

## Michelle Annette Meyer, Ph.D.

### Teaching Excellence and Example Syllabi

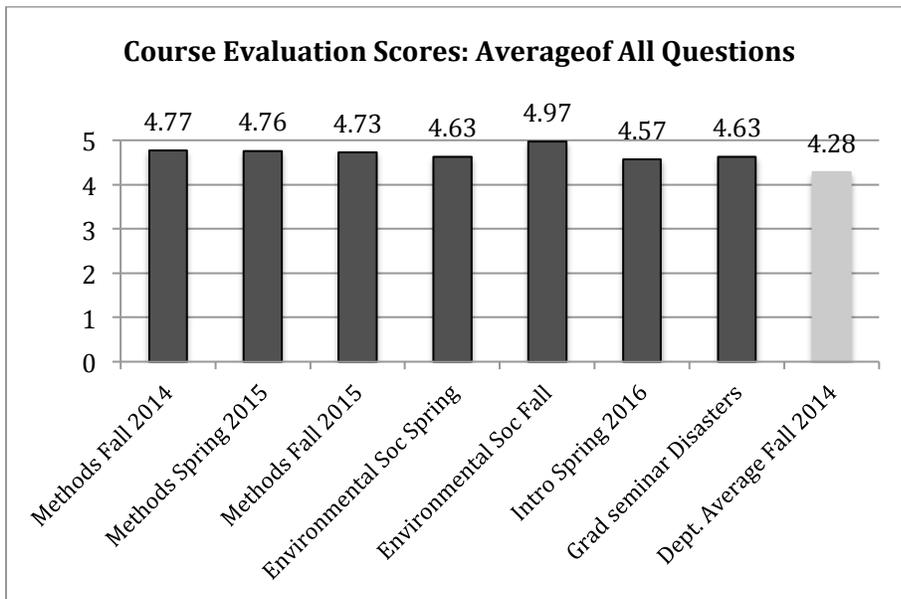
I strive to be a teacher who inspires the sociological imagination in all my students and provide practical learning objectives for their future careers in and out of sociology. Below includes evaluations of my efforts including 1) awards, 2) quantitative student evaluation results, 3) qualitative student evaluation feedback, and 4) example syllabi from my two most frequently taught undergraduate courses (Research Methods and Environmental Sociology).

#### *Awards*

Professor of the Year, LSU Undergraduate Sociological Society, 2014-2015

#### *Student Evaluations: Standard Assessment Results*

LSU uses a 10-question standard course evaluation. Students respond to the statements on a scale of 5 from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” All questions are phrased positively, indicating that a 5 is the highest best score. This data returned to us includes specific course averages and the department average. Figure 1 shows the results for the average of all the questions for each of my classes taught at LSU and the Sociology Department average for my first semester. This department average does fluctuate a little each semester, but I have consistently scored higher than the department average. Table 1 provides average scores for each question across the classes I have taught. My scores are near 5.0 indicating most students respond agree or strongly agree to the questions.



