Sociology 6007: FOUNDATIONS IN ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY

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Graduate Seminar
Spring Semester 2015
Tuesdays 3:30-6:00; LIBR M498

COURSE DESCRIPTION

I have designed this course to introduce graduate students to the field of environmental sociology. We will spend the first ten weeks of class getting acquainted with major areas of debate in environmental sociology through 'classic' journal articles and synthetic review articles. In the last five weeks of the semester, we will then build upon this foundation by reading and critically evaluating five recent monographs.

Although I had sociology graduate students most in mind while designing this syllabus, the course will be useful for students in other graduate programs as well. As will become clear, environmental sociologists mingle with geographers, anthropologists, political scientists, ecologists, and other scholars who inhabit the broad world of environmental studies. Throughout the semester, we will discuss environmental sociology's inherent multidisciplinarity at the same time that we interrogate its relationships with (and grounding in) the discipline of sociology.

I have several goals in this course. First, students will learn the basic contours of environmental sociology in terms of topics, arguments, tensions, major scholars, classic publications, and recent monographs. Second, students will become familiar with the scholarship of faculty and graduate students at CU-Boulder. Third, through applying foundational theoretical perspectives to current events, students will practice situating current events in terms of longstanding theoretical debates and evaluate the contemporary relevance of theories learned in class. Fourth, students will discuss the merits, protocol, and challenges of different types of publications (refereed journal articles, books, and policy or other outreach reports).

I should also note that I have focused the syllabus on many of the analytical frameworks that I have found to be most seminal and influential. However, it would be impossible to comprehensively survey this prolific field of work in one semester. Thus, with regret, I have had to leave out considerable work and numerous topics of debate.

Students should consider joining the Envirosoc and Envirograds listserves – both are sponsored by the American Sociological Association's Environment and Technology Section. Find access to both of these listserves here: http://listserv.neu.edu/cgi-bin/wa?HOME

Acknowledgement: Numerous scholars' past syllabi have helped me to construct this one. I am especially grateful to Fred Buttel, Michael Bell, Bill Freudenburg, Lori Hunter, and Brian Mayer.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Preparation and participation: Because each week's readings are responses to and developments of readings we will have covered in prior weeks, it is imperative that you attend regularly and stay current with the reading assignments. Moreover, because this is a graduate reading seminar rather than a lecture-style course, you are expected to actively contribute to the discussions. I plan to lecture for a few minutes at the beginning and end of each class session, but otherwise you should expect the bulk of our

time to be spent in discussion as a group. Your regular participation and evident preparation will count for 25% of your final grade.

- Questions and comments: Each week, you are required to bring to class at least four discussion questions addressing that week's readings; at least one of the questions must strive to integrate most or all of the week's readings. These must be typed, proofread, formatted in 12-point font, and submitted in hard copy at the end of each class meeting. These will account for 10% of your final grade.

- Student-led activities: At least once during the semester, you must prepare a short class activity that relates to course material and lead us through the activity. You could bring in outside materials that relate to a course concept (e.g., a news article, video clip, movie trailer, song, or some other work of art) along with some discussion questions or prompts, do an interpretive dance, or direct us in some other activity. You all have wonderful classroom activity ideas that I won't think of on my own, so this is your chance to spice up our class sessions, try out different teaching ideas, and apply course concepts to the broader world. In class, on the day you lead your activity, you must submit to me in hard copy a short (< 1 page) summary of how you relate this activity to course concepts; this summary must be typed, proofread, formatted in 12-point font, and submitted in hard copy at the end of class on the day you do your activity. Your activity and summary will account for 5% of your final grade.

- Reading reflection essays: Three times during the semester, you are required to prepare a brief essay that reflects upon a particular theme in the readings. Each essay should clearly identify a particular theme you found interesting in the preceding three weeks of the course, develop a coherent argument about that theme, and develop your argument by using material covered in the preceding three weeks of the course. Each essay will account for 10% of your final grade. Essays should be 3-4 double spaced pages, professionally composed, coherently organized, proofread, typed in 12-point Times New Roman font, and formatted with 1-inch margins and page numbers. Within your essay, be sure to cite your sources using the following in-text citation format: (Smith 2007), or (Smith 2007: 1). Your end-of-text references list should be formatted according to the guidelines of the American Sociological Association, which I have posted to D2L. You must submit each essay as a Word document (.doc or .docx) to the appropriate dropbox on D2L by the date and time listed below.
    - Essay #1 due 2/10 at 3:30pm to D2L.
    - Essay #2 due 3/3 at 3:30pm to D2L.
    - Essay #3 due 3/31 at 3:30pm to D2L.

