

Fall 2015

# SOC 2871

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## COURSE SYLLABUS



### **SOC 2871, ENVIRONMENT AS A SOCIAL PROBLEM, (3 Cr. Hrs.)**

Fall Semester, 2015

Room & Time: MH 320, 11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. T, Th

Professor: Francis O. Adeola, Ph.D.

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Web Page: [http://soci.uno.edu/adeola\\_personal.htm](http://soci.uno.edu/adeola_personal.htm)

Office: MH 187.

Phone: (504) 280-5554

Office Hours: 8:30 – 9:30 a.m.; 12:15-1:30 p.m T, Th or by appointment only.

#### **Required Texts:**

- (1) Harper, Charles L. 2012. *Environment and Society: Human Perspectives on Environmental issues*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall/Pearson.
- (2) Gould, Kenneth A. and Lewis, Tammy L. 2015. *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology. Second Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press.

#### **Recommended:**

- (1) Adeola, Francis O. 2015. *Hazardous Wastes, Industrial Disasters, and Environmental Health Risks: Local and Global Environmental Struggles*. New York: Palgrave.  
(Now Available in Paperback)

**PLEASE READ THIS SYLLABUS CAREFULLY AND REFER TO IT OFTEN**

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

SOC 2871, The Environment as a Social Problem, examines the interrelationship between society and the bio-physical environment. Emphasis is placed on how society affects the biophysical environment and how the environment in turn influences human affairs in society. The threats of environmental degradation, ecosystem disruptions, releases of toxic hazards, pollution, overpopulation, consumption, depletion of natural resources, loss of wetlands, global warming and global climate change, and environmental injustice all rising to the level of serious social problems in contemporary society are emphasized. This course provides an introduction to some of the key areas of research and activism in environmental sociology. This course offers fundamental concepts and broader theoretical frameworks within the field of environmental sociology. Furthermore, it examines the intersections of social structural variables such as social class, race, gender, and political power in society-environment interrelationship. The issues of social and environmental justice or injustice and environmental health will be explored. The course examines the process through which environmental problems become socially constructed as social problems caused by people and how concerted collective efforts by people are required to address these problems.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The specific objectives of this course are:

- ❖ to introduce the student to sociological analysis of society and environment interaction and the consequent undesirable outcomes constructed as social problems;
- ❖ to enable the student to acquire a clear understanding of the major sociological perspectives, theories, and concepts in the study of environment and society particularly within environmental sociology;
- ❖ to demonstrate knowledge of key environmental issues at the local, national, and global levels after successfully completing the course; and
- ❖ to gain an understanding of social-structural variables associated with environmental risks vulnerabilities.

## **STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES (SLOs):**

Upon completing this course at the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- ❖ demonstrate an understanding of environmental issues and be able to give a comprehensive litany of environmental problems at the local, state, regional, national, and global levels;
- ❖ describe the social construction of environmental degradation as a social problem;
- ❖ understand environmentalism and environmental activism in the United States and around the globe;
- ❖ understand and be able to explain the interrelationship between the environment and society and socio-cultural factors;
- ❖ identify and discuss how social inequalities (by race/ethnicity, class, and gender) shape the likelihood of getting exposed to environmental harms and the adverse health consequences;
- ❖ understand basic concepts, theoretical perspectives, and paradigms in environmental

- sociology;
- ❖ understand the diversity of human society and human impacts on ecosystems;
  - ❖ define fundamental concepts and explain basic environmental sociology principles, as well as identify different sociocultural systems that are especially vulnerable to environmental disruptions;
  - ❖ be familiar with the names of prominent classical, contemporary, and modern thinkers who contributed to the field of environmental sociology;
  - ❖ apply sociological theories to the analysis specific cases of environmental problems;
  - ❖ understand the impacts of population and technology on the environment and the costs of ecological degradation and consequences of disaster; and
  - ❖ engage in critical thinking, writing, and explore research trends in sociology of the environment as a social problem.

### **COURSE FORMAT & CLASS PROCEDURES**

Class sessions will be devoted to a combination of lectures, class discussions, audio-visual, film/video presentations, and class presentations. Again, students should maintain preparedness to participate in class discussion/scheduled dialogue sessions by reading the assigned topic(s) in advance. Please Note: Cell-phones or beepers are not allowed in class during class sessions. They should be turned off in your bags before class begins. All students are expected to treat faculty and fellow students with respect. Civility and respect for an authority and the opinions of others are very crucial in an academic environment.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Students enrolled in this course are responsible for the following activities:

1. **Reading Assignments:** The student is required to read all assigned materials ahead of class lecture on scheduled lecture. Major points are sometimes covered in the lecture. However, given a large volume of materials incorporated, most topics or issues may be skipped. It is the responsibility of the student to read all assigned topics. Therefore, each student is advised to read all the chapters and other materials assigned.
2. **Two (2) quizzes** will be given on scheduled or announced dates. **Please note that there will be no make-up for quizzes missed without the instructor's excuse arranged prior to the quiz.**
3. **Examinations:** There will be two major examinations--the **Mid-Term** and **Final** Examinations based on class lectures, discussion, and assigned readings up-to-date.
4. **Regular class attendance** is required. Students are expected to attend all classes regularly and punctually. A student who is not present to answer roll call will be marked absent.

