

ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY

Sociology 565

Fall 2019 (CREF #12964)
Tu/Th 9:40-11:00 AM
Horton 307

Prof. Cliff Brown

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Office: McConnell 341B
Hours: Th 11:00 AM-12:30 PM & by appointment

Environment and Society focuses on the complex interactions between human communities and the natural world. The course considers the ways that social systems, the built environment, and related technologies produce environmental changes, and in turn, how shifts in resources, air and water quality, climate, biodiversity, and ecosystems compel societies to adapt. The course will help you appreciate the interplay between environmental, technological, and social forces. The course is a lower-level elective in the sociology major and fulfills a requirement in the Environment, Technology, and Society category of the Discovery Program. Major topics include (1) theoretical approaches to environmental issues, (2) how production, consumption, and technology relate to environmental problems, (3) food and agriculture, (4) risk assessment and the unequal impacts of environmental degradation, (5) population growth and development pressures, (6) the consequences of climate change, (7) environmental beliefs and ideologies, and (8) the role and impact of public policy.

Objectives: Upon successful completion of the course, you should be able to demonstrate proficiency five major areas. First, you will be able to discuss and write about the field of environmental sociology and explain how a sociological perspective informs understanding of the changing natural world. Second, you will be able to evaluate research that relates to course themes and understand its implications. Third, you will develop a global perspective on environmental issues. Fourth, you will understand how the analysis of evidence can help us understand the complex linkages between environmental, social, and technological processes. Finally, you will be able to demonstrate basic “environmental literacy,” as evidenced by your understanding of environmental issues, processes of environmental change, and society’s role in both.

Contact Information: My office hours will be Tuesdays from 2:00-3:00 PM and by appointment in McConnell 341B. Please contact me any time you have questions or concerns about the class. The best way to reach me is at cliff.brown@unh.edu. I also have a mailbox in the Sociology Department, McConnell 303. The phone number there is 603-862-2500 should you need to reach sociology department staff.

Teaching Assistant: Kristine Bundschuh is the teaching assistant for this course. She will be attending class regularly, and you can reach her by e-mail at kab1098@wildcats.unh.edu. Kristine will be available to help you with questions about the readings, class material, quizzes, exams, and assignments. Her office hours are Wednesdays and Thursdays 1:00-2:00 PM and by appointment in McConnell 338.

MATERIALS

- Bell, Michael M. and Loka L. Ashwood. 2016. *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, 5th edition. Los Angeles: Pine Forge. (B&A)
- Gould, Kenneth A. and Tammy L. Lewis. 2015. *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*, 2nd edition. New York: Oxford University Press. (G&L)
- iClicker 2 Device. Clickers will be available at the UNH Book Store and the Durham Book Exchange. Once you purchase a device, there are no additional registration fees, and the clicker can be used in other classes and in subsequent semesters. You will need to register your device by going to the “iClicker” area of the SOC 565 online course menu. *Be sure that you have your iClicker device for every class session.*

