

Environmentalism, Sustainability and Society (SAMPLE SYLLABUS) POSC 139 – Fall 2014

Instructor: Steven Cauchon
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Location: Soc. & Behavioral Sci. 2109
Lecture: MWF 1:30 –2:20PM
Office Hours: Friday 2:30-5:30PM

Course description

Does development always come at the expense of environmental protection? How can we meet the needs of an anticipated population of nine billion while living within the earth's means? What is the role and limitations of technology in addressing challenges related to sustainability? This course explores these key questions by examining several of the recurring political controversies that surround environmental sustainability, as well as the main political, legal, analytical, and ethical approaches used to craft policy responses to environmental problems. In doing so, we also will examine the various ways that people are responsible for environmental problems and affected by them—as individuals, citizens, consumers and producers.

The course also explores the relationship between socio-economic status, race, legacies of colonialism and the distribution of environmental ills—both domestically and internationally. Some of the key questions we will explore include the following: Are such distributions just? What is an acceptable level of risk associated with development? Risk to whom? How does social activism shape development and environmental policy? Who knows best how to promote environmental conservation? In addressing these questions, the course will explore debates in the field of environmental justice, with attention to non-western, grassroots and indigenous perspectives.

Course learning objectives

By the time you have completed this course you should be able to do the following:

- appreciate the reasons why global agreement on addressing climate change is so difficult to achieve;
- understand how environmental problems relate to human behavior, culture, and social institutions;
- analyze the role of the state system, global political economy, and civil society in exacerbating and/or mitigating environmental problems;
- evaluate suggestions for changing the human-environment relationship to a more “sustainable” environment, society, and world order;
- understand that sustainability is a contested concept that has different meanings for different actors, requiring that underlying assumptions be examined; and
- apply critical thinking skills through careful assessment of competing policy approaches to address contemporary socio-environmental problems.

Texts

Charles L Harper *Environment and Society (5th Edition)* ISBN-10: 0205820530 • ISBN-13: 9780205820535. **This text and all supplemental reading will be made available through**

Rivera Library and electronic reserve.

You should complete the readings for that assigned week by the Friday lecture of that week. (For example, the readings for week one should be completed by Friday, October 10th). This is particularly important for your in class participation (described below), which will utilize the course reading and lecture material from that week. Completing the course readings is a requirement and failure to do so can affect your performance on all assignments. You may find some of the readings challenging—I will try and anticipate this and spend greater attention working through those readings in lecture. Please do not hesitate to pose clarifying questions in the beginning of lecture, as this is likely to also benefit your classmates.

Course Evaluation

You will be evaluated on the basis of:

- **Exam 1 (November 3) & Exam 2 (November 24) (40%)**
The in-class exams will entail at least one essay question and multiple short answer questions. Further details will be provided the week before each exam.
- **Term Paper (due December 11 at 11am) (45%)**
There will be a 6 – 8 page term paper for this course. The paper prompt will be posted during the third week of class and directly relate to course themes and materials. One of the goals of this course is to help improve your writing skills, so the term paper will be broken up into multiple parts, all of which will build towards a holistic final paper. Please be aware that specifics pertaining to the course paper may change, so you should always consult the course prompt for the most up-to-date deadlines and requirements. Also, please be aware that some components of the term paper will be integrated into class assignments.
- **Active Learning Assignments (15%)**
Each week, there will be an active learning component. Think of this as a participation grade, which asks you to be in class, engage the material, and be an active participant in your own education. These active learning assignments will be multidimensional and integrated throughout class sessions. At times, you will be asked to work in groups or with a partner and at other times you will be asked to complete a task alone. The goal here is to break up the traditional classroom and make it more student-centric.

Class Behavior Expectations

Please come to class read and prepared to participate. In order to foster productive participation, students in this class are expected to follow these basic principles:

- 1 Demonstrate respect for oneself and for others.
- 2 Treat other with dignity and behave in a way which promotes a physically and psychologically safe, secure, and supportive climate.
- 3 Allow all community members to engage as full and active participants where the free flow of ideas is encouraged and affirmed.

