SOC 4860: Environmental Sociology
Spring 2013
T/Th 2:00-3:15pm, Engr 280

Professor: Dr. Emily Gaarder Email: egaarder@d.umn.edu
Office: Cina 213/Phone 726-7094 Office Hrs: Tu 12-1, W 4-5, or by appt

Course Description:
Environmental Sociology is a field that examines the interaction between human societies and their physical/natural environment. A central theme of the course is that the environmental issues we face are always profound social issues as well. Sociology points us beyond technical and scientific issues to the social roots of contemporary ecological problems.

This course explores how the science of the natural environment interacts with economic, social, cultural, and political forces in a local, national and global context. We explore how economic systems affect sustainability and treadmills of production and consumption. We consider the social justice implications of environmental issues. For instance, who is most directly impacted by pollution, toxic waste, loss of biodiversity, ozone depletion, and environmental degradation? How does power and status affect whose ideas about natural resources are given priority? Finally, we explore the practical implications of environmental sociology--debating the positions and actions of governments, corporations, and environmental movements in the United States and worldwide.

This upper-division elective in Sociology counts as a course in the Sustainability category of the Liberal Education program. It is designed to meet key learning objectives. By the end of the course, you will be able to:

1. Evaluate how your values and choices and those of others affect the environment and society. The goal of this course is not merely to accumulate facts about environmental sociology, but to follow and participate in contemporary debates concerning environmental issues. We will consider the implications of what we have studied insofar as we ourselves are workers, students, consumers, members of religious and community groups, corporate decision makers, and/or activists. This classroom is a place for us to explore our belief systems and be challenged by alternative perspectives.

2. Articulate ideas about humans, the environment, and sustainability: Explain the environmental, social, and economic aspects of sustainability in one or more contexts. Explain the interdependence of local and global economic, social, and environmental systems. This course includes a significant writing component as well as a verbal presentation. The assignments are designed to help you articulate your personal philosophy and sociological experiments in a creative and accessible manner, but also to critically engage with, and respond to, the concepts and research presented in the readings.

3. Act on your knowledge: Respond to sustainability problems through creative problem solving and action. Once we gain knowledge and form opinions, how do we act to create the change we wish to see in the world? In this course, we will focus on individual and collective action related to environmental sustainability. The group project offers an opportunity to practice putting your knowledge into action.

Required Texts:
- Articles & book chapters available through the class Moodle site

Optional Text:
Assignments & Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Reflection Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Reflection Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Project</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>500</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A 460-500     A- 450-459  B+ 440-449  B 415-439  B- 400-414  C+ 390-399  
C 360-389     C- 350-359  D+ 340-349  D 325-339  F 0-324

Attendance/Participation (50 pts): The success of our class depends on active participation and learning. You will earn points for your regular attendance and meaningful participation. Please come to class prepared to discuss the day’s reading. Our class may also take field trips or participate in service learning projects during class time. For instance, we may visit the Whole Foods co-op, the UMD farm or sustainable gardens.

Midterm Exam (75 pts) & Final Exam (75 pts): Includes multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

2 Reflection Papers (100 pts each): Length is 5-7 pages. You can take creative license with these papers—they can involve more than typed words. All papers should include a cover page with the following items: A unique title, your full name, the course name and number, the semester/year, and the professor’s name.

- Correctly cite your sources within the text (see examples under Academic Integrity)
- Every paragraph starts with one (only one) tab/indent
- Do not place empty lines between paragraphs.
- Double-space your written text.
- Include page numbers.
- All margins, top, bottom, right and left, should be 1-inch.
- Staple your paper in the upper left-hand corner

Reflection Paper #1. A Consumption & Trash Journal. For one entire day, create a journal of the resources you consume, where these products come from, any waste you create, and where it goes. Write about the results and incorporate specific course concepts or issues in your analysis.

1. Keep track of every resource you consume or use (food, electricity, gasoline, paper, water, products, technology, etc).
2. Investigate where it comes from (a reservoir, dammed river, nuclear power plant, coal mining, etc). If it is a product, where was it made and what is it made of?
3. Keep track of where the waste you accumulate in one day ends up. What kind of “garbage” did you throw away? Where does it ultimately end up?
4. Connect your personal findings to any of the class readings. Do this in a way that adds value to your analysis—not just dropping in a quote at the end of the paper.
5. I realize that you cannot possibly investigate all items under #2 & 3. Be selective in your exploration.