Please note that excessive absences (i.e., absences in excess of 3 periods will undoubtedly affect your final grade) as this will lead to an automatic **5% reduction** of your cumulative Semester average.

5. Film: Watch the Documentary entitled “Seeds of Death” on the following link:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6OxblwEjQ>

Write a summary review of the film in 3 to 5 double spaced pages. **Due Date: August 27.**

### **DELIVERY FORMAT & NAME POLICY**

**Format:** All students must submit assignments, papers in formats I can read, i.e., typed and well written. No handwritten papers or assignments will be accepted. Failure to conform to the acceptable format will lead to the rejection of your document submission or lower score.

**Name:** Each student must place his/her name in two places when sending messages or assignments to me. That is, place your name in the closing of any e-mail correspondence (e.g., Sincerely, Mary John, Student, SOC 2871). This is especially very important so that your papers will not get mixed up with other courses. You must also place your name in the header of the documents you submit. For assignments and papers, your name, student ID and special code must appear on top of your document.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Each student must abide by this motto: **Honesty is the best policy!** Academic integrity is basic to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. Any form of academic dishonesty involving cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsification, and being an accessory to any of these deviant acts, will not be condoned. Any violation of academic integrity code will be met with severe negative sanctions. In addition to academic sanctions by the instructor including automatic “F,” students found guilty of academic dishonesty may be subject to academic sanctions including probation, suspension, and possible expulsion or dismissal from the program or from the University. For more information about academic integrity requirements, please refer to the UNO Judicial Code available online at:  
<http://www.studentsaffairs.uno.edu> or  
[http://www.uno.edu/~stlf/policy%20Manual/judicial\\_code\\_pt2.html](http://www.uno.edu/~stlf/policy%20Manual/judicial_code_pt2.html).

Also see:

Academic Dishonesty Policy:

[http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu/studentpolicies/policymanual/academic\\_dishonesty.cfm](http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu/studentpolicies/policymanual/academic_dishonesty.cfm)

Academic Integrity Brochure:

[http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu/Judicial/judicial\\_pdfs/AcademicIntegrity\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu/Judicial/judicial_pdfs/AcademicIntegrity_brochure.pdf)

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Class participation measured by frequency of participation in class discussions, 2 examinations, 2 short quizzes, film reviews, and any other assignments given by the instructor are required.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY**

Please Note: All portable hand-held electronic devices including cell-phones, pagers, ipods, ipads, PDAs, MP3/MP4 players, etc., are not allowed in class during class session. They should be turned off or set in silent/vibration mode inside your bag before class begins. The use of tape recorders or other recording devices is not allowed. Exception may be granted only under unusual or special circumstances approved by the instructor. The use of laptop for note-taking may be permitted provided the student does not surf the internet or check e-mails and other media during class session.

## **STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITY:**

It is the responsibility of each student enrolled in this course to:

1. Attend class regularly and punctually;
2. Complete in-class orientation;
3. Read all the assigned chapters and supplementary readings;
4. Actively participate in class discussions;
5. Complete and submit all required assignments & presentations on time on the due date;  
and
6. Take all tests including quizzes and examinations.

## **LATE ASSIGNMENTS & MAKE-UP POLICY**

Make-up examinations and quizzes will not be given except under certain exceptional circumstances, such as LIFE OR DEATH situations. The student must prove his/her particular case with solid evidence beyond any reasonable doubt. Please note that generally when given, make-ups are more rigorous than regularly scheduled examination and it can only be given at the time that is mutually convenient.

Unless otherwise announced or noted, papers and assignments are due at the beginning of class on the specific due dates. Papers are considered late if they are turned in after class or dropped into my office

bin or under my office door. There is a 5 points penalty for each day a paper is late and any paper that is more than 4 days late will not be accepted. I do not accept any course work that requires grading via e-mail. **Please do not send your paper via e-mail.**

### **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Consistent with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), students with disabilities needing academic accommodative services will receive them, provided they are registered with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) on campus. It is the University policy to provide, on a flexible and individual basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. However, it is the responsibility of the student to register with the Office of Disability Services and follow the procedures for obtaining assistance. Students with disabilities should contact ODS at <http://ods.uno.edu/#contact> as well as the instructor to discuss his/her individual needs for accommodations. A letter indicating the need for accommodation and what type should be delivered to the instructor as soon as possible.