If you encounter any issues that inhibit your participation, I highly encourage you to speak with me so that I may help. Moreover, I never mind answering your questions, and helping you to understand course content is my job and my pleasure!

Communication & Failed Technology

If you are not already familiar with the iLearn you should familiarize yourself with the interface as soon as possible. Regarding email, you can expect a response to your email within 24 hours during the weekdays, and in general, I will try to respond as promptly as possible. I will check my email during the weekends; however, you should expect a longer response time. In your emails, please be as specific as possible and make sure to use formal language. If your questions requires more than a 1-3 sentence response, you should see me during office hours. Assume that technology will fail at some point. Plan ahead and not leave completion/submission of assignments/projects for the last possible moment. When in doubt, email with your assignment.

Credit Hour Policy

Students are expected to spend a minimum of two hours outside of class each week for every unit of credit engaged in learning. For this course, you should spend a minimum of 5 hours each week, outside of class, reading, studying, and preparing for course related assignments.

Add/Drop Deadlines

Students are responsible for understanding all processes associated with adding/dropping from a course. Published detailed information can be found with the Class Schedule on the UCR website.

Make-up Exam, Late Paper Policy & Incomplete Policy

All exams must be taken at the scheduled time. No make-up exams or paper extensions will generally be granted. Excuses that may prove acceptable include: serious injury and family emergencies (serious illness of a family member or death in the family), serious accident (such as those requiring immediate hospitalization, and so forth), or the observance of a religious holiday. In order to be excused, students need to bring documentation and provide ample advance, when appropriate. Late assignments, if accepted, will be assessed a penalty at my discretion.

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to adhere to standards of academic honesty and integrity, as outlined in the Student Academic Honesty Policy. All assignments must be original work and all ideas/material that are borrowed from other sources must have appropriate references to the original sources. Any quoted material should give credit to the source and be punctuated accordingly. The instructor reserves the right to discipline any student for academic dishonesty, in accordance with the general rules and regulations of the university. Disciplinary action may include the lowering of grades and/or the assignment of a failing grade for an exam, assignment, or the class as a whole. It is recommended that students be referred to the full Academic Honesty Policy at:

<http://www.vcsa.ucr.edu/conduct/> and <http://library.ucr.edu/help/Plagiarism.shtml>.

Academic Accommodations

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodations must be approved for services by providing appropriate and recent documentation to the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS). This office is located in Craven Hall 5205, and can be contacted by phone at (760) 750-4905, or TDD (760) 750-4909. Students authorized by DSS to receive accommodations should meet with me during my office hours or in a more private setting in order to ensure your confidentiality.

Syllabus Disclaimer

Please be advised that this syllabus is “subject to change.” **If changes are made, I will make it known to the class via a iLearn announcement.**

Schedule

Week One: Introduction to environmental politics and sustainability

October 6th, 8th and 10th

Harper, Charles. 2012. Introduction and Chapter 1: *Environment, Human Systems, and Social Science*, Chapter 2 *Humans and the Resource of the Earth: Sources and Sinks*, pp.1-57. (Required text)

Steffen, W., J. Grinevald, P. Crutzen, and J. McNeill. 2011. "The Anthropocene: conceptual and historical perspectives," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, Vol.369, No. 1938, January 31, pp.842-867, available at:
<http://rsta.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/369/1938/842.full.pdf+html>

Week Two: Policy, values and science

October 13th, 15th, and 17th (NO CLASS FRIDAY 10/17)

Harper, Charles. 2012. Chapter 7: *Transforming Structures: Markets and Politics*, pp.191-221. (Required text)

Vig, N. and M. Kraft. 2010. "Environmental Policy over Four Decades: Achievements and New Directions," from *Environmental Policy, New Directions for the Twenty-First Century*, 7th edition, pp.1-25.

Borner, J. and S. Wunder. 2008. "Paying for avoided deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon: from cost assessment to scheme design," *International Forestry Review* 10: no.3, pp.496-511.