-----Choose 1 of the 2 options below for Reflection Paper #2-----

Reflection Paper #2. A History of Family, Place, & Food. Conduct an interview with a grandparent about their experiences of: 1.) the place/space/land they live on, and 2.) food production and consumption. Write about the results and incorporate specific course concepts or issues in your analysis. Please base your conversations on the following questions:

1. Where did your family come from? How did they settle in the place they live now? What is the history of the place they live (how has the land, water, weather patterns, etc. changed)?
2. Where did they receive their food? How was it produced? (grown, bought, cooked by whom and how). How do they think this has changed over time (for themselves or for their younger family members)?
3. How does your food consumption compare to what you heard in the interview? What is your relationship to the environment where you grew up or where you live now?
4. Include background information about the individual you interviewed (age, race/ethnicity, occupation, or other relevant info).
5. Connect your personal findings to any of the class readings. Do this in a way that adds value to your analysis—not just dropping in a quote at the end of the paper.

Reflection Paper #2: A Local Food Experiment. You may write this paper together with one other classmate. If you do, each will receive the same grade. Plan a potluck meal with friends and/or family, asking everyone to bring food and beverages that are predominantly 1) locally grown/produced (e.g., within Minnesota/Wisconsin/Iowa); 2) organic (grown without pesticides/herbicides/hormones); and 3) assembled or cooked by hand (e.g., not from the deli). This potluck meal should involve a minimum of 5 participants (including yourself). Write about the results of your meal and incorporate specific course concepts or issues in your analysis. Include the following:
1. How did you go about choosing and creating your contribution to the meal?
2. What happened during the actual meal? What did people talk about? How did the food taste?
3. What was most challenging about this potluck meal?
4. What was the most fun about this meal?
5. Connect your experience to any of the class readings. Do this in a way that adds value to your analysis—not just dropping in a quote at the end of the paper.
6. Include supporting materials to document your meal (e.g., the party invitation; pictures of the food; pictures of the partygoers)

*LATE ASSIGNMENTS* Late papers will lose 10 points. Assignments turned in one week past the due date will not be accepted. Extensions will be made for serious circumstances. Please talk to me before the due date if you are experiencing difficulties! Do not email assignments or extra credit. If you miss class, put them in my mailbox in Cina 228 or under my door.

Group Project (Presentation: 75 pts, Collective Action Component: 25 pts =100 points total)

In groups of 4-6 students, you will focus your energies on a modest (small, concrete, well-defined) project of individual/collective action related to sustainability. There are 4 designated class periods where you will have 30 minutes of class time to work as a group. You will probably need to meet outside of class as well. All groups will create a class presentation at the end of the semester. Get creative in your explorations, and your group presentation. Consider skits, video, photography, and music.

Each student enters this class with different levels of knowledge, experience, and interests in the field of environmental sociology. Look at the description and outcomes for sample group projects to decide what kind of project would best fit you.

1. Ecoteam
This group requires the purchase of the Green Living Handbook: A 6-Step Program to Create an Environmentally Sustainable Lifestyle. This book introduces concrete, hands-on ideas for living more sustainably. You will work with the 6-step program in the book, recording your experiments in the areas of garbage, water, energy, transportation, consumption, and outreach. Prepare a class presentation to report on your discoveries, share information, and discuss your experiences. Create a name for your ecoteam. Discuss the most fun you had with the project, and what was most challenging. What experiments worked? What didn’t work? How did other members of your household react? You should also critically analyze the ecoteam project in light of our sociological readings. Consider why you think the ecoteam model is/isn’t a successful model for social change.
Outcome: Acquire hands-on knowledge about individual actions for sustainability; analyze the model of individual action in terms of its ability to create social change; learn how to initiate collective action.

2. Reusable Coffee Mugs
This group will tackle the issue of disposable coffee cups among the UMD population. Hundreds of cups are thrown away (perhaps recycled) each day at UMD. Your group will examine why this happens and how to change it, examining people’s interests/needs, and how to initiate and support a different “culture” around coffee. This might include discussions with the Northern Shores Coffee Shop, educational campaigns, etc.
Outcomes: Identify the key players (and their interests/needs) in a given sustainability issue; learn how to initiate collective action.

