

SOCIOLOGY 311
SOCY P311
THE ECOLOGY OF HUMAN SOCIAL SYSTEMS: ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY
PALMETTO PROGRAMS
FALL 2007

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HOURS: Tuesday/Thursday 1-3 (Virtual Office on Blackboard)

Course Meeting Time:
9:30 – 10:45 Tuesday/Thursday

Course Information:

Overview

This course is an introduction to **human ecology** and **environmental sociology** as substantive fields of sociological inquiry. It will explore various sociological and philosophical understandings of the co-evolving relationships that exist between human social systems and ecological systems. Course content will include readings and discussion of: a) environmental ethics; b) social constructions of environmental concern; c) the cultural and institutional bases of environmental degradation; and d) the political-economy of the environment.

Course Design

This is an upper-division sociology course offered in a distance learning context. Traditional in-class teaching methods, facilitated through video-compression technology, will be used concurrently with web-based teaching techniques and tools. Both class attendance and regular use of Blackboard outside of the classroom is **necessary** for successful completion of course work. Class will meet live via video-compression from 9:30 – 10:45 on Tuesdays/Thursdays about 80% of the term. On-line activities will be substituted for in-class (9:30-10:45) activities about 20% of the semester – i.e. we will meet in-class only 80% of the scheduled Tuesday/Thursday dates, while doing on-line activities tailored to take advantage of your time schedules to substitute for the 20% of scheduled classes we will not actually meet together live via video-compression.

Class time will involve lecture, group discussion and film.

Texts and Readings

There will be two primary required texts for the course and multiple readings from selected texts. The readings from selected texts will be made available for downloading in PDF format.

Required texts include:

- 1) *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*, 1989, Roderick Frazier Nash, University of Wisconsin Press. ISBN 0-299-11844-4 (pbk); and
- 2) *Environmental Problems Grassroots Solutions: The Politics of Grassroots Environmental Problems*, 1995, Sherry Cable and Charles Cable, St.Martin's Press, Inc. ISBN 0-312-08142-1

Grading Scale

A	92-100%
B+	88-91%
B	82-87%
C+	78-81%
C	72-77%
D	64-71%
F	0-63%

Evaluation

Writing Assignments (60%)

There will be five assigned take-home writing assignments over the course of the semester, the last of which will be given during the final exam week. The first and fifth assignments are **mandatory**, while the lowest of the second, third, or fourth writing assignment grades will be dropped. These assignments will pertain to readings and class discussions, and must be turned in electronically through Blackboard Assignment (we will do an in-class tutorial on how to use Blackboard Assignment). They are to be 4-5 typed pages in length. The four grades will each count 15% of your course grade.

Wiki Assignments (20%)

During the course of the semester we will be building as a class a Blackboard Wiki Encyclopedia pertaining to the field of Environmental Sociology and its key concepts, methods and perspectives. Students will be randomly divided into teams and teams will be given responsibility for creating, constructing and continually monitoring and updating a set of glossary entries for the class Wiki. At the end of the semester individual grades will be assigned based upon number and clarity of entries and updates associated with their group's glossary, with extra credit available for adding substantive content to other groups' glossary entries. At the mid-point of the semester, each student will receive a preliminary evaluation of how well they are doing in terms of number of posts/edits and the clarity of their post/edits.

A Blackboard Wiki tutorial will be given.

Blog Participation (10%)

Each week that we only meet one class session, a blog subject will be posed on Blackboard Blog. Students will be expected to participate in discussion of this subject through blogging on Blackboard Blog. Blog grades will reflect frequency of posts (5-7 spread out over the course of the week is expected), and the substantive content of posts. At mid-term each student will receive a preliminary evaluation of how they are doing with their blogging.

A Blackboard Blog tutorial will be given.

Overall Course Participation/Contribution (10%)

10% of your course grade will reflect your attendance, participation, and most importantly, your overall contribution to the class's learning environment.