- Final paper: You are required to produce a final paper that meaningfully engages with one or more themes/topics from this course. You should design the assignment to be useful to your own needs (e.g., responses to one or more possible questions of an upcoming comprehensive exam; a field statement; literature review for a dissertation proposal; article for publication; or thought piece). That said, I do require that you situate your analysis within environmental sociology: in some way, identify how your paper fits into the field of environmental sociology and/or use your findings to critically reflect upon environmental sociology. I expect that your paper will be 10-20 pages (double-spaced), although the length is less important than the content and coherence. Your papers should be double-spaced, proofread, coherently organized, and thoughtfully composed.
    - You must submit to me a one-page proposal for your final paper by 3/31 in hard copy. You are welcome and encouraged to meet with me before this date to discuss your final paper ideas, and you are welcome and encouraged to submit your final paper proposal before this date. Your proposal will count for 5% of your final grade.
    - Your final paper is due by 5pm on May 5th to the dropbox on D2L. It will account for 25% of your final grade.

In sum, your grade will be based on the following:

Class participation	25%
Weekly discussion questions	10%
Student-led activity	5%
Reading reflection essays (3)	30%
Final paper proposal	5%
Final paper	25%

The following grading rubric is endorsed by the Sociology Department for its graduate program, and it explains how final grades in graduate seminars should be interpreted:

A: Consistently performs well above expectations for the course
A-: Performs above expectations for the course
B+: Meets expectations for the course
B: Occasionally performs below expectations for the course
B-: Consistently performs below expectations for the course
C range: Unsatisfactory work for a PhD student. Serious concerns regarding student progression toward degree.

If you have any questions or concerns, free to meet with me or email me!

REQUIRED READINGS

The following five books are **required** and can be purchased from the University Bookstore:

Julie Guthman. 2011. *Weighing In: Obesity, Food Justice, and the Limits of Capitalism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Matthew T. Huber. 2013. *Lifeblood: Oil, Freedom, and the Forces of Capitalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Kari Marie Norgaard. 2011. *Living in Denial: Climate Change, Emotions, and Everyday Life.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Lisa Sun-Hee Park and David Pellow. 2011. *The Slums of Aspen: Immigrants Vs. the Environment in America's Eden*. New York: NYU Press.

Paul Robbins. 2007. *Lawn People: How Grasses, Weeds, and Chemicals Make Us Who We Are*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

All other readings will be available as downloadable material to websites through the "Content" link of this course's D2L website.

I **recommend** the following book (or an earlier edition of it) to students who have little prior experience with the debates covered in this course or who simply want an accessible, engaging overview of the concepts:

Bell, Michael, with Michael Carolan. 2011. *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, 4th ed. Newbury Park, CA: Pine Forge Press (Sage).

OUTLINE OF READINGS

January 13 (Week 1): Course Organization

(Introductions, discuss syllabus)

January 20 (Week 2): Introduction to Environmental Sociology

William R. Catton, Jr. and Riley E. Dunlap. 1978. Environmental sociology: A new paradigm. *American Sociologist* 13(1): 41-49.

Frederick H. Buttel. 2002. Has environmental sociology arrived? *Organization and Environment* 15(1): 42-54.

John Bellamy Foster. 2002. Environmental sociology and the environmental revolution: A 25th anniversary assessment. *Organization and Environment* 15(1): 55-58.

Arthur P.J. Mol. 2006. From environmental sociologies to environmental sociology? A comparison of U.S. and European environmental sociology. *Organization and Environment* 19(1): 5-27.

David N. Pellow and Hollie Nyseth Brehm. 2013. An environmental sociology for the twenty-first century. *Annual Review of Sociology* 39: 229-250.

January 27 (Week 3): Realist-Constructionist Debates

John A. Hannigan. 1995. Introduction. From *Environmental Sociology: A Social Constructionist Perspective*. New York: Routledge, pp. 1-4, 32-57.

Gary Alan Fine. 1997. Naturework and the taming of the wild: The problem of 'overpick' in the culture of mushrooms. *Social Problems* 44(1): 68-88.

Kate Burningham. 1998. A noisy road or noisy resident? A demonstration of the utility of social constructionism for analysing environmental problems. *The Sociological Review* 46(3): 536-563.