REQUIREMENTS

- 1) **Class Participation (12.5%).** This class will generally follow a mixed lecture and discussion format. I encourage your questions and comments, and I will provide frequent opportunities for your electronic and verbal participation.
 - Clicker Participation (12.5%): Through iClicker, you will be able to participate in short credit/no credit exercises in class that I will use “in the moment” to illustrate sociological concepts, spark discussion, examine data gathered in the class, or assess comprehension. Once that moment has passed, there is no way to participate after the fact by submitting responses on paper or at a later time. Your physical presence is required, and you must engage in the activity with the rest of the class.
 - Verbal Participation (2% extra credit): Ideally, participating verbally in class enhances proficiency in public speaking and maximizes the exchange of ideas. In class, I may call on those who have a 50-Word Sentence due (see below), and at my discretion, students who participate constructively and consistently (roughly, at least once each week) throughout the semester and who have a good attendance record will earn up to 2 percent extra credit. Please avoid any temptation to dominate discussions and make every effort to respect others’ views.
- 2) **Quizzes (12.5%).** To encourage diligent reading and consistent attendance – and to help me gauge your understanding of the material – I will give brief unannounced quizzes throughout the semester. Quizzes will cover readings and content from the current or recent class sessions and must be taken electronically using your iClicker device. There are no make-ups for missed quizzes, which receive a grade of zero. However, the lowest two scores will be excluded from your grade to give you a cushion if an illness or scheduling conflict necessitates missing class.
- 3) **Assignments (15%).** These consist of short writing exercises throughout the semester, a longer data-gathering assignment that will investigate variation in environmental risk, and a brief presentation based on collaborative small-group work. For the latter, you will have opportunities to rate your peers’ contributions and to provide updates on your progress, and you will receive credit for completing these assessments.
 - 50-Word Sentences (5%): For each of five dates allocated to you, you will convey the core argument for the assigned reading in a single sentence of no more than 50 words. The goals are to help you see how details and evidence relate to the “big picture,” to cultivate writing skills via repeated, focused tasks, and to encourage careful reading and class preparation. Given the last of these goals, there are no make-ups for missed assignments, which are due on Canvas before class. However, the lowest score will be automatically excluded from your grade.
 - NATA Assignment (5%): This assignment explores the extent to which environmental risks are borne unequally across geography and social groups. Individually, you will gather data from the Environmental Protection Agency’s National Air Toxics Assessment, use the U.S. Census to compare socioeconomic characteristics of different places, and construct graphs that facilitate an analysis of your evidence.
 - NATA Presentation (5%): The presentation allows you to look for and share with the class any larger patterns that are evident in the NATA data. In small groups, you will use the evidence from your earlier NATA Assignment to develop a 5-minute presentation for class toward semester’s end.
- 4) **Exams (60%).** Three multiple-choice and true/false exams will cover course readings, lectures, clicker exercises, and discussions. Exams will be delivered through Canvas. Each exam is worth 20 percent of your final grade. The exams are not cumulative. Exams will not be rescheduled except for legitimate reasons that receive *advance approval*; missed exams receive a grade of zero.

SCHEDULE

Part 1: Consumption, Technology, and Population

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| Tuesday
8/27 | Course Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sociological perspective • Semester overview and course requirements |
| Thursday
8/29 | Sociology and the Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B&A, Ch. 1: "Environmental Problems and Society" and G&L, "An Introduction to Environmental Sociology." • <u>Note</u>: Please register your iClicker on Canvas and bring it to class. |
| Tuesday
9/3 | Theoretical Perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G&L, Ch. 1: "The Social Construction of Nature" and Ch. 2: "Theories in Environmental Sociology." |
| Thursday
9/5 | Consumption and Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B&A, Ch. 2: "Consumption and Materialism." |
| Tuesday
9/10 | Production and Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B&A, Ch. 3: "Money and Markets," G&L, Ch. 7: "Technological Change and the Environment," and Ch. 9: "Energy, Society, and the Environment." |
| Thursday
9/12 | Labor and Corporate Power <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G&L, Ch. 4: "Labor Productivity and the Environment," Ch. 5: "Corporate Power," and Ch. 17: "Labor and the Environment." |
| Tuesday
9/17 | Technology as Social Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B&A, Ch. 4: "Technology and Science." |
| Thursday
9/19 | Population Pressures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B&A, Ch. 5: "Population and Development" and G&L, Ch. 8: "Population, Demography, and the Environment." |
| Tuesday
9/24 | Food and Agriculture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G&L, Ch. 12: "Producing and Consuming Food" and Ch. 13: "From Farms to Factories." |
| Thursday
9/26 | Industrial Food Production <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Video</u>: <i>King Corn</i> • <u>Due</u>: NATA Assignment (5 PM via Canvas) |
| Tuesday
10/1 | Meet in NATA Presentation Groups |
| Thursday
10/3 | EXAM 1 |

Part 2: Culture, Ideology, and Risk

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| Tuesday
10/8 | Science and Human Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G&L, Ch. 6: "The Science of Nature and the Nature of Science" and Ch. 11: "The Sociology of Environmental Health." |
| Thursday
10/10 | The "Inviroment" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B&A, Ch. 6: "Body and Justice." |

Tuesday
10/15 Classes Follow a Monday Schedule

Thursday
10/17 Environmental Domination
• B&A, Ch. 7: "The Ideology of Environmental Domination."

Tuesday
10/22 Environmental Concern
• B&A, Ch. 8: "The Ideology of Environmental Concern."

Thursday
10/24 The Concept of Nature
• B&A, Ch. 9: "The Human Nature of Nature."

Tuesday
10/29 Risk Assessment
• B&A, Ch. 10: "The Rationality of Risk."

Thursday
10/31 Lessons from "Natural" Disasters
• G&L, Ch. 14: "Understanding Disaster Vulnerability."

