

Environmental Sociology SOC 360

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It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.-Aristotle

Course description

SOC 360 Q*- Environmental Sociology (3 credits) (Prereq: SOC 101 or SOC 102, Student must be enrolled in at least 60 credit hours prior to registration, or permission of the instructor). The course examines key issues in the relationship between society and the natural environment. The primary focus is on social structural and cultural factors behind environmental and resource problems. Attention is also given to social consequences of environmental degradation (e.g., social and economic disruption) and to social responses to environmental and resource problems (e.g., change in culture/attitudes about environmental issues, the environmental movement, community mobilization against threats). This course is an experiential learning course that requires 15 hours of fieldwork. F, S, Su

Course texts

Carolan, Michael. 2013. Society and the Environment: Pragmatic Solutions to Ecological Issues. Westview Press.

Gould, Kenneth A. and Tammy Lewis. 2014. Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology. 2nd ed. Oxford University Press.

Course Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

Goal 1. Students participate in experiential learning activities that complement and build on the knowledge and skills relevant to their academic program and/or career goals.

SLO 1.1. Students will demonstrate the knowledge and skills obtained through participation in experiential learning activities that are relevant/pertinent to their academic programs and/or career goals.

Goal 2. Students critically reflect on the relationship between and among experiential learning, their academic experience and the world in which they live.

SLO 2.1. Students will demonstrate a high level of comprehension and skill in connecting theory with practice which is correlated to their level of participation in experiential learning activities.

SLO 2.3. Students will reflect on the impact that experiential learning activities have had on their relationship to the world in which they live.

Goal 3: Students develop informed and thoughtful written arguments about critical environmental issues.

SLO 3.1. Students will assess the comparative contributions of various theories and explanations for environmental problems.

SLO 3.2. Students will interpret and analyze different perspectives on nature and the environment.

SLO 3.3. Students apply sociological perspectives to understand environmental problems as sites of social conflict, social power and competing social values.

Goal 4: Students understand environmental issues using a sociological framework.

SLO 4.1 Students analyze environmental issues using a sociological framework (theories, concepts, or perspectives);

SLO 4.2 Students recognize and critically evaluate the structures, institutions and ideas that shape individual opportunities and collective outcomes within an environmental context.

SLO 4.3 Students address environmental justice as an issue of social justice involving dynamics of race/ethnicity, class, and gender.

SLO 4.4 Students critically evaluate commonly held views concerning the causes of environmental problems, the impacts of such problems on human societies, and potential solutions to the problems.

Classroom Behavior Policies

Keep an open mind. You will learn many different perspectives on many different topics throughout the semester. At various times you may find yourself agreeing or disagreeing with some of the viewpoints presented by the readings and/or the viewpoints of your classmates. *Agreement is not a class requirement- respect is.*

Please keep mobile phones, laptops, tablets, etc. turned off and put away while in the classroom unless otherwise instructed. Use of such devices during class time is a distraction to you and the students around you. Research has shown that use of these devices negatively impacts class performance, and, ultimately, your grade in the class. Any laptop/tablet use in the classroom must be pre-approved by me (for example, if we are using these devices for a class activity or you have a condition for which laptop use is considered a reasonable accommodation). Students who are

approved for laptop use may be asked to submit notes and/or other materials.
(Note: If you have a work or family situation that requires you be on-call please let me know this in advance.)

This class is designed to include a large degree of class discussion and engagement. Class discussion is only possible if *you* have read the assigned chapter prior to class, and are prepared to ask questions, discuss, and engage the material assigned for that day.

I communicate regularly with my students by email. You are responsible for regularly checking both your CCU email and Moodle accounts for course announcements and updates.

Please communicate with me if you experience any problems that may affect your course attendance/performance. Don't just stop coming to class or wait until it's too late to try to work something out.

E-mail

Most class information (i.e. assignment instructions, due dates, exam dates, etc.) can be found on your syllabus and/or posted on Moodle. If you have a question about class and the answer is not on your syllabus or posted on Moodle, please contact me by email. I do my best to respond to all messages as quickly as possible. If you do not receive a response within 24 hours please resend your e-mail, and/or follow up with me before or after class. Email to professors should include a subject in the subject line with your class number and section (i.e. SOC 309 01), and be written using a proper greeting (i.e. Dear Professor) with correct grammar. Remember you are emailing your professor, not texting your bff. Please refer to:

<http://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor>

Course Requirements

Attendance / Participation: (10%) This class is designed to work best if you keep up with the reading and come to class prepared to discuss, ask questions, debate, and otherwise engage class material.