William R. Freudenburg, Scott Frickel, and Robert Gramling. 1995. Beyond the nature/society divide: Learning to think about a mountain. *Sociological Forum* 10(3): 361-392.

William Cronon. 1998. The trouble with wilderness, or, getting back to the wrong nature. In J. Baird Callicott and Michael P. Nelson, eds., *The Great New Wilderness Debate*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, pp. 471-499.

February 3 (Week 4): Population Growth and the Environment

Garrett Hardin. 1968. The tragedy of the commons. *Science* 162: 1243-1248.

Julian L. Simon. 1980. Resources, population, environment: An oversupply of false bad news. *Science* 208 (4451, June 27): 1431-1437.

Riley E. Dunlap. 1983. Ecologist versus exemptionalist: The Ehrlich-Simon debate. *Social Science Quarterly* 64: 200-203.

Michael Goldman. 1997. "Customs in common": The epistemic world of the commons scholars. *Theory and Society* 26(1): 1-37.

Philip Cafaro. 2012. Climate ethics and population policy. *WIREs Climate Change* 3: 45-61.

Diana Hummel, Susana Adamo, Alex de Sherbinin, Laura Murphy, Rimjhim Aggarwal, Leo Zulu, Jianguo Liu, Kyle Knight. 2012. Inter- and transdisciplinary approaches to population-environment research for sustainability aims: a review and appraisal. *Population and Environment*.

Lori Hunter. Reading TBA.

Feburary 10 (Week 5): Marxist Approaches in Environmental Sociology

Note: Essay #1 due today to D2L

James O'Connor. 1991. On the two contradictions of capitalism. *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 2: 107-109.

John Bellamy Foster. 1992. The absolute general law of environmental degradation under capitalism. *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 3: 77-82.

John Bellamy Foster. 1999. Marx's theory of metabolic rift: Classical foundations for environmental sociology. *American Journal of Sociology* 105(2): 366-405.

Kenneth A. Gould, David N. Pellow, and Allan Schnaiberg. 2004. Interrogating the treadmill of production: Everything you wanted to know about the treadmill but were afraid to ask. *Organization and Environment* 17(3): 296-316.

Liam Downey and Susan Strife. 2010. Inequality, democracy, and the environment. *Organization and Environment* 23(2): 155-188.

Shannon E. Bell and Richard York. 2010. Community economic identity: The coal industry and ideology construction in West Virginia. *Rural Sociology* 75: 111–143.

February 17 (Week 6): Ecological Modernization

Gert Spaargaren and Arthur P. J. Mol. 1992. Sociology, environment, and modernity: ecological modernization as a theory of social change. *Society & Natural Resources* 5(4): 323-344.

Frederick H. Buttel. 2000. Ecological modernization as social theory. *Geoforum* 31(1): 57-65.

Dana Fisher and William Freudenburg. 2001. Ecological modernization and its critics: Assessing the past and looking toward the future. *Society and Natural Resources* 14: 701-709.

Richard York, Eugene A. Rosa, and Thomas Dietz. 2003. Footprints on the Earth: The environmental consequences of modernity. *American Sociological Review* 68(2): 279-300.

Andrew K. Jorgenson and Brett Clark. 2012. Are the economy and the environment decoupling? A comparative international study, 1960-2005. *American Journal of Sociology* 118: 1-44.

February 24 (Week 7): Neoliberalization of Environmental Governance

Manfred B. Steger and Ravi K. Roy. 2010. Selections from *Neoliberalism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-20.

David Harvey. 2005. Selections from *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Centeno, Miguel A., and Joseph N. Cohen. 2012. The arc of neoliberalism. *Annual Review of Sociology* 38: 317-340.

Brian J. Gareau. 2012. The limited influence of global civil society: International environmental non-governmental organisations and the Methyl Bromide controversy in the Montreal Protocol. *Environmental Politics* 21(1): 88-107.

Mansfield, Becky. 2012. Gendered biopolitics of public health: Regulation and discipline in seafood consumption advisories. *Environment and Planning D* 30(4): 588-602.

James Ferguson. 2010. The uses of neoliberalism. *Antipode* 41: S1: 166-184.

March 3 (Week 8): Environmental Social Movements

Note: Essay #2 due today to D2L

Robert J. Brulle. 1996. Environmental discourse and social movement organizations: A historical and rhetorical perspective on the development of U.S. environmental organizations. *Sociological Inquiry* 66(1): 58-83.