3. Technology
This group will investigate technology use in a university culture—cellphones, computers, etc. What is the average student’s daily usage? How long do such items last? What is technology “made of”—what materials and resources are used? How is it disposed of? Your group can focus on one particular item or one particular angle on this subject matter, or you may conduct a broad investigation. You might interview a key person in technology on UMD’s campus to learn more about the presence or absence of sustainability efforts at UMD. You might engage in an educational campaign or individual collective action.
Outcomes: Understand the creation/disposal process involved in the creation of key technologies; identify the sustainability options available; learn how to initiate collective action.

4. Global Warming: Media, Politics & Science
Go beyond the bumpersticker! This group will examine the media, politics, and science of global warming. What are the different ideological positions about global warming? Who tends to represent these different positions? Consider a search of newspaper articles, internet sites, and other media—what language is used? What images? What do politicians say—your local representatives or national figures. Call their office and ask them. What role do the media, politics and science play in the public’s understanding of global warming and its causes?
Outcomes: Learn how to “read” media; identify the interests and positions behind the global warming debate; identify the positions of politicians and scientists on global warming; learn how to initiate collective action.

5. Transportation
Is mass transit the wave of the future? Can America give up its love affair with cars? Do you know how to ride a bike? This group will focus on one more aspects of transportation, perhaps analyzing car advertisements, discovering the wave of new electric and hybrid cars, interviewing members of the Bike Cave Collective in Duluth, or surveying students to discover how many drive 10 blocks to get to school. You might even decide to educate or initiate action related to your topic.
Outcomes: Become acquainted with the culture of transportation in America; learn about alternative modes of transit; learn how to initiate collective action.

6. UMD Food Systems
What’s in that burger and fries? This group will investigate the availability of local and/or organic food choices at UMD. You can conduct a broad investigation, or focus on one area (e.g., the Food Court; the UMD farm). You might interview students buying/consuming food at these venues. You might initiate “food action”—create a petition, meet with administration, etc.
Outcomes: Learn how to identify local/organic food choices in your everyday setting; observe/analyze student awareness of their food choices; learn how to initiate collective action.

7. Local Energy Debates
Explore current controversies in energy, such as current & proposed mining in Northeastern Minnesota (think of the BWCA debate), fracking (natural gas), wind power, solar energy, dams, etc. Follow the issues in the local newspapers. Talk to local activist groups about their positions and strategies for change. Discover where politicians stand on energy issues. And what do average citizens think/know about sources of energy?
Outcomes: Become educated with a local energy issue; identify the interests and positions of different ‘players’ involved in the politics and decision-making around energy production and use; learn how to initiate collective action.

