# SOCI 420

# **Sociology of the Environment**

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Winter Term II, January 2020. BIOLOGY 1012

Tuesday, Thursday 2:00 – 3:20

Office hours Tuesday / Thursday 12:30-1:30, or by appointment

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, you will examine environmental problems and solutions through a sociological lens. After a broad introduction to the field of environmental sociology, we will develop a sense of how sociologists approach issues including climate change, natural resource conservation, environmental justice, and chemical toxins. We then turn our gaze to solutions, and you will be encouraged to constructively and critically evaluate market-based solutions, individual solutions and civil society solutions to environmental problems.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course has five key learning objectives. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and define key concepts in environmental sociology.
2. Deepen your relationship to natural environments.
3. Understand how student wellbeing is affected by time in nature.
4. Implement a program using nature to enhance student wellbeing.
5. Formulate concepts or theories of how nature affects human experience.

## CLASS FORMAT and STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Most classes will be structured around a lecture, broken up with classroom discussion, exercises, and multi-media. Students should come prepared to engage in class discussion, and listen attentively to the instructor andtheir fellow students.

You are expected to regularly attend class, engage in class discussions, respectfully listen to your fellow students, and keep up with the course readings and assignments. In addition, you are expected to have access to a laptop on which you can take Canvas quizzes and conduct some in-class exercises. Please see me if you expect this to be a barrier to your participation.

## *A note on classroom etiquette:*

You probably know the basic rules of classroom etiquette, but everybody can use a refresher. You attend a top-ranked research institution and you should conduct yourself in a professional, responsible manner. Here are a few key things to remember:

* Please turn off your phone when class begins. If there is personal or professional reason why you need your phone, just let me know.
* If you are late, enter quietly and discreetly, and avoid walking in front of the instructor and projection screen.
* Never record the lecture without explicit permission from the instructor.
* **Laptop usage** is allowed in class, but should be used for notes only. Other uses (e.g., emailing, web surfing) distract your fellow students.

## READING MATERIALS

The readings for this course are available through the course Canvas site.

**Note:** **I assume and expect that you have or will acquire the skills necessary to use the UBC library system.** The hyperlinks are included for many articles, but they work differently depending on where/how you are accessing the library system. If you have problems using the library system, please seek advice from a UBC librarian, not your instructor.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

Assessment in this class is based on your understanding of how sociologists have endeavoured to understand how society impacts the environment and your own learning of how the natural environment can impact humans.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Type | Description | Date | Weight |
| *How have humans impacted the natural environment? (LG1)* | | | |
| Midterm | In class | Feb 25 | 10% |
| Final exam | Cumulative | TBA | 20% |
| Participation | In-class exercises | Throughout the semester | 10% |
| *How does the natural environment impact humans? (LG 2-5)* | | | |
| SEEDS Project | Phase 1: Clinical review | Jan 30 | 15% |
| Phase 2: Asset map & intervention schedule | Feb 13 | 15% |
| Phase 3: Final report | Apr 9 | 25% |
| Presentation | In-class presentation | March 31 | 5% |

#### **MIDTERM**

* Closed book, 75-minute exam on Canvas.
* Multiple choice, true / false, short answer questions.
* The midterm covers all material presented in lectures, exercises, and readings up to the test date.

#### **FINAL EXAM (date TBA)**

* Short answer & brief essay questions.
* The exam is cumulative, that is it will test *all material* presented in the course readings, lectures and in-class exercises.

## ***PARTICIPATION***

Most of our classes will involve in-class exercises. Participation is assessed in part (5%) by attendance (students are allowed to miss 2 classes and after that missed classes will affect the participation grade). The other part is (5%) based on the average of the instructor’s and the student’s averaged assessment of participation in class and small group discussion and in-class exercises.

### ***SEEDS PROJECT + PRESENTATION***

I’m excited that this year our class is participating in a [SEEDS project](https://sustain.ubc.ca/teaching-applied-learning/seeds-sustainability-program)! We are working with the [UBC Wellness Centre](https://students.ubc.ca/health/wellness-centre) to design and administer a nature prescription for advancing student health and well-being. See the detailed document on Canvas outlining each of the phases that comprise the project.

**Deadlines**: Phase 1 is due Jan 30th, Phase 2 is due Feb 13th and Phase 4 is due April 9th. There is also a group presentation on March 31st.

## CONFLICTING RESPONSIBILITIES

UBC recognizes that students may occasionally have conflicting responsibilities that affect their ability to attend class or examinations. These may include: representing the University, the province or the country in a competition or performance; serving in the Canadian military; or observing a religious rite. They may also include a change in a student’s situation that unexpectedly requires that student to work or take responsibility for the care of a family member, if these were not pre-existing situations at the start of term.