Week Three: Population and consumption

October 20th, 22nd and 24th

Harper, Charles. 2012. Chapter 5: *Population, Environment and Food* pp.127-159. (Required text)

Leonard, Annie. 2010. Chapter 4 from *The Story of Stuff*, pp. 144-181.

Maniates, Michael. 2002. "Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World?" from *Confronting Consumption*, pp.43-66.

Week Four: Sustainable development

October 27th, 29th and 31st

Harper, Charles. 2012. Chapter 6: *Globalization, Inequality, and Sustainability* pp.160-159. (Required text)

Conca, Ken and Geoffret Dabelko. 2010. Introduction and all of Part 4: The Sustainability Debate from *Green Planet Blues*, pp.1-14 and pp.199-246.

Week Five: Energy and Accidents

November 3rd, 5th and 7th (Exam #1 Monday 11/3)

Harper, Charles. 2012. Chapter 4: *Energy and Society* pp.93-125. (Required text)

Perrow, Charles. 1999. "Introduction" and "Normal Accident at Three Mile Island," from *Normal Accidents*, pp.3-31.

Mendelsohn et.al. 2012. "Oil impacts on coastal wetlands: Implications for the Mississippi River Delta Ecosystems after the *Deepwater Horizon* Oil Spill," *BioScience* 62: no. 6, pp.562-574.

Grattan et.al. 2011. "The Early Psychological Impacts of the *Deepwater Horizon* Oil Spill on Florida and Alabama Communities," *Environmental Health Perspectives* 119: no. 6, pp.838-843.

Week Six: Climate Change:

November 10th, 12th and 14th

Harper, Charles. 2012. Chapter 3: *Climate Change, Science, and Risk*, pp.61-91. (Required text)

Rosenbaum, Walter A. 2011. "Climate Change, Domestic Politics, and the Challenge of Global Policymaking," from *Environmental Politics and Policy*, 8th edition, pp.363-395.

Klien, Naomi. 2014. *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*, pp. TBD

Week Seven: Environmental Justice

November 17th, 19th and 21st

Harper, Charles. 2012. Introduction and Chapter 8: *Environmentalism: Ideology and Collective Action* pp.223-253. (Required text)

Cole, L. and Foster, S. 2001. *From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement*. New York. NYU Press, chapters 1, 2 and 3, pp.19-79

Coulthard, Glen. 2014. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. Minneapolis. University of Minnesota Press, introduction and conclusion.

Week Eight: Exam and Thanksgiving Break

November 24th, 26th and 28th (Exam#2 Monday 11/24; Class Canceled the 26th)

Week Nine: Global environmentalism and civil society

December 1st, 3rd and 5th

Keck, M. and K. Sikkink. 1998. "Transnational Advocacy Networks in International Politics: Introduction" and "Environmental Advocacy Networks" from *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Cornell University Press, pp. 1-38 and 121-165.

Pellow, David Naguib. 2007. "Ghosts of the Green Revolution: Pesticides Poison the Global South" from *Resisting Global Toxics: Transnational Movements for Environmental Justice*. Cambridge: MIT Press, pp. 147-184.

Lightfoot, Sheryl. 2016. *Global Indigenous Politics: A Subtle Revolution*. New York: Routledge, pp. 1-31.

Week Ten: Toward a sustainable future

December 8th, 10th and 12th

Annan, Kofi A. 2002. "Toward a Sustainable Future," *Environment* 44, no. 7 September, pp.10-15.

Schumacher, E.F. 2010 (1973). "Buddhist Economics," from *Small is Beautiful*, pp. 37-45.

Litfin, Karen. 2014. Chapter 3: "Ecology: Living in the Circle of Life," in *Ecovillages*, pp.33-76.

Princen, Thomas. 2010. Chapter 7: "Beyond the Consumer Economy," and Chapter 9: "Work, Workers, and Working: Toward an Economy that Works," *Treading Softly: Paths to Ecological Order*, pp.91-102 and pp.119-134.

*****Final Research Paper due Thursday, December 19, by 11:59 PM*****