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 issues. Central questions of this course include: Why have some societies treated their environment differently than others? How do science, technology, industrialization, economics, politics, religion, and culture impact human interactions with the natural environment? We will also consider the social justice implications of environmental issues, including how power and status affect whose ideas about natural resources are given priority, and who is most directly impacted by pollution, toxic waste, loss of biodiversity, ozone depletion, and environmental degradation. Finally, we will examine and debate the diverse positions and actions of environmental movements in the United States and worldwide.

This upper-division elective in Sociology is designed to engage you in the deeper questions of human and social existence. To this end, we will continually return to the following questions:

- What is the relationship between human beings and the larger order (the natural world) of which we are a part?
- How do our historical circumstances affect the way we see things and shape society?
- How does the way we treat the environment affect various groups in society, especially those who are not privileged or powerful?
- What justice considerations does this provoke?

The course is designed to approach such questions through a variety of methods and assignments:

- **Historical approach**: In order to gain a critical perspective on contemporary ecological issues, this course traces the history of thought about ecological and environmental matters, both in the United States and globally.
- **Cultural diversity**: This course takes into account cultural diversity, not simply by studying different cultures, but also by integrating the writings of American and non-American authors, women and men, and authors of various religious and ethnic backgrounds into the material of the course.
- **Creating a personal philosophy**: The overall goal of this course is not merely to accumulate facts and abstract ideas, but to follow and participate in contemporary debates concerning ecological issues. In particular, we will explore ways of integrating what we have learned on a more personal, existential level. We will consider the implications of what we have studied insofar as we ourselves are consumers, members of the university community, religious and community groups, citizens, workers, corporate decision makers, and/or activists.
• **Writing**: This course includes a significant writing component. Some of the writing will be reflective, designed to help you articulate your personal philosophy in an accessible manner. Other assignments are designed to have you critically engage with, and respond to, the concepts and research presented in the readings. These writings will ask you to present organized arguments, evidence to back your claims, and proper citation of sources.

• **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 the local community and space we all share at UMD. In group action projects, you will take on a particular environmental issue at UMD (e.g., energy, water, food), and find ways to take individual action as well as influencing University policymakers and educating the student body.

**Required Texts:**


**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. Students who bring creativity, thoughtfulness, and critical reflection to the classroom materials will do well in the class. I encourage discussions to take place within the context of critical thinking and in the spirit of understanding diverse perspectives.

It is vital that our classroom be a place where everyone feels safe to express opinions, beliefs, be themselves, and explore their values. This course and this professor will challenge those opinions and beliefs, in the spirit of critical thinking and examining life to its fullest. In order to engage in open discussion, students are asked to follow some guidelines to help create a more comfortable learning environment amidst these challenges:

1. Acknowledge that other people have experiences that we may not understand or relate to. We will work on acknowledging the experiences and feelings of ourselves and others, even if we do not agree with how we or others are currently acting on these feelings.
2. Agree not to blame others or ourselves for the misinformation they or we have learned, but to accept responsibility for not repeating misinformation after we have learned otherwise.
3. Consider that people - both the groups we study and members of our class - are doing the

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1 These guidelines were developed by Lynn Weber and published in *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 18 (Spring/Summer 1990). Some amendments have been made.
best they can with the current tools they have at their disposal.

4. Agree to 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?)

5. Agree to respect any requested in-class confidentiality.

6. Be respectful in our dialogue with others.

7. Do not 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.).

Part of promoting respect and consensus means accepting that we in this class may choose to discuss and potentially make changes to these guidelines, or to point out when our class fails to meet this agreement. All students should feel free to begin such a discussion at any time.

Managing Your Course Participation

The best advice I could give you on how to succeed in this course is NEVER MISS CLASS!!! It is impossible for us to learn together as a community when one or more members continually drop in and out. Missing classes or coming unprepared will compromise your grade, since the writing assignments and examinations rely on classroom materials, including lectures, discussions, guest speakers and films that are not covered in the readings.

Attendance Policy

Attendance will be the first business of the day and will generally be taken by a short answer quiz in the first few minutes of each course meeting. The questions will be simple, designed to ascertain whether you have completed the reading. They will also form a portion of your grade. If you arrive after the reading quiz has been administered, the quiz points will not be available to you. If you leave a class early, you will be noted as absent for the meeting. Use this as an opportunity to operate with 100% integrity. You know ahead of time when you need to be in class, so organize your life to meet this commitment. Excused absences require documentation, and include such things as emergencies, illness, or University-sanctioned events.

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
Assignments & Grading:
Assignments turned in late will lose $\frac{1}{2}$ a grade for each day they are overdue. Do not email papers.