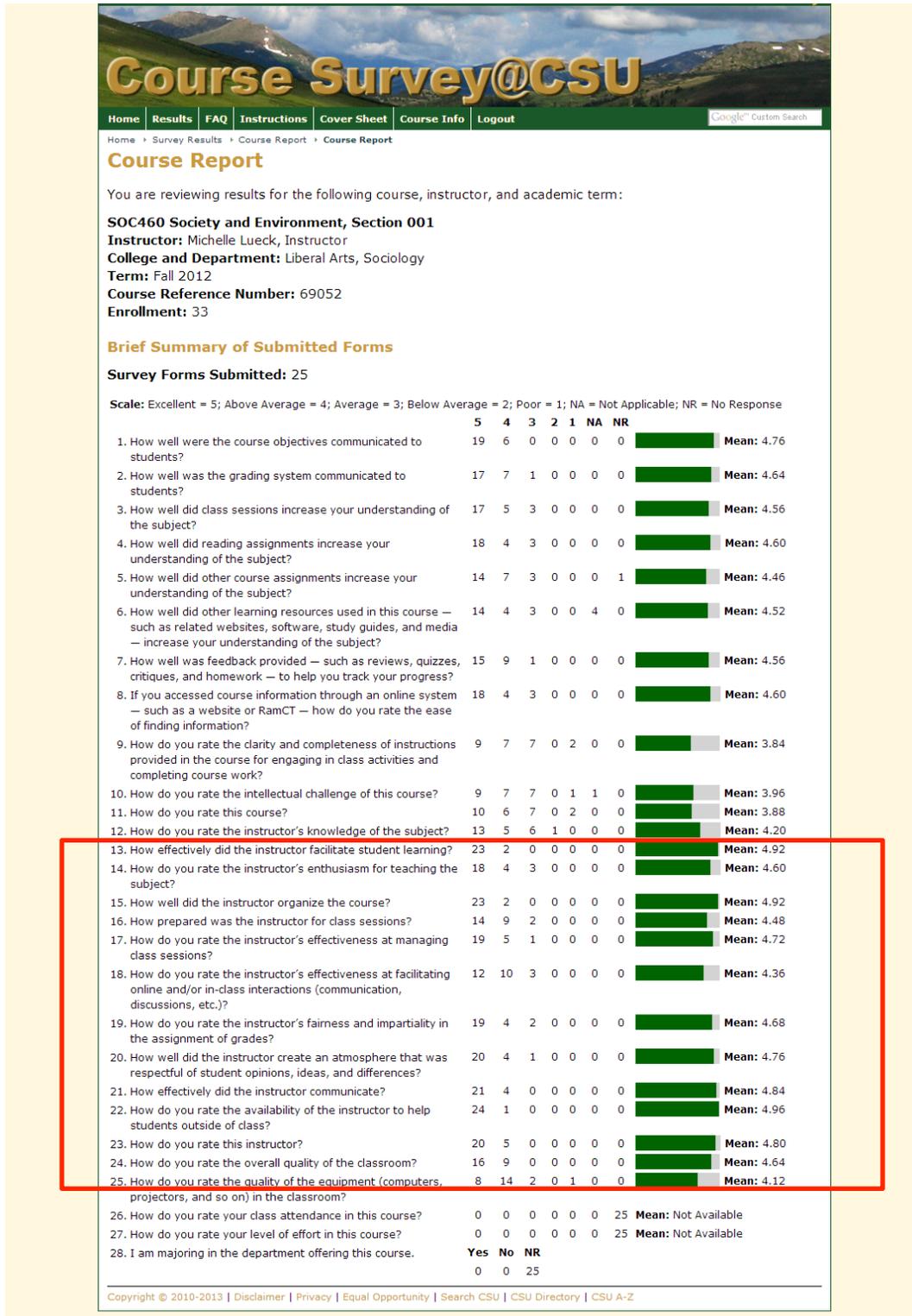
**Figure 1. Dr. Meyer’s Overall Average per Course on Student Evaluations compared to Department Average**

**Table 1. Dr. Meyer's Course Evaluation Question Averages**

|   | Dr. Meyer's Averages (scale 1-5) |                    |                      |                     |                       |                  |                               | <i>Dept.<br/>Average<br/>Fall 2014</i> |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|--|
|   | Methods<br>Fall 2014             | Methods<br>SP 2015 | Methods<br>Fall 2015 | Env. Soc<br>SP 2015 | Env. Soc<br>Fall 2015 | Intro SP<br>2016 | Grad.<br>Disasters<br>SP 2016 |  |
| <b>The instructor....</b>                               |                                  |                    |                      |                     |                       |                  |                               |  |
| <b>motivated me to do my best</b>                       | 4.68                             | 4.72               | 4.78                 | 4.59                | 4.91                  | 4.5              | 4.57                          | 4.11                                   |
| <b>I learned a lot in class</b>                         | 4.73                             | 4.72               | 4.61                 | 4.73                | 5                     | 4.58             | 4.71                          | 4.26                                   |
| <b>clearly communicated learning objectives</b>         | 4.7                              | 4.69               | 4.78                 | 4.45                | 5                     | 4.58             | 4.57                          | 4.26                                   |
| <b>communicated clearly and understandably</b>          | 4.82                             | 4.69               | 4.7                  | 4.59                | 5                     | 4.74             | 4.86                          | 4.23                                   |
| <b>was available for assistance outside class</b>       | 4.84                             | 4.76               | 4.65                 | 4.59                | 5                     | 4.53             | 4.43                          | 4.28                                   |
| <b>was concerned about student learning</b>             | 4.8                              | 4.72               | 4.7                  | 4.68                | 5                     | 4.47             | 4.71                          | 4.28                                   |
| <b>was well prepared for each class</b>                 | 4.82                             | 4.72               | 4.83                 | 4.68                | 4.91                  | 4.77             | 4.43                          | 4.44                                   |
| <b>Graded work reflected important aspects of class</b> | 4.75                             | 4.79               | 4.65                 | 4.59                | 5                     | 4.33             | 4.71                          | 4.23                                   |
| <b>demonstrated respect for students</b>                | 4.8                              | 4.9                | 4.83                 | 4.73                | 5                     | 4.59             | 4.71                          | 4.43                                   |
| <b>Overall, was effective teacher</b>                   | 4.81                             | 4.86               | 4.78                 | 4.71                | 4.91                  | 4.65             | 4.57                          | 4.32                                   |
| <b>Summary of all questions</b>                         | 4.77                             | 4.76               | 4.73                 | 4.63                | 4.97                  | 4.57             | 4.63                          | 4.28                                   |
|   | n = 43                           | n = 28             | n = 23               | n = 26              | n = 11                | n = 66           | n = 7                         | n/a                                    |

