SOC 139: Topics in Social Inequality

Environmental Sociology
SOCIOLOGY 139 ● LEC 001 ● Class # 30779
FALL 2023
University of California, Berkeley
Tu 12:30P-1:59P - Room 20 - Social Sciences Building
Instructor: Fatmir Haskaj, Ph.D.
Email: haskaj@berkeley.edu
Office Hours: tbd

I. Course Description
This course suggests a new take on an old concept- the “sociological imagination”-by engaging with the two most universally pressing concern of the 21st century, the environment and global society. The combination of these two concepts gives us the “environmental sociological imagination” which enables us to understand our lives as minute points in the intersections of biography and history within a global society and world ecology. We will be thinking about the ways we as individuals are interacting and impacting as well as how we are a part of the environment. Over the course of the semester, we will investigate topics such as the greening of capitalism, externalities, consumption, risk, governance, the corporation, alternative approaches to capitalism, and the relationships between the local and the global. The essential components to be completed for credit are readings, class discussions, quizzes, and exams.

II. Learning Outcomes and Course Objectives:

- Apply a sociological perspective and imagination to environmental debates, issues, and phenomena by mastering the basic concepts, theories, and literature of environmental sociology.
- Master core concepts and methods from economic, political, and social analysis more broadly, as they pertain to the evaluation of environmental policies, institutions, and social practices.
- Analyze and understand the causes, consequences, and solutions to environmental issues.
- Introduce students to the wealth of research by environmental sociologists so students are able to apply the findings, frameworks, and paradigms in real-world situations.
- Develop critical thinking skills about the subject matter of the course and develop their own methods of inquiry into human societies and the environment.
- Reflect critically about their roles and identities as citizens, consumers, and environmental actors in a complex, interconnected world.
III. Course Materials

All readings will be available on bCourses.

IV. bCourses & Technology

All course materials will be posted on bCourses. These include the readings, syllabus, quizzes, responses and grades. It is strongly suggested that the students visit the class site daily to access these course materials and announcements. Students will not be excused for not having access to bCourse for any period of the semester. If you have an issue, please contact UCB’s IT department or the help desk. It is your responsibility to ensure you have access to a functional computer and internet. In class, I do encourage disconnecting from laptops and digital devices during discussions.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Participation/class attendance and readings: Students are expected to attend classes regularly and to complete all reading assignments. The lectures will cover aspects of the readings but will also supplement them with additional material. Doing well on the examinations and assignments will thus depend on diligently attending lectures and keeping up with weekly readings. We will have in-class breakout sessions, group work, and discussions, these require your presence. Occasionally, we will also hold class outside and do "walk & talks" so wear proper footwear.
- Term paper: This will be a short paper of 6-8 pages. See the assignment for details.
- Quizzes: Periodically there will be quizzes based directly on the readings. These will usually be multiple choice but may also contain short answer questions or brief responses. Check bCourses weekly.
- Final exam: The final exam will be composed of multiple choice, short answer, and one essay question. It will be timed and scheduled during our normal exam period.

VI. Class Meetings

This is an in-person class.

VII. Grading

Due dates for all assignments, quizzes, and exams are firm.

Grading structure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes/assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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Course Schedule

*Note: All items below including but not limited to readings, lectures, assignments, and quizzes may change at the instructor's discretion.

8/24 Week 1 Introduction


8/29 Week 2 What is nature?

- Jean Giono, The Man Who Planted Trees (either read this text or watch the film, your choice.)

9/5 Week 3 Environmental Sociology & the Classics

- Recorded lecture of J.B. Foster on Marx's Capital and the Earth here (optional)
  ➢ Reading response to Marx and sustainability


  ****The Climate Crisis Is Worse Than You Can Imagine (Short read on carbon and composting toilets)

9/12 Week 4 Green Backs: Modernity, Markets, and Environment

• Quiz 1

9/19 Week 5 Moral Nature
• Justin Farrell talk here (start at minute 3).

****Documentary (optional): Drawn to Yellowstone. Download Drawn to Yellowstone.

9/26 Week 6 Exam
• review
• exam

10/3 Week 7 Revolutionary Nature
• Short response to "revolutionary nature"

10/10 Week 8 Cheap Nature

****Optional video lecture by R. Patel.

10/17 Week 9 The Human Nature of Nature
• Quiz 2

10/24 Week 10 Political Ecology
- Reading response

10/31 Week 11 The Green City
- Reading response to: (Community) garden in the City

****Optional film: The City- A film from 1939 that encapsulates many of the ideas about nature vs city dichotomy that dominated ideas about "greening" and nature to this day.

11/7 Week 12 Consumption and the Environment
- Big Sugar (optional documentary)
- Quiz on Robbins

11/14 Week 13 Disasters and the Limits of Nature
- Reading response assignment- RISK

11/21 Week 14 Film and Winter break
- Term paper due 11/21
- Film: Blue Gold
11/28 Week 15 Disaster, Domination & Unpredictability

- Reading response on Tsing

12/5 Week 16 Reading/Review/Recitation

- no class

12/12 Week 17 Exams

- Final Exam