8. Choose your own topic
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tu, 1/22</td>
<td>Class Introductions &amp; Syllabus Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| I: Environment, Politics & Economy | Th, 2/24 ES, Intro & Chap 1 (The Vulnerable Planet)  
Film: Rewriting the Science |                 |
| Th, 1/24   | "Money & Machines" (M. Bell)                                             |                 |
| Tu, 1/31   | ES, Chaps 2 (Mountaintop Removal)                                        |                 |
| Th, 2/5    | ES, Chap 3 (Treadmill Predisposition)                                    |                 |
| Th, 2/7    | "Forty Years of Spotted Owls?" (W. Freudenburg, et al.)                 |                 |
| Tu, 2/12   | Film: The Forest for the Trees (con't)                                   | Paper 1 due     |
| II: Environment & Public Health | Th, 2/14 No Family History, Intro & Chap 1 |                 |
| Tu, 2/19   | No Family History, Chaps 2 & 3                                           |                 |
| Th, 2/21   | No Family History, Chaps 4 & 5                                           |                 |
| Tu, 2/26   | ES, Chap 18 (The Social Construction of Cancer) & Film (con't)           |                 |
| Th, 2/28   | No class                                                                 |                 |
| M, 3/4     | Special class session: Sandra Steingraber, Kirby Ballroom               |                 |
| Tu, 3/5    | No Family History, Chaps 6 & 7                                          |                 |
| III: Environmental (In)Justice: Race, Class, Gender & Globalization | Th, 3/7 ES, Chaps 4 (Environmental Justice) & 19 (Amer. Environmentalism) | Exam |
| Tu, 3/12   | ES, Chaps 11 (The Unfair Tradeoff) & 5 (Turning Public Issues into Private Troubles) | Exam Review |
| Th, 3/14   |                                                                          |                 |
| 3/18-22    | Spring Break                                                             |                 |
| IV: Food Systems | Tu, 3/26 Omnivore's Dilemma, Intro, Chaps 1-3 | Group Work Session |
| Th, 3/28   | Omnivore's Dilemma, Chaps 4-7                                           |                 |
| Tu, 4/2    | Omnivore's Dilemma, Chaps 8-12 (skip Chap 10)                            | Group Work Session |
| Th, 4/4    | Omnivore's Dilemma, Chaps 13-16                                          |                 |
| Tu, 4/9    | Omnivore's Dilemma, Chaps 17-20                                          |                 |
| Th, 4/11   | Guest speakers                                                            | Paper 2 due     |
| V. Media & Popular Culture | Tu, 4/16 ES, Chaps 8 (Touch the Magic) & Chap 14 (Prime-Time Subversion) |                 |
| Th, 4/18   | ES, Chap 13 (Selling Mother Earth)                                       | Group Work Session |
| VI: Individual and Collective Action | Tu, 4/23 ES, Chaps 22 (Individualization) & 26 (On the Trail of Courageous Behavior) | Group Work Session |
| Th, 4/25   | "Perspectives on Ecoterrorism" (R. Amster)                               |                 |
| Tu, 4/30   | Film: If a Tree Falls: Story of the Earth Liberation Front               |                 |
| Th, 5/2    |                                                                          |                 |
| Tu, 5/7    |                                                                          |                 |
| Th, 5/9    | Exam Review                                                              |                 |
| Tu, 5/14   | Final Exam, 2-3:55pm                                                     |                 |
Class Environment
I invite you to join me in a commitment to actively and respectively participate to make this an interactive and dynamic space to learn. It is vital that our classroom be a place where everyone feels safe to express opinions, be themselves, and explore their values. This course and this professor will challenge opinions and beliefs, in the spirit of critical thinking and examining life to its fullest. To help create such a classroom, I ask the following of you:

1. Be aware that how we conduct ourselves in the classroom affects the learning of others (e.g.: Am I talking more than my share? Am I unwilling to share my ideas?)
2. Be respectful while listening and speaking. I encourage discussions to take place within the context of critical thinking and in the spirit of understanding diverse perspectives.
3. Don’t engage in private conversation during lecture or group discussion, speak while another person is speaking, read non-course materials or use of any form of electronic devices (cell phones, pagers, blackberries, portable computers, etc.). There are certain days where bringing your laptop computer to class will be helpful, such as group work sessions. See syllabus for the schedule.

Academic Integrity
Cheating, plagiarizing or other actions that violate the rights of another student in academic work or involve misrepresentation of your own work are violations of academic integrity. The American College Dictionary defines plagiarism as “copying or imitating the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author and passing off the same as one's original work.” If you are confused as to the difference between paraphrasing and plagiarizing, ask for clarification! The correct way to paraphrase (explain an author’s point in your own words) is to place the author’s last name & the date of publication after your sentence. Here are some examples of the correct use of paraphrasing and quoting:

- Vandana Shiva calls food democracy “the new agenda for ecological sustainability and social justice” (Shiva 2000, p. 18).
- Regardless of age, political views, and educational level, women are more likely than men to be animal advocates (Kruse 1999).

UMD’s Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: www.d.umn.edu/assl/conduct/integrity

UMD SUPPORT SERVICES

Writing: You can get free tutoring service at the Solon Campus Center for writing needs. Call 726-6246 or visit their website at (www.d.umn.edu/tutoring/) for times.

Disabilities: If there are aspects of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or your ability to meet course requirements – such as time limited exams, inaccessible web content, or the use of non-captioned videos – please notify me as soon as possible. You are also encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Resources to discuss and arrange reasonable accommodations. Please call 218-726-6130 or visit www.d.umn.edu/access for information.

Counseling: Call 726-8155 for a free appointment or visit (www.d.umn.edu/hlthserv/counseling)

When the last living thing has died on account of us,
how poetical it would be
if Earth could say,
in a voice floating up
perhaps
from the floor
of the Grand Canyon,
"It is done."
People did not like it here.
- Kurt Vonnegut