Below is the output for the standard evaluations for when I taught Society and the Environment at CSU in 2012. The section highlighted in red includes the statements that relate to the instructor.

SOC 460: Society and Environment, Fall 2012



### ***Qualitative Feedback from Student Evaluations***

Below is a subset of statements from students provided on the evaluations. Overall, student comments are positive. Threads throughout the comments indicate that my courses are challenging, that I am approachable, the enjoyment of real-world application in the courses, and that I am knowledgeable about the subject matter and engaging in the way I present the material.

#### *LSU Graduate Seminar: Sociology of Disaster, Spring 2016*

“I have totally reconceptualized what I want to study because of this class. I have fallen in love with sociology of disaster. Furthermore, this class forced me to stretch and exercise my sociological imagination.”

“The discussions in this seminar were the best of any of my courses this semester. I would have suggested different or more recent papers and books for some topics, especially given how fast this field is changing.”

“This class was vital to my ability to frame disasters within the field of sociology.”

“Great class. Lots of reading, which is great because this is my area of interest.”

“This course was rather reading-intensive, and I would have appreciated more instruction rather than just a discussion... I did appreciate the discussions, however, not so much the summary-writing.”

#### *LSU SOCL 4091: Environmental Sociology, Spring 2015, Fall 2015*

“I loved the final project. We were dealing with real things. It was real and relevant. It was cool to feel like we were really getting involved.”

“[Things I learned:] Environmental issues affect people and different people are affected dependent on their race/class. Poor and minorities are disproportionately impacted.”

“I really enjoyed this course. Also, the class was informative and fun.”

“You are the perfect person to teach this class because you know what you’re talking about. Even though I had issues sometimes understanding the topics, I still enjoyed trying to wrap my head around them. The group projects really helped in my understanding of the topics.”

“I loved [the final content analysis project]. It was a great experience and gave me a good amount of how-to knowledge.”

“I definitely enjoyed this class. I learned a lot and realized that environmental sociology is far more complicated than I had ever thought.”

“It was great working with the class to produce such a detailed project, one of my proudest moments was contributing to [the final content analysis project]. Loved this class! I learned so much about a topic I didn’t realize I’d have so much interest in.”

“This was a great class, you did a great job making the information relate to our lives and make it interesting. I will miss this class.”

“Dr. Meyer is by far one of the best professors I have had here at LSU. She is very motivating though it is a very difficult class. I seek her out outside of class to discuss assignments and progress. She relates to her students extremely well and I hope to work with her in the future.”

“Dr. Meyer is a really great instructor. She is very intelligent and articulate. She was always very knowledgeable about the topics and presented info in such a way to make everything interesting. I really enjoyed her class. If I wasn't graduating in a few weeks, I would definitely enroll in her new course on disasters, but I will definitely recommend her to other students.”

“I highly recommend Professor Meyer to anyone that needs to take this course. She is enthused about what she teaches and makes sure you grasp every concept.”