Students with conflicting responsibilities have a duty to arrange their course schedules so as to avoid, as much as possible, any conflicts with course requirements. As soon as conflicting responsibilities arise, students must notify **their Faculty Advising Office** (e.g. Arts Academic Advising), and can request an [academic concession](http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,48,0,0#255). Instructors may not be able to comply with all such requests if the academic standards and integrity of the course or program would be compromised.

Varsity student-athletes should discuss any anticipated and unavoidable regular-season absences with the instructor at the start of term, and provide notice of playoff or championship absences in writing as soon as dates are confirmed.

Religious observance may preclude attending classes or examinations at certain times. In accordance with the [UBC Policy on Religious Holidays](https://www.universitycounsel.ubc.ca/files/2010/08/policy65.pdf), students who wish to be accommodated for religious reasons must notify their instructors in writing at least two weeks in advance. Instructors provide opportunity for such students to make up work or examinations missed without penalty.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### Week 1. Introduction to the Course, Environmental Sociology

Jan 7: Lecture 1, Intro to SOCI 420

* Readings:
  + Syllabus
* Optional Readings:
  + Dunlap, R. E., Van Liere, K. D., Mertig, A. G., & Jones, R. E. (2000). Measuring Endorsement of the New Ecological Paradigm: A Revised NEP Scale. *Journal of Social Issues 561*(3), 425-442.

Jan 9: Lecture 2, What is Environmental Sociology?

* Readings:
  + Dunlap, R. E., & Catton Jr, W. R. (1979). Environmental sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *5*(1), 243-273.
  + Pellow, D. N., & Nyseth Brehm, H. (2013). An environmental sociology for the twenty-first century. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *39*, 229-250.

### Week 2: Climate Change & Sociology I

Jan 14: Lecture 3, How can sociology help us understand climate change?

* NOTE: Term project introduction! SEEDS and Wellness Centre Staff visit the class (25 minutes)
* Readings
  + Required: Jorgenson, Andrew et al. 2018. Social Science Perspectives on Drivers of and Responses to Global Climate Change. *WIREs Climate Change*, Available online: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/wcc.554>
  + Optional background material for those not up to speed on climate science and politics:
    - [National Geographic summary](file:///Users/emilykennedy/Downloads/•%09https:/www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/global-warming/global-warming-overview)
    - Podcast: The Daily, [A New Climate Tipping Point](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/19/podcasts/the-daily/climate-change-un-report-carbon-tax.html?action=click&module=audio-series-bar&region=header&pgtype=Article)

Jan 16: Lecture 4, Why don’t we all care about climate change?

* NOTE: Form groups for term project
* Readings:
  + Brulle, R. J., & Roberts, J. T. (2017). Climate misinformation campaigns and public sociology. *Contexts*, *16*(1), 78-79.
  + Liu, J. C. E. (2015). Low carbon plot: climate change skepticism with Chinese characteristics. *Environmental Sociology*, *1*(4), 280-292.

### Week 3. Who’s Affected by Environmental Problems?

Jan 21: Lecture 5, How are we impacted by environmental issues?

* Readings:
  + Whyte, K. (2017). Way Beyond the Lifeboat: An Indigenous Allegory of Climate Justice.
  + Chapter 1 in “Speaking for Ourselves”, Agyeman, J., Cole, P., Haluza-DeLay, R., & O'Riley, P. (Eds.). (2010). *Speaking for ourselves: Environmental justice in Canada*. UBC Press.

Jan 23: Asset-Mapping, Field Trip [brief lecture on preparing a map of natural assets]

* NOTE: Meet in class for first 30 minutes, remainder of class is an exploration of nature-spaces on campus.

### Week 4. Who’s Affected by Environmental Problems?

Jan 28: Lecture 6, Environmental Injustice

* Readings:
  + Mohai, P., Pellow, D., & Roberts, J. T. (2009). Environmental justice. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, *34*, 405-430.
  + Bacon, J. M. (2019). Settler colonialism as eco-social structure and the production of colonial ecological violence. *Environmental Sociology*, *5*(1), 59-69.

Jan 30: Lecture 7, Everyday Toxins

* Discussion of Toxic Baby (TED Talk)
* Readings: Mackendrick, N. (2014). More work for mother: Chemical body burdens as a maternal responsibility. *Gender & Society*, *28*(5), 705-728
* Due: Phase 1 of SEEDS Project

### Week 5. Analysing Environmental Problems: Politics and Economy

Feb 4: Lecture 8, Money Hurts the Environment

* NOTE: How to design a wellness intervention
* Readings:
  + Gould, K. A., Pellow, D. N., & Schnaiberg, A. (2004). Interrogating the treadmill of production: Everything you wanted to know about the treadmill but were afraid to ask. *Organization & Environment*, *17*(3), 296-316.
  + [Green New Deal](https://youtu.be/d9uTH0iprVQ)

Feb 6: Lecture 9, Money Helps the Environment

* Readings: Mol, A. P., & Janicke, M. (2009). The origins and theoretical foundations of ecological modernisation theory. In *The Ecological Modernisation Reader. Environmental Reform in Theory and Practice.* (pp. 17-27). Routledge.