Tuesday
11/5 Climate Change
• G&L, Ch. 15: "Normalizing the Unthinkable."

Thursday
11/7 **EXAM 2**

Part 3: Environmental Movements, Sustainability, and Policy

Tuesday
11/12 Building Environmental Consciousness
• B&A, Ch. 11: "Mobilizing the Ecological Society."

Thursday
11/14 Environmental Movements
• G&L, Ch. 10: "Environmental Inequality and Environmental Justice," Ch. 16: "U.S. Environmental Movements," and Ch. 18: "Environmental Movements and the Global South."

Tuesday
11/19 Social Justice and Environmental Movements
• Video: *Groundswell Rising*
• Due: NATA Presentations (5 PM via Canvas)

Thursday
11/21 Health Risks and the Distribution of Environmental Hazards
• NATA Presentations

Tuesday
11/26 Policy and Sustainability
• G&L, Ch. 20: "The Paradoxes of Sustainable Development."

Thursday
11/28 Thanksgiving Break

Tuesday
12/3 Policy, Government, and Community
• B&A, Ch. 12: "Governing the Ecological Society"

Thursday
12/5 Reconstituting Daily Life
• B&A, Ch. 13: "Living in the Ecological Society."

Wednesday
12/11 **EXAM 3** (starting at 10:30 AM)

POLICIES

Academic Honesty: Violations of academic honesty include but are not limited to cheating, unauthorized collaboration, and plagiarism, and they will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Please note that allowing someone else to submit answers or other coursework on your behalf constitutes a violation of academic honesty for both parties. The UNH policy is fully described in the *Student Rights, Rules, and Responsibilities* handbook (<http://www.unh.edu/student-life/handbook>).

Attendance: I do not formally take attendance, but regular attendance is essential for your success. I appreciate being informed if you have to miss class, but I generally do not make a distinction between excused and unexcused absences. Absence from class is a lost opportunity to participate, raise questions, engage the material, and learn. Therefore, the fact of missing class is more significant than the reasons for any particular absence. You will learn more and do better if you attend class regularly. If you are not able to do so, please understand that you are responsible for the consequences.

Canvas: Your grades, handouts, Internet links, material presented in class, and this syllabus will be available online through the Canvas site (<https://mycourses.unh.edu>). Delivery of exams, posting of announcements, and all assignment submissions will also occur through Canvas. Therefore, you will need to have reliable access to e-mail and the Internet for this course. Please submit all work online by the posted deadline to receive consideration for full credit.

Curtailed Operations: If UNH curtails operations and it becomes necessary to make adjustments to the course schedule, *please note that I may move lecture material, quizzes, or other course content online if classes are cancelled*. Please check email and the Canvas website for updates in the event of curtailed operations.

Grading: The assignment scoring rubrics, the grade weights attached to course requirements, and this information will help you understand how I assign and calculate your grades.

You all have the same opportunity to do well in this class, and everyone will be graded on the same basis for the same work. I do not offer extra-credit or special make-up assignments to individuals. We all lead complicated lives with multiple and competing demands associated with school, work, and family. However, it is your job to fulfill the requirements for this class. As a general rule, I do not curve final grades or round them up to the next highest mark: please note that my grading scale is carried to two decimal points. The time to be concerned about your grades is during the semester. Once the class is over, so is your opportunity to earn a higher grade. Please check your grades regularly and let me know if you have any questions.

Grading Scale		
Excellent	A	95 – 100
	B+	90 – 94.99
	B+	87 – 89.99
Superior	B	83 – 86.99
	B-	80 – 82.99
	C+	77 – 79.99
Satisfactory	C	73 – 76.99
	C-	70 – 72.99
	D+	67 – 69.99
Marginal	D	63 – 66.99
	D-	60 – 62.99
Failing	F	0 – 59.99

Student Accessibility Services: If you have a documented condition that will require accommodations in this course, please contact Student Accessibility Services. It is your responsibility to make any necessary arrangements through the SAS Office (<https://www.unh.edu/studentaccessibility/students-0>).

Technical Support: If you have questions about clicker registration, browser or Internet issues, Canvas, or other technical matters that may be relevant to your experience in this course, you will be able to get the assistance you need most efficiently if you work through the UNH IT Service Desk in Dimond Library or by calling the Help Desk at (603) 862-4242.