“Dr. Meyer was a great Professor who really cares.”

“Very energetic and pleasant. One of the best professors I have had!”

“Dr. Meyer is a PHENOMENAL instructor. This class was interesting and combined everything I've learned so far as a sociology major. I would strongly urge anyone to take this course under her.”

“The text was very easy to understand, keep it! Great lecture style,, I enjoyed the daily activities. We were a tad heavy on assignments at the end of the semester, but I understand the need for them. The final review was a great idea and covered the most important topics at a high level. This class is notoriously boring and difficult but I enjoyed it so much!!”

“[Things I learned:] teachers can be awesome and proper research methods. When we would talk in groups, it greatly added understanding. Keep up the excellent work.”

“I like the lecture style. Easy to follow along and given enough time to write everything. The critique [assignments] were a bit annoying but in the long run they helped [me] learn the material and made it easier to apply in the final paper. Awesome teacher and interesting although challenging course.”

“[Things I learned:] There are so many different types of research methods, social science research will never be unnecessary, research is critical. Dr. Meyer was my favorite prof this semester!”

“[Things I learned:] Types of data collection, what research is used for, Extra info for future Sociology opportunities. Great energy! Very charismatic Really really enjoyed it. Thanks!”

“You are an amazingly gifted person and professor. Look forward to working with you in the future! By far my favorite professor.”

“I learned the structure of a research paper. I had no idea how to even read through them at the beginning.”

“I liked that the [journal article] critiques prepared us for the essay on the midterm. I also liked the draft deadlines for the final proposal. I like the powerpoints and organized notes. This was probably the only class that the in class assignments were very helpful, non-intimidating.”

“Your enthusiasm is inspiring and your dedication to student's success really shines. This class ended up being one of my favorites in my undergraduate career. Thank you for genuinely caring about what some write off as a boring capstone requirement.”

“I find myself wondering how I can study or research everyday life situations. This isn’t something I learned, but it made me reconsider the path of sociology I want to take. Considering more research methods courses.”

“Loved this class.... Definitely demanding, but I learned a TON, great foundation for sociology.”

“I liked the level of participation that was incorporated into each class.”

*LSU SOCL 2001: Introduction to Sociology, Spring 2016*

“Please know that I have enjoyed your class. I am really enjoying an extra dimension to my reading and viewing film.”

“I really enjoyed your class this semester. I found it very interesting and I may consider getting a minor in sociology now.”

“Thank you so much for a wonderful semester, Dr. Meyer! You were a great professor and a pleasure to listen to. I enjoyed your lectures very much.”

“I want to start by saying thank you for being such a role model for young women such as myself. Being a part of your class was the final push I needed to changing my major and creating a plan for my future based on who I want to be and what I want to do for the world rather than choosing an occupation strictly for the income.”

“I just wanted to thank you for the great year in your class. It was very interesting and I loved the way you taught class! You actually made us involved a lot even though we were a big class. Also the final review was very helpful for me! I was making C's on all the test until the final I got an A. So thank you so much! You kind of make me want to minor in sociology!”

“This class was so surprising to me because most introductory courses are taught by professors who clearly don’t care. The powerpoints and websites were great!”

“I really enjoyed this class and professor Meyer. This class has opened my mind and made me less ignorant. Professor Meyer teaches in a very interesting, passionate way making the class very meaningful. The teachers like Professor Meyer will make the world a better place.”

“Too much forced participation.”

“The instructor was easy to approach. No intimidation.”

*CSU SOC 460: Society and Environment, Fall 2012*

“The format of the class was really fun and forced me to step out of my comfort zone to participate in discussion thus learning more about the topic. Good job – Keep in touch.” *Senior*

“A great overview of the field. Instructor was fabulous! My only criticism would be that student-led discussions sometimes slowed our momentum. Discussions were more effective when facilitated by the instructor. Nevertheless the material was engaging and well selected. I would highly recommend this class and instructor!” *Graduate Student*

“I appreciated the assortment of readings Professor Lueck selected for this course. As a student you could tell they were carefully selected and having minimal previous knowledge in environmental sociology they will help in the future. I do think when class was taught more by her it was more effective. One suggestion: have a balance between student discussion and professor-led class. (Only say this due to my selfish preferences, but I understand why you organized class in this manner. Thank you! You really opened my eyes to environmental sociology.” *Junior*

