

SOCIOLOGY 285 (SPRING 2019)  
**ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY**

T/R 10:05AM-11:30AM  
HINCHLIFFE HALL 117

Instructor: John Chung-En Liu  
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Office Hours: M/W 930am-11am or by email appointment  
Course Website: <https://moodle.oxy.edu/course/view.php?id=26958>

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

This course is an introduction to the field of environmental sociology. To begin, we will define why environmental problems are social problems and briefly introduce the history of the field. The course will then proceed in three sections: *the material*, *the ideal*, and *the practical*. In the material, we will consider how our production, consumption, and reproduction shape our environmental conditions; in the ideal, we will concern about how culture, ideology, and social experiences influence how we think and actor toward the environment; in the practical, we will explore ways to bring about a more ecological society. In addition to the course readings and discussion, the course will also include various action-oriented assignments (e.g. cultural jamming, photo essay, contact your representative, etc.) and case studies from students. This course aims to develop a sharp sociological imagination on our relationship with the natural world, as well as empower students to envision possible social changes

**COURSE REQUIREMENT**

**Main Text**

This course will follow closely with the text: *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, by Michael M. Bell and Loka Ashwood. Make sure you get the 5<sup>th</sup> edition.

**Grading**

Your grade will be based on your class participation, environmental action papers, and the case study presentation and final paper. The grading rubric is as the following:

Participation	20%
Environmental Action Papers (*5)	50%
Environmental Sociology Case Study	
- Final Paper	20%
- Presentation	10%

### **Participation (20%)**

You have to attend the class to participate. I will exercise attendance checks regularly. You are allowed to be absent without any reason **once**. Beyond this absence, you will lose 1 out of your 20 participation points for every absence. If you are late to the class by more than 10 minutes, you will be considered absent for the day.

The quality of our collective learning experience depends on your participation. My advice is simple – I suggest viewing our time together as an opportunity to make new friends, to learn some interesting things about the world in which we live, and to push yourself academically in whatever way makes sense for you. Your high-quality contributions may be rewarded with an extra “plus” on the final grade if you fall on a borderline between two grades.

I expect you to devote much time reading and thinking about the subject. To do well in this class, you aim to master the course material and apply the concepts to environmental issues around you. During each class, I will mix short lectures, classroom discussions, and various activities. To cultivate good conversation, please keep in mind that we are debating ideas, not each other as individuals. Listen carefully. Be respectful. And, don't be afraid to speak up!

### **Environmental Action Papers (50%)**

This course will include five short and “active” writing assignment to empower students to think about various ways to create positive social change. Our topics include 1) greenwashing and culture jamming, 2) fossil-fuel divestment campaign, 3) environmental justice and political representation, 4) human and nature photo essay, and 5) climate change dialogue. We will devote substantial class time on these exercises and I expect you participate fully. Each paper is about 800 words. I will give detailed writing prompts when it gets close to the assignment.

### **Environmental Sociology Case Study (30%):**

To make use of our course materials, students will choose to illustrate a case of environmental issue and discuss how environmental sociology helps you understand the situation. You will make a 15-minute presentation in week 13 or 14. In your final paper, students should write rigorously as if they are preparing for a manuscript to submit to the journal *Case Studies in the Environment*. Please follow the [submission guideline](#) to format the paper. Please aim to write between 2500-3000 words, excluding abstract, footnotes, references, tables, figures, and supporting information. The final paper is due on May 5<sup>th</sup> 11:59pm. I encourage ambitious students to take this assignment seriously and make an actual submission after the semester!

## **COURSE RULES**

### **Office Hour**

My office hour is on Monday and Wednesday 9:30am-11am. I enjoy talking to students and I encourage you to stop by. If you need to meet up with me in times other than my regular office hours, you can make an appointment with me. Office hours will not be devoted to tutorial for materials that students miss when not attending class. Also, please strive to ask routine questions of clarification in class.

## **Email Policies**

The primary mode of communication for this course (outside of class meetings) will be email. Please check your Oxy email regularly. I will send course-related information to you at least 24 hours in advance of any deadlines. I will likewise respond to your emails within 24 hours.

## **Academic Honesty**

The College takes academic honesty very seriously. All of the work that you submit for this class must be your own work, and you are required to quote and cite all references properly. Although this appears straightforward, it can sometimes be confusing. Wherever you are unsure about quoting and citing, I am happy to help you figure out the best strategy.

The penalty for academic misconduct can include disciplinary probation, a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, or expulsion from the college. Every student is responsible for understanding what constitutes academic misconduct. Please read the college's academic honesty primer here: <http://www.oxy.edu/student-handbook/academic-ethics>. If you have any question about whether your work upholds the standards set forth by Oxy, please speak with me.