### **INSTRUCTOR'S AVAILABILITY OUTSIDE OF CLASS**

I will meet with any member of the class at any time that is mutually convenient to discuss matters pertinent to the course. My regular office hours are listed on the front page of this syllabus. I am also available at other times by appointment.

### **STUDENT EVALUATION**

Student evaluation will consist of assignments, quizzes, term paper, attendance and meaningful course participation, and examinations.

The final semester evaluation will be based on cumulative points from the following activities:

Two quizzes (50 points each)	100
Mid- Semester Examination	100
4 Film Reviews @ 25 points each	100
Term Project Paper	80
Final Exam	100
Perfect class attendance and active class participation	20
<b>Total scores obtainable</b>	<b>500</b>

**GRADING SCALE:** A letter grade will be given to each student at the end of the semester based upon the percentage score on cumulative points as stated above. The following grading

scale will be used:

Percentage (%) Range	Letter Grade
90 to 100	A
80 to 89	B
70 to 79	C
60 to 69	D
0 to 59	F

**Please Note: Grades are earned, not arbitrarily given in this course!**

**SOC 2871, COURSE OUTLINE (Subject to change at Professor's discretion)**

<b>The Week of:</b>	<b>Lecture Topic(s)</b>	<b>Assigned Reading(s)</b>
1. Aug. 20	INTRODUCTION: Orientation. Read the syllabus and get familiar with course requirements and policies.	
2. Aug. 25	Introduction to Environmental Problems & Basic Concepts and Principles	Harper ch. 1
<b>Aug. 27</b>	<b>Film #1 Review Due</b>	
3. Sept. 1	Ecosystems, Socio-cultural Systems & Social Sciences An Intro to Environmental Sociology	Gould&Lewis Lesson 1; Harper ch. 1
4. Sept. 8	Theories in Environmental. Soc. ; HEP & NEP	Gould & Lewis Lessons 2-3 Dunlap & Catton
<b>Sept. 10</b>	<b>Quiz # 1 (Bring Your Blue Scantron)</b>	
5. Sept. 15	Humans and the Resources of the Earth: Sources & Sinks: Hazardous Wastes as Sinks Problem, Harper ch. 2	
<b>Sept. 17</b>	<b>Film #2 Presentation</b>	
Sept. 22	<b>Film #2 Review Due</b>	
6. Sept. 22	The Major Transitions in Human Transformation of The Biosphere (Available in the journal: Human Ecology Review, 11 (1): 51-66, 2004.	Takacs-Santa
7. Sept. 29	Causes of Environmental Disruptions	Gould & Lewis Lessons 5-8
<b>Oct. 1</b>	<b>Film #3</b>	

8. Oct. 6	Population, Environment & Food	Gould & Lewis Lessons 9&12; Harper ch. 5;
	<b>Film #3 Review Due</b>	
<b>Oct. 8</b>	<b>Examination 1 (Mid-Semester)</b>	
9. Oct. 13	Energy, Society & Ecosystems	Harper ch. 4
<b>Oct 14</b>	<b>Final Date to Drop Courses or Resign from the University</b>	
<b>Oct. 15 – 16</b>	<b>Fall Semester Break</b>	
10. Oct. 20	Energy & Society (contd.)	Same as above
<b>Oct. 22</b>	<b>Film Presentation (#4) on Energy</b>	
11. Oct. 27	Environmentalism: Ideology & Collective Action	Gould & Lewis Lessons. 15- 17
	<b>Film Review #4 Due</b>	
<b>Oct. 29</b>	<b>Quiz #2 (Bring Your Blue Scantron)</b>	
12. Nov. 3	Environmental Health Problems	Gould & Lewis, Lesson 11
<b>Oct. 31</b>	<b>Quiz #2</b>	
13. Nov.10	Contaminated Communities including Love Canal	Lecture Notes
14. Nov. 17	Environmental Justice	Gould & Lewis, Lesson 10;
15. Nov 17	Environmental Justice (contd.)	
<b>Nov. 26 – 27</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Holidays</b>	
16. Nov. 19	Risk and Uncertainty; Environmental Regulations, Understanding Disaster Vulnerability	Gould & Lewis, Lessons 13-14

**Dec. 1 & 3** Term Papers Due Upon Presentation & Final Exam Review

**Dec. 8 FINAL EXAMINATION (10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon)**