“I thought this class was excellent and should be mandatory for zoology/conservation biology majors. I think more time at the very beginning should be used to clarifying theories for non-majors. I liked the class discussion but I liked when Michelle jumped in to structure it a bit more. I don’t think there should be online participation so there will be more people talking in class.” *Senior (zoology major)*

“Awesome job! Force people to talk more, online discussions are worthless for the class. Only good for individual/Instructor. But class leading was good! Nicely done!” *Junior*

“Michelle did an excellent job organizing and running the class for her first time. One suggestion: Instead of having discussion groups lead twice a semester, they should only do it once and have them work more of the grade. Because I felt I got A LOT more out of class sessions when Michelle would lead discussion. Great Job Michelle!” *Sophomore*

“Michelle is so great. I learned more than I thought I would about things that were not expected to be learned...” *Junior*

“I think the class was too rigidly theoretical. While theories are beneficial to an understanding of the material, not everything falls into a theory or specific perspective and I would have preferred to examine social application and opinions more.” *Senior*

“Very interesting class and I probably should have participated more.” *Junior*

## **Example Syllabi**

### **SOCL 2211: RESEARCH METHODS**

#### **Course Description**

This course provides a general overview of social science research. We will survey the core methods of data collection and analysis to understand how social knowledge is generated. This course is meant to introduce students to the diversity of thought in and approaches to sociological research.

#### **Course Objectives**

1. Understand the logic of social science inquiry, strategies of research design, and a variety of research methods.

We will review how social scientists conduct research including their epistemologies, design strategies, and tools used for both quantitative and qualitative research. We will cover material including research questions, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations to begin developing our own research projects.

2. Become an informed consumer of social science research.

We will understand the research process so that we can evaluate the questions, designs, and research tools used by others and be able to analyze research claims made by other researchers and the media.

3. Become critical thinkers.

We will use our critical thinking skills to learn and understand the research process. This course requires development of well-reasoned arguments and thorough thought processes, all of which contribute to the higher-order thinking involved in university study.

#### **Required Text**

Schutt, Russell K. 2014. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research* 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA.

Online articles - Citations or full-text articles are on Moodle

#### **Evaluation**

Assignment details will be provided during the semester. This is a required course for sociology majors. All sociology majors must earn a grade of “C-” or higher.

| Assignment                           | % of Overall Grade |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Midterm Exam                         | 20%                |
| Final Exam                           | 20%                |
| 2 Research Critiques                 | 20% total          |
| Media Assessments                    | 10% total          |
| Research Proposal                    | 20%                |
| In Class Projects/Quizzes Attendance | 10%                |

Extra Credit is available for attending research presentations on campus. Each presentation is worth 1% toward your final grade. Up to 3 presentations can be attended. I require a “selfie” of you at the presentation or with the speaker and a 1-page review of the presentation similar to a popular press assignment.

### 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).)

### Commitment to Community

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.

| Range    | Grade |
|----------|-------|
| 98-100   | A+    |
| 92-97.99 | A     |
| 90-91.99 | A-    |
| 88-89.99 | B+    |
| 82-87.99 | B     |
| 80-81.99 | B-    |
| 78-79.99 | C+    |
| 72-77.99 | C     |
| 70-71.99 | C-    |
| 68-69.99 | D+    |
| 62-67.99 | D     |
| 60-61.99 | D-    |
| Below 60 | F     |

In the current age where it seems debate is only vicious and malicious, this class is a place where we express thoughtful opinions, questions, and suggestions as a way to think through the material. We respect each other for who we are and what ideas and experiences we bring to the table. Thus, we 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 questioning 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 apparently the presidential campaign) and will not be tolerated in this space. Any students not adhering to this commitment, or making the classroom an unwelcoming space will be asked to leave.

Class starts promptly at 1:30. Be respectful of your classmates, and do not interrupt by being late. No cheating or plagiarism will be tolerated. We will learn the importance of our intellectual property in the course and honor ourselves by doing our own work. Suspected cases will be dealt with individually through department and university channels.

## SOCL 4091: ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY

### 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 materials 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 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 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.