponential lecture	
R 01/29		Turrentine; Mander; Mander		
Week 4	Population and Environment			
T 02/03		Bell Ch. 4; Hardin; Levine		
R 02/05	Guest Speaker: Prof. Beth Osnes		"Mother: Caring for 7 billion"	Commit to Project A
Week 5	Body and Health and Contested illnesses			
T 02/10		Bell Ch. 5 up to pp. 137; Brown		
R 02/12		Hofrichter; King Ch. 7 (Bryson et al.)		
Week 6	The Sociology of Environmental Justice & Inequalities			
T 02/17		Bell Ch. 5 pp. 137-145; Pulido		
R 02/19		Bullard; Cable	"Living downstream"	
Week 7	Environmental problems, Nature, and Ideology			
T 02/24		Bell Ch. 6 pp. 149-156 & 162-168		
R 02/26		Bell Ch. 7		

Week 8	Climate Change and Denial			
T 03/03		Climate literacy; Shiva		
R 03/05		Boykoff	“Climate Refugees”	Commit to Project B
Week 9	Agriculture and Food			
T 03/10	CIW & SFA	Beardworth; Walsh	“Food Inc.”	
R 03/12	Guest Speaker: Laurent Cilia (The Buzz About Bees)	Shiva; Fishman		
Week 10	Constructionism and Risk			
T 03/17	The Human Nature of Nature	Bell Ch. 8; Cronon		
R 03/19	The rationality of Risk	Bell Ch. 9 pp. 227-229; Tierney (skim!); King. Ch. 13 (Ritchie et al.)		Project A Due
Week 11	Spring Break			
Week 12	Hazards and Disasters			
T 03/31	Disaster Recovery – 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami	Rodriguez		
R 04/02				Exam #1
Week 13	Mobilizing the Ecological Society			
T 04/07		Bell Ch. 10		
R 04/09	Guest Speaker: from CU E-Center	King Ch. 20 (Maniates)		
Week14	Critics and Alternatives to Capitalism, Consumerism and Growth			
T 04/14	Happiness	Kimeldorf; Helburn	“Everything is Amazing and Nobody is Happy”	
R 04/16	Sustainability & Degrowth; Voluntary Simplicity	Latouche; Schor; Elgin		
Week 15	Governing the Ecological Society			
T 04/21		Bell Ch. 11		
R 04/23		Rogers; King Ch. 23 (Glazer & Glazer)		Project B Due
Week 16	Ecological Literacy & Exam Review			
T 04/28		Ecological Literacy		
R 04/30	Exam Review	* WEEK 17 is EXAM WEEK, Exam date TBD *		

Readings and movies must be read/watched before class; Schedule subject to change!

University Policies:

Anti Discrimination Policy

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU-Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. The University of Colorado does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status in admission and access to, and treatment and employment in, its educational programs and activities. (Regent Law, Article 10, amended 11/8/2001). CU-Boulder will not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based upon Protected Classes, or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. For purposes of this CU-Boulder policy, "Protected Classes" refers to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual, orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or veteran status. <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/discrimination-and-harassment-policy-and-procedures>

Classroom Learning Environment Policy

Students and faculty each have a responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals on topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-classroom-and-course-related-behavior>

Religious Observances

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Please inform Elizabeth in writing by the **end of the second week of class** if you will be unable to attend class, scheduled in class exams, or turn in assignments on time because of religious obligations and observances, or athletic engagements so that we can work out a revised schedule with you to meet course requirements. http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

Students with Disabilities

Please inform Elizabeth in person by the **end of the second week of class** if you qualify for accommodations because of a disability. Please bring along a letter from Disability Services by then so that I can work with you to enable you to do your best in this course. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (Contact: 303-492-8671, Center for Community N200, and <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices>). If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see guidelines at <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/go.cgi?select=temporary.html>

We (the instructor and students) are expected to adhere to the behavior standards listed in the **Rights and Responsibilities Regarding Standards of Conduct**. The specific policy may be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html>

CU Honor Code

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council and those students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member involved and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion)

<http://honorcode.colorado.edu/>

Cheating and plagiarizing will result in a failing grade for either or both the assignment and the course. The student(s) will also be reported to the Honor Code Council (even for a first offense). To be clear, plagiarism refers to using the work, ideas, or knowledge of other people as your own. It includes all forms of exam or quiz cheating, using other people's work, copying all or sections of papers from the web, and "borrowing" (without citing) from published sources. Please do not give me **ANY** reason to suspect this type of behavior. If you are unclear about the rules regarding plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration, please consult Elizabeth immediately. **There is no need to cheat.** Whether through office hours, e-mail, or a scheduled appointment, I am available if you need an assignment explained, writing suggestions, etc. Frequent violations include "overlooking" necessary citations, cheating on an exam, and completing a quiz for someone else.

Sexual harassment is not tolerated

For more information on maintaining a fair and safe environment and sexual harassment policies and reporting see www.colorado.edu/sexualharassment or call the Office of Sexual harassment at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550.

The Writing Center

Meet one-to-one with a writing consultant for sound advice at ANY stage of your writing process. They teach you strategies to formulate and organize strong thesis statements, use and cite evidence appropriately, master style and grammar, and overcome writing anxiety. Services are free to all CU students. Please visit <http://www.colorado.edu/pwr/writingcenter.html>. The Writing Center is located in Norlin Library, Room E-156. For more information on the Writing Center please email wrtghelp@colorado.edu or call (303)735-6906. *It is an awesome FREE service - I use it too!*

Note regarding email

I am more than willing to answer questions via email as long as the answers to your questions cannot be found in the syllabus. To protect my own time and to be able to use it to thoughtfully respond to other questions, I will not respond to emails with these kinds of questions. By University policy grades cannot be discussed over e-mail. I will not respond to grade inquiries over e-mail. Also, please be aware that email is official communication and should be composed as such (use your full name, be clear in your question or concern and no texting abbreviations please). Do not expect replies to emails outside of normal working hours (9-5pm) and during the weekend.

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Learning Environment and Salutations

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code

Student-Athletes

It is the student's responsibility to notify each instructor—in the first week of the semester and in writing--about any known conflicts between academic requirements and intercollegiate varsity athletic events. For conflicts that arise during the regular term, instructors have full authority to decide whether and/or how to accommodate those conflicts. While an instructor has the right to refuse to allow make-ups or other accommodations, he or she is permitted to provide such accommodations. Intercollegiate varsity athletics events during final exams, which are normally forbidden by university policy, must be approved in writing by the BFA Intercollegiate Athletics Committee well in advance of the event. Students involved in these events must then work with their instructors in regard to any missed work, as required above.