

## Course Description:

Environmental sociology is the study of the interactions between society and the environment. This statement seems simple enough until we begin to examine the blurry, socially defined edges of either of those concepts. In this course, we will explore those edges in great detail, especially as they correlate to conceptions of the human and the non-human and power and justice. We will ask questions about how society defines the environment (or the non-human) and how conceptions of environmental problems shape our understanding of the boundary between society and the environment as well as boundaries between humans.

## Texts:

1. Carolan, Michael. 2013. *Society and the Environment*. Westview Press: Boulder, Colorado.
2. Gottlieb, Robert. 2005. *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement*. Island Press: Washington, DC.
3. Taylor, Dorceta. 2014. *Toxic Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution, and Residential Mobility*. New York University Press: New York.
4. Assigned articles on Moodle

## Evaluation:

As an upper-level course, we will engage through reading and discussion in a part lecture/part seminar format.

Participation	10%	A: 90-100
Book Review	15%	B: 80-89
Discussion Leader	20%	C: 70-79
Two Take-Home Exams	30%	D: 60-69
Final Research Project	25%	F: Below 60

## Virtues of Engagement:

*Humility · Fairness · Compassion · Inquisitiveness · Respect*

Louisiana State University is an interactive community in which students, faculty, and staff together strive to pursue truth, advance learning, and uphold the highest standards of performance in an academic and social environment.

In the current age, where it seems debate is only vicious and malicious, this class is a place where everyone is expected to express their thoughtful opinions, questions, and suggestions as a way to think through the material. We are all respected for who we are and what ideas and experiences we bring to the table. Thus, I encourage everyone to engage in active debate *with the material*; this means asking for clarity of someone else's comments and discussing and debating the *perspective* they present. I expect everyone to try on different perspectives, like trying on different clothes, and see whether something you always discounted may fit pretty well. There is an enormous difference between disagreeing with someone's perspective and attacking them as a person. The first is the hallmark of scientific inquiry; the second is for talk shows and reality TV and will not be accepted in this space.

## Academic Integrity:

You will get out of this course what you put in. Thus, cheating, as cliché as it sounds, most importantly limits your benefit from this course. Plagiarism is the unauthorized or unacknowledged use of another person's academic or scholarly work. Done on purpose, it is cheating. Done accidentally, it is no less serious. Regardless of how it occurs, plagiarism is a theft of intellectual property and a violation of an ironclad rule demanding "credit be given where credit is due." Plagiarism is easily avoided by using citations and quotations appropriately. Discuss with me if you are concerned about what is and is not plagiarism.

## Disabilities:

If you are a student who will need accommodations in this class, please let me know early in the semester. Please see Disability Services to register for accommodations at 115 Johnston Hall, [www.lsu.edu/ods](http://www.lsu.edu/ods).

### 1. Participation:

Participation is crucial to success in this course. We will record attendance and do class activities to foster our understanding of the material. Reading the material is necessary to actively participate in class discussion.

Extra credit will be added to the participation grade through the use of Twitter or Instagram and attending campus lectures.

*Twitter and Instagram:* Posting questions, observations, articles, or other environmental sociology related content. Use #LSUenvsoc, and @Chell\_Meyer (Twitter) and @chell.meyer (Instagram).

*Campus Environmental Lectures:* Attending and writing a half page summary and commentary on any campus environment lectures. I will announce these opportunities as I come across them, and please also announce ones you find.

### 2. Book Review:

Review of one environmental sociology or sociology of disaster book. Books must be written by a social scientist (sociologist, psychologist, anthropologist, economist) and cannot be an edited volume. You will submit the name and author of your book for approval. See example book review on Moodle.

You will present your book in 5 minutes to the class. Book reviews are 3 pages double-spaced and must include:

- Full citation
- Overall research question
- Research methods
- Description of each chapter (if more than 10 chapters, general description of topics)
- Who the book is targeted toward
- Discussion of theory from class used in the book
- Your recommendation
- Preferable to choose newer books (since 2010). Graduate students are required to choose a book 2013 or newer for potential publication.