Reading journal: (10%)

Quizzes: (30%)

A weekly quiz will be posted on Moodle.

Critical Reflection Papers (3 @ 10= 30%)

This course is listed as an experiential learning course in the university catalog. That means a substantial amount your learning will take place outside of the classroom learning about local environmental issues and actions taking place to address them. Over the course of the term you complete at least ten hours of service learning activities on three (or more) occasions. At the end of each activity, you will write a 1.5-2 page critical reflection paper in which you connect your experience in the field with course material.

Final project : Policy Proposal or Policy Brief (20%)

For your final project you must analyze an environmental issue and propose a solution to it. You should write the proposal as though you are appearing before a governing body and asking them to implement your proposed solutions. You may propose your solution to an international body like the United Nations or the International Criminal Court, a domestic agency like the US EPA, a state or regional agency (SC Department of Health and Environmental Control, Hamilton County Soil and Water District, a local city council or Chamber of Commerce, etc.

Your proposal should be extensively researched and show a deep, complex understanding of the problem from multiple perspectives. Your solution must be well-reasoned and supported by evidence (including but not limited to evidence found in academic journal articles). You must be clear about why you chose to present your proposal to the specific body you chose, as well as who you represent in your proposal (i.e. Yourself as an individual? A community? What gives you the authority to represent anyone on this issue?).

In your proposal you must synthesize 1) theories and concepts from class, 2) your experience in the field, 3) sociological research. Whether you write a proposal to Myrtle Beach City Council about a solution to littering on the beach, a proposal to the UN that addresses toxic waste dumping, or a policy brief to a state senator outlining the economic benefits of maintain clean, healthy waterways you must effectively and convincingly combine academic and experiential learning material.

We will discuss additional details throughout the term. Our class discussions, as well as your problem/solution papers, are designed to help you practice for this project.

All assignments will be generally assessed by to the following scale:

A = Exceptional content. Extremely well-written/presented and clearly organized, strong analytical focus, correct use of course concepts, succinctly backs up points with evidence, all material is properly cited. Demonstrates deep and complex understanding of course material. Goes well above and beyond requirements and expectations.

B = Very good content. Well-written/presented and organized, might contain minor spelling and/or grammatical errors. Succinctly summarizes and explains main points of argument, but lacks analytical depth of A-range papers. Demonstrates strong understanding of course material. Exceeds general requirements and expectation to some degree.

C = Average content. Satisfactorily completes assignment requirements, but may contain spelling, grammatical, and/ or organizational errors that detract from the quality of the overall essay/presentation. Key points are present, but insufficiently addressed/analyzed. Demonstrates general understanding of course material. Meets basic requirements and expectations.

D = Below average content. Severe problems with writing or organization, contains numerous spelling/grammatical errors which detracted from the quality of the overall essay/presentation, lacks sufficient number of key points, lacks sufficient explanation/evidence for points made in essay. Demonstrates little understanding of course material. Does not meet basic requirements/expectations.

F = Unacceptable content. Does not complete assignment as instructed. Poorly written and organized, numerous spelling and grammatical errors, lack of any clear points made, no evidence given for ideas, no connection to text or class discussion, or evidence of plagiarism. Demonstrates no understanding of course material. Falls far below requirements and expectations.

Make-up Policy

It is expected that students will submit assignments on time and attend class regularly. If it is the case you turn in an assignment late, please contact me ASAP. Typically work may be turned in late for a reduced score.

Honor Code

This Student Code of Conduct is a commitment by students of Coastal Carolina University to adhere to the highest degree of ethical integrity in academic conduct. It is a commitment individually and collectively that the students of Coastal Carolina University will not lie, cheat, or plagiarize to gain an academic advantage over fellow students or avoid academic requirements

The CCU Code of Conduct gives me a great degree of latitude in terms of the punishment I may apply to students who cheat. Consequences include failure for the course and/or being reported to the Dean. If you're nervous about an assignment or exam, talk to me about it. We'll work through your anxiety and get you to a place where you can confidently complete the assignment. Also, please keep in mind that the penalty for late assignments or missing exams is far less than the penalty for cheating.