Jason T. Carmichael, J. Craig Jenkins, and Robert J. Brulle. 2012. Building environmentalism: The founding of environmental movement organizations in the United States, 1900-2000. *The Sociological Quarterly* 53: 422-453.

Schlosberg, D. and J.S. Dryzek. 2002. Political strategies of American environmentalism: Inclusion and beyond. *Society and Natural Resources* 15(9): 787-804.

Scott Frickel. 2004. Scientist activism in environmental justice conflicts: An argument for synergy. *Society and Natural Resources* 17: 1-8.

Brian Mayer. 2009. Cross-movement coalition formation: Bridging the labor-environment divide. *Sociological Inquiry* 79(2): 219-239.

Andrew Austin. 2002. Advancing accumulation and managing its discontents: The U.S. anti-environmental countermovement. *Sociological Spectrum* 22: 71-105.

March 10 (Week 9): Environmental Inequality and Justice

Paul Mohai, David Pellow, and J. Timmons Roberts. 2009. Environmental justice. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 34: 405-430.

Don Grant, Mary Nell Trautner, Liam Downey, and Lisa Tiebaud. 2010. Bringing the polluters back in: Environmental inequality and the organization of chemical production. *American Sociological Review* 75(4): 479-504.

David N. Pellow. 2000. Environmental inequality formation: Toward a theory of environmental injustice. *American Behavioral Scientist* 43(4): 581-601.

William Freudenburg. 2005. Privileged access, privileged accounts: Toward a socially structured theory of resources and discourses. *Social Forces* 84(1): 89-114.

Rachel Morello-Frosch. 2002. Discrimination and the political economy of environmental inequality. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 20: 477-496.

Kathleen Tierney. 2006. Social inequality, hazards, and disasters. From *On Risk and Disaster: Lessons from Hurricane Katrina*, ed. R. J. Daniels, D. Kettl, and H. Kunreuther. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 109-128.

March 17 (Week 10): Expertise, Uncertainty, and Public Participation in Science

Thomas Gieryn. 1983. Boundary-work and the demarcation of science from non-science: Strains and interests in professional ideologies of scientists. *American Sociological Review* 48: 781-795.

Brian Wynne. 1996. May the sheep safely graze? A reflexive view of the expert-lay knowledge divide. In S. Lash, B. Szerszynski, & B. Wynne, eds., *Risk, Environment and Modernity: Towards a New Ecology.* London: Sage, pp. 44-83.

Phil Brown. 2000. Popular epidemiology and toxic waste contamination: Lay and professional ways of knowing. In *Illness and the Environment: A Reader in Contested Medicine*, ed. Steve Kroll-Smith, Phil Brown, and Valerie J. Gunter. New York: New York University Press.

Sainath Suryanarayanan and Daniel Lee Kleinman. 2012. Be(e)coming experts: The controversy over insecticides in the honey bee colony collapse disorder. *Social Studies of Science* 32(2): 215-240.

Jill Lindsey Harrison. 2011. Parsing "participation" in action research: Navigating the challenges of lay involvement in technically complex participatory science projects. *Society and Natural Resources* 24(7): 702-716.

Alissa Cordner, David Ciplet, Phil Brown, and Rachel Morello-Frosch. 2012. Reflexive research ethics for environmental health and justice: Academics and movement building. *Social Movement Studies: Journal of Social, Cultural and Political Protest* 11(2): 161-176.

March 31 (Week 11): Environmental Attitudes, Climate Justice, and Environmental Privilege

Note: Essay #3 due today to D2L

Note: Deadline for submitting proposal for final paper

Kari Marie Norgaard. 2011. *Living in Denial: Climate Change, Emotions, and Everyday Life.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

April 7 (Week 12): Political Economy of Oil

Matthew T. Huber. 2013. *Lifeblood: Oil, Freedom, and the Forces of Capitalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

April 14 (Week 13): Population, Sustainability, Privilege, and Justice

Lisa Sun-Hee Park and David Naguib Pellow. 2011. *The Slums of Aspen: Immigrants Vs. the Environment in America's Eden*. New York: NYU Press.

Abby Hickox. White environmental subjectivity and the politics of belonging. Paper in progress.

April 21 (Week 14): Thinking Sociologically about Suburban Environments

Paul Robbins. 2007. *Lawn People: How Grasses, Weeds, and Chemicals Make Us Who We Are*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

April 28 (Week 15): Environments and Contested Bodies

Julie Guthman. 2011. *Weighing In: Obesity, Food Justice, and the Limits of Capitalism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.