## **Electronic Devices**

No use of laptops, tablets, phones, or other electronic devices in the class. Although computers are a valuable tool for research and study, they often hinder participation and collegiality in the classroom. Plus, we're really not that good at multi-tasking. If you are interested in this policy, I recommend *The New Yorker's* article "[The Case for Banning Laptops in the Classroom](#)"

## **Support Services**

- The Writing Center (<http://www.oxy.edu/writing-center>) offers students from all disciplines two types of support to work on their writing: peer-to-peer, drop-in consultations with knowledgeable Writing Advisers and appointments with Faculty Writing Specialists from the Writing and Rhetoric department.
- Students who have disability-related needs, please contact me AND the Coordinator of Disability Services—(323) 259-2969—as soon as possible and we will make the appropriate accommodations. Please refer to the information on Disability Services' website: <http://www.oxy.edu/disability-services>
- Finally, the Emmons Health and Counseling Center (<http://www.oxy.edu/emmons-health-center>) is available for assistance with medical and mental health concerns.

\* When you see this line, please immediately send me an email with the message "close reading is crucial for academic success." You will get extra points for reading the syllabus thoroughly. Limited time offer until January 25.

## **Changes to the syllabus**

The syllabus is a guide for the course and your learning is my top priority. If the course requires any changes, I will post a revised syllabus on Moodle and inform the class of any changes.

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

- Reading
- ✧ Important Dates

### **Week 1 (1/22 & 1/24): Environmental Problems and Society**

- The Syllabus
- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology* Ch1

### **Week 2 (1/29 & 1/31): Consumption and Materialism**

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology* Ch2
- Hawkins, “The impacts of bottled water: an analysis of bottled water markets and their interactions with tap water provision”

### **Week 3 (2/5 & 2/7): Money and Markets**

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology* Ch3
- Video: [The Story of Stuff](#)
- ✧ 2/7 Greenwashing/Cultural Jamming Paper Due

### **Week 4 (2/12 & 2/14): Technology and Science | Population and Development**

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology* Ch4-5

### **Week 5 (2/19 & 2/21): Living in the Ecological Society**

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology* Ch13
- ✧ 2/19 Guest lecture (Amy Andrews Muñoz, Associate Vice President for Hospitality Services)
- ✧ 2/21 Fossil-Fuel Divestment Paper Due

### **Week 6 (2/26 & 2/28): Body and Justice**

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology* Ch6
- Harrison, “We do ecology, not sociology: interactions among bureaucrats and the undermining of regulatory agencies' environmental justice efforts”
- ✧ 2/28 Guest lecture: “Navigating Multidimensional Borderlands: How Spatial Politics and Inequalities Shape the Working Conditions and Lives of Mexican Women Farmworkers in the San Joaquin Valley” (Evelyn Pruneda, PhD candidate, UC-Riverside)

**Week 7 (3/5 & 3/7): The Ideology of Environmental Domination**

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology* Ch7
- Shapiro, *Mao's war against nature* Ch2
- ✧ 3/7 “Call Your Representative” Paper Due

**Week 8 (3/12 & 3/14): Spring Break**

**Week 9 (3/19 & 3/21): The Ideology of Environmental Concern**

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology* Ch8-9

**Week 10 (3/26 & 3/28): The Human Nature of Nature**

- ✧ 3/26 Guest lecture “Climate Realities - fact and fixings. A visual presentation based on the work of Al Gore’s Climate Reality Project” with UEP101 and DWA102 (Jeremy Kagan, Professor, University of Southern California)
- ✧ 3/28 Earth Month Photo Essay paper due

**Week 11 (4/2 & 4/4): The Rationality of Risk**

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology* Ch10
- Liu, “Low carbon plot: climate change skepticism with Chinese characteristics”

**Week 12 (4/9 & 4/11): Mobilizing and Governing the Ecological Society**

- *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology* Ch11-12
- Hess and Brown, “Green tea: clean-energy conservatism as a countermovement”
- 4/9 Guest Lecture “Creating Eco-content through new media” with (Auri Jackson, Video Producer at BuzzFeed)
- ✧ 4/11 Environmental Communication project due

**Week 13 (4/16 & 4/18): A Global Environmental Sociology & Student Presentation**

- Liu, “China’s Summons for Environmental Sociology”
- Liu, “Shark Fin Bans in the United States: Moral, Cultural, and Policy Considerations”

**Week 14 (4/23 & 4/25): Student Presentation**

**Week 15 (4/30): Conclusion and Reflection**

- ✧ Environmental Case Study paper due May 5<sup>th</sup> 1159pm