### Week 6. Taking Stock

Feb 11: Project Check-in; Catch-up Day

* Visit from our client, UBC Wellness Centre

Feb 13: Midterm review

* NOTE: Prepare questions about course material to date
* Due: Phase 2 of SEEDS Project

### Week 7. Reading Week

Feb 18-22, no classes

### ***Transitioning to Solutions***

### Week 8. A Better Relationship to the Environment

Feb 25: Midterm

* Midterm in class

Feb 27: Lecture 10, How Should We Respond to Environmental Issues?

* Readings:
  + Speth, J.G. 2008. Chapter 1: Looking into the Abyss. In, *The Bridge at the End of the World.* Yale University Press.
  + [Should rivers have rights?](https://e360.yale.edu/features/should-rivers-have-rights-a-growing-movement-says-its-about-time)
  + [Environmental rights are human rights](https://davidsuzuki.org/story/environmental-rights-are-human-rights/)
* NOTE: Phase 3 should take place this week or next.

### Week 9. Market Solutions

Mar 3: Lecture 11, Industrial Solutions to Sustainability Challenges

* Readings:
  + Jones, E. (2019). Rethinking Greenwashing: Corporate Discourse, Unethical Practice, and the Unmet Potential of Ethical Consumerism. *Sociological Perspectives*, 62(5): 728-752.
  + In class:
    - [Products](https://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/12/business/energy-environment/12sustain.html) that are Earth and Profit Friendly
    - Film on [Cradle-to-Cradle design](https://www.ted.com/talks/william_mcdonough_on_cradle_to_cradle_design?language=en)
* NOTE: Phase 3 should take place this week or last.

Mar 5: Carbon tax, **Guest lecture: Marc Lee,** *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives*

* Readings:
  + <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/fair-and-effective-carbon-pricing>
  + <http://www.policynote.ca/climate-justice-and-the-bc-carbon-tax-20th-anniversary-retrospective/>
  + <https://www.policynote.ca/carbon-pricing-prospects-and-protests/>
* Optional: Fairbrother, M. (2016). Externalities: why environmental sociology should bring them in. *Environmental Sociology*, *2*(4), 375-384.

### Week 10. Individual Solutions

Mar 10: Lecture 12, The Power of the Individual

* Readings: Dietz, T., Gardner, G. T., Gilligan, J., Stern, P. C., & Vandenbergh, M. P. (2009). Household actions can provide a behavioral wedge to rapidly reduce US carbon emissions. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *106*(44), 18452-18456.
* Kennedy, E. H., & Krogman, N. (2008). Towards a sociology of consumerism. *International Journal of Sustainable Society*, *1*(2), 172-189.

Mar 12: Lecture 13, Disproportionate Impacts (Or, Blame the Rich)

* Readings: Kennedy, E. H., Krahn, H., & Krogman, N. T. (2014). Egregious emitters: Disproportionality in household carbon footprints. *Environment and Behavior*, *46*(5), 535-555.

### Week 11. Civil Society Solutions

Mar 17: **Guest lecture: Max Chewinski**

* Readings: TBA

Mar 19: No class, instructor at conference

* NOTE: Might be a great time to get Phase 4 final report in good shape!

### Week 12. Analysing Solutions

Mar 24: Lecture 14, Questioning Green Consumerism

* Readings:
  + Maniates, M.F. 2001. Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World? *Global Environmental Politics,* 1(3): 31-52.
  + Anantharaman, M. (2018). Critical sustainable consumption: a research agenda. *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences*, *8*(4), 553-561.

Mar 26: Lecture 15, Class, politics, gender

* Readings:
  + Kennedy, E. H., & Givens, J. E. (2019). Eco-Habitus or Eco-Powerlessness? Examining Environmental Concern across Social Class. *Sociological Perspectives*, *62*(5), 646-667.
  + Kennedy, E. H., & Dzialo, L. (2015). Locating gender in environmental sociology. *Sociology Compass*, *9*(10), 920-929.

### Week 13: Wrap up

Mar 31: Presentations!

* NOTE: SEEDS and UBC Wellness Staff, plus additional UBC services will be in the audience.

Apr 2: Lecture 16, Course Summary

* No readings, but come prepared with questions about the final exam

**Final report due April 9th by 4:00 pm**