Disabilities

I am happy to provide accommodations for students with disabilities. If you require accommodations (academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, or services) for this course you must register with the Office of Accessibility and Disability Services. It is not uncommon for students who have never been diagnosed with a learning disability to be tested and diagnosed in college, when increased academic rigor makes it more difficult to compensate for an underlying disability. If you are struggling in your courses, you may want to contact the Office of Accessibility and Disability to see if disability testing is right for you. <http://www.coastal.edu/disabilityservices/>

Course Content Advisory

Sociology deals with all aspects of the human experience. Some of the topics covered in this class may make you uncomfortable- especially as we consider opposing viewpoints on difficult topics. It's okay to have these feelings, and I work hard to fairly represent multiple points of view and to end class on note of hope even when we deal with difficult topics. For all the bad in the world, there are many, many people working very hard to make the world a better place (sometimes, they even succeed!). If you need help processing a difficult topic beyond our allotted class time, you are welcome to follow up with me via email or in my office. You may also leave anonymous feedback for me on Moodle (see the link at the top of our class page). If you feel distressed you may want to consider talking to a counselor (see info below).

Counseling Services

College years are full of tremendous growth and change. You will have a lot of fun, but you might also have periods of stress. Students can go through many things: family problems, difficult relationships, abuse, assault, addictions, or just a general feeling of being overwhelmed. Seeking help is a sign of strength.

<http://www.coastal.edu/counseling/>

Grading

Attendance/Participation	5%
In-class assignments	10%
Quizzes	30%
Reflection papers	30%
<u>Final project</u>	<u>25%</u>
Total	100%

Course Schedule

Thinking About the Environment: Culture, Experience, and Worldview

Gould & Lewis (G&L) Ch. 1, The Social Construction of Nature

G&L Ch. 2, Theories in Environmental Sociology

G&L Ch. 5, Corporate Power: The Role of the Global Media

G&L Ch. 6, The Science of Nature and the Nature of Science

G&L Ch. 7, Technological Change and the Environment

G&L Ch. 17, Labor and the Environment

Taking Action Locally, Globally, and Individually

G&L Ch. 16, US Environmental Movements

G&L Ch. 18, Environmental Movements in the Global South

Carolan, Ch. 13, From Our Beliefs to Our Behaviors

Guest Speaker: Sustain Coastal Eco-Reps

Experiential learning activity: Sustain Coastal Zero Waste Game Day

Environmental Inequality

Carolan Ch. 12, Inequality and Growth: Prosperity for All

G&L Ch. 10, Environmental Inequality and Environmental Justice

Environmental Health

G&L Ch. 11, The Sociology of Environmental Health

G&L Ch. 13, From Farms to Factories

Food and Food Security

Carolan Ch. 8, Food: From Farm to Fork

G&L Ch. 12, Producing and Consuming Food

Experiential learning activity: CAP community garden

Transportation, Community, and Public Health

Carolan Ch. 7, Transportation: Beyond Air Pollution

(Online) Living and Dying in Louisiana's Cancer Alley

Basic Elements: Water

Carolan Ch. 5, Water: There's No Substitute

(Online) What is Volunteer Monitoring Good For?

Guest speaker: Waccamaw Watershed Academy and Waccamaw Riverkeepers

Experiential learning activity: Waccamaw Riverkeepers

Climate Change and Biodiversity

Carolan Ch. 2, Greenhouse Gases: Warmer Isn't Better

G&L Ch. 15, Normalizing the Unthinkable

Carolan Ch. 4, Biodiversity: Society Wouldn't Exist Without It

Experiential learning activity: SC Cares Animal Sanctuary

Energy, Externalization, and Alternatives

G&L Ch. 9, Energy, Society, and the Environment

(Online) Resource Wars Against Native Peoples

Carolan Ch. 9, Energy Production: Our Sunny Prospects

Guest speaker: Stop Offshore Drilling in the Atlantic (SODA)

Trashing the Planet

Carolan Ch. 3, Waste: Our Sinks Are Almost Sunk

(Online) The Next Revolutionary Stage: Recycling Waste or Recycling History

(Online) Unfair Trade-Off: Globalization and the Export of Ecological Hazards

Guest speaker: Keep Horry County Beautiful

Experiential learning activity: Tour of Horry County Solid Waste Authority