Examples:

- *Crafting Collectivity: American Rainbow Gatherings & Alternative Forms of Community*, Chelsea Schelly
- *The Slums of Aspen*, Lisa Sun-Hee Park and David Naguib Pellow
- *The Deepest Wounds: A Labor and Environmental History of Sugar in Northeast Brazil*, Thomas Rogers
- *Diamond: A Struggle for Environmental Justice in Louisiana's Chemical Corridor*, Steve Lerner
- *The Secret History of the War on Cancer*, Devra Davis
- *The World without Us*, Alan Weisman
- *Filling the Ark*, Leslie Irvine
- *Born to Buy*, Juliet Schor
- *Catastrophe in the Making*, Freudenberg, Laska, Gramling, and Erikson
- *Why We Disagree about Climate Change*, Mike Hulme

### 3. Discussion Leader:

In groups (size to be determined by enrollment), you will lead the class discussion two times throughout the semester. Groups and dates will be assigned on the second day of class. You will be evaluated on your ability to keep discussion from stalling, ability as the "expert" on the week's topic, your discussion questions, and organization of the material. Preparing to lead the discussion will take time, so plan to meet with your group in advance of your day leading.

Leading discussion must include:

- No PowerPoint
- Three thought-provoking discussion questions posted to Moodle & Twitter 24 hours before class.
- Discussion could address:
  - "What is the issue addressed in these readings?"
  - "What is the environmental problem, and how do we know?"
  - "What is the solution, and how do we know?"

Leading the discussion may include bringing in outside material including video clips (shorter than 15 minutes), pictures, and/or articles.

#### 4. Take Home Exams:

There will be two essay exams that will be completed at home. You will be given 6 questions and will choose 4 to complete. You will have 1 week to turn in the exam. It must be typed, double-spaced, and include references and citations. An acceptable essay answer will take up approximately 1 typed page (2-3 paragraphs).

#### 5. Research Project:\*

We will discuss the format of a content analysis research project on day 1 and decide by day 3. We will either complete a group project among the whole class as chosen by me, or the class will be split into pairs who will complete their own chosen content analysis projects. This will include development of an abstract, literature review, methods section, results, and conclusion in the style of an academic journal article. Detailed assignment guidelines will be provided in week 2. We will present our results during our final exam period.

\*Graduate students see me to discuss ways to incorporate this project into your degree goals.

#### Semester Outline: Additional readings to be posted to Moodle.

Week	Readings	Assignment
2	What is Environmental Sociology <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Assigned Reading: Catton and Dunlap</li><li>Read the Visitor section of the ASA Environment and Technology Section website: <a href="http://envirosoc.org/visitors.php">http://envirosoc.org/visitors.php</a></li><li>Carolan Chapter Intro, 1, 2</li></ul>	
3	I. Environmental Problems and Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Carolan Chapters 3, 4, 5</li></ul>	
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Carolan Chapters 6, 7</li><li>Assigned Reading</li></ul>	
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Carolan Chapters 8, 9</li><li>Assigned Reading</li></ul>	
6	NO CLASS TUESDAY	Book Review Due
7	II. Environmental Movement <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Gottlieb Chapter Intro, 1</li><li>Assigned Reading</li></ul>	
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Gottlieb Chapters 2, 3</li></ul>	Exam 1 due FRIDAY @ 5pm
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Gottlieb Chapters 4, 5, 6</li><li>Assigned Reading</li></ul>	
10	III. Environmental Justice <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Taylor Chapters Intro and 1-2</li><li>Gottlieb Chapter 7</li></ul>	
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Taylor Chapters 3, 4</li><li>Gottlieb Chapter 8</li></ul>	
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Taylor Chapters 5, 6</li><li>Carolan Chapter 10</li></ul>	
13	SPRING BREAK	
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Taylor Chapters 7, 8</li><li>Carolan Chapter 11</li></ul>	
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Taylor Chapters 9, 10, Conclusion</li><li>Carolan Chapter 12</li></ul>	
16	Wrap-up <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Gottlieb Conclusion and Epilogue</li><li>Carolan Chapter 13</li></ul>	Exam 2 due FRIDAY @ 5pm
17	Final Presentations are Tuesday, May 5 <sup>th</sup> from 10-12	Final Project Due and Presentations