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<tr>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Reflection Paper</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Reflection Paper</td>
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<td>Take Home Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-Class Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Action Project Paper</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes (all)</td>
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<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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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 (25 pts): Your regular attendance and meaningful participation in class.

Reading Quizzes (60 pts): Quizzes are given at the beginning of most class meetings, and are designed to assess your general comprehension of the material. There are no make-up quizzes; I will drop your two worst quiz scores from your final total.

2 Reflection Papers (75 points each): Length is 5-7 pages. You can take creative license with these “papers”—they can involve more than typed words. Use artwork or alternative styling to make it your own unique creation. All papers should include a cover-page with the following items: A title, your full name, the course name and number, the semester/year, and the professor’s name.

- 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

1. A Consumption Journal: The Story of My Trash. 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.

2. A History of Family, Place, & Food. Conduct an interview with a grandparent or parent 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.

Group Action Project (Paper: 50 pts, Presentation: 40 pts = 90 points total)
You will participate in a group research project & presentation with up to 6 of your classmates. Groups will be organized according to general interest areas (see below), and then you decide your specific role in the investigation and action. Your group will prepare a class presentation to report on your discoveries, share information, and discuss your experiences. You will have opportunities to meet w/your group during class—see class schedule. Your grade for this group project will be based on both your individual effort and the group's accomplishments as a whole. Each student will write a brief account of their role in the project (and reflection on it) in an individual 2-3 page paper (due with your portfolio materials). This is your opportunity to educate and/or act on the knowledge you have gained, and make a contribution to the UMD community. For instance, you might create a collage, art project, or poster to display in a hallway case at UMD. You could create and distribute brochures, or do tabling in the Kirby Student Center. You can write letters to the editor or write a column for the newspaper. One essential “action” for all groups, however, is to meet with the appropriate UMD administrative officials to discuss your findings and proposals for action.

Examples of General Topic Areas:
Food   Water   Energy   Recycling/Trash   Land

Portfolio (50 pts): Your portfolio will consist of a number of formal and informal projects/writings you will do over the semester. I encourage you to use this portfolio throughout the semester to reflect upon recurring themes discussed in class. Try to make regular entries rather than waiting until the last minute. The grade for the portfolio includes the organization, content, and creativity of the portfolio as a whole. Entries in your portfolio can take any form you wish, including drawings, stories, artwork, poetry, music, or “journal” entries. Entries do not need to be typed (except for the papers) and may pertain to any topic in Environmental Sociology that interests you. For example, you might clip out a newspaper article and reflect on it. You might talk to a family member, friend,
or co-worker about topics from class, and report on their reactions and questions. Did you see a recent movie to reflect on? Whatever you choose, your portfolio should contain the following items:

- Reflection Papers 1 & 2 (these will already have comments and a grade recorded)
- Take Home Exam (this will also have comments and a grade)
- Any in-class writings we have done
- Entry on any 1 guest speaker from class
- Entry on any 1 film we watched in class
- 2 additional entries of your choosing (see ideas above)
- Group Action Paper & any supporting materials from the project (e.g., pamphlets, posters)
- A final reflection on the class (this does not need to be in written form!)

**Course Schedule:**

**W, 9/5** Class Introductions & Syllabus Review

**Part I: Politics & the Economy**

**F, 9/7** Environmental Sociology, Intro & Chap 1 (The Vulnerable Planet)

**M, 9/10** ES, Chap 10 (Forty Years of Spotted Owls?)

**W, 9/12** ES, Chap 2 (Mountaintop Removal in West Virginia)
& Chap 13 (Corporate Responsibility for Toxins)

**F, 9/14** ES, Chap 4 (Tourism, Environmentalism, & Cultural Survival in Quintana Roo)
& Chap 5 (Treadmill Predispositions and Social Responses)

**M, 9/17** *1st Reflection Paper Due: A Consumption Journal*
No readings: Bagley Nature Center

**Part 2: The Role of Culture**

**W, 9/19** Ishmael, Chaps 1 & 2

**F, 9/21** No class

**M, 9/24** Ishmael, Chaps 3 & 4

**W, 9/26** Ishmael, Chaps 5 & 6

**F, 9/28** Ishmael, Chaps 7 & 8

**M, 10/1** Ishmael, Chaps 9 & 10
*Group Projects Discussion/Choose Topic Area*

**W, 10/3** Ishmael, Chaps 11, 12, & 13
Exam Review & Distribution
Part 3: Globalization & Social Justice
F, 10/5  *Take Home Exam Due*
Film or Guest Speakers

M, 10/8  Stolen Harvest, Intro & Chap 1

W, 10/10 Stolen Harvest, Chaps 2 & 3
*Group Project Meetings*

F, 10/12 Stolen Harvest, Chap 4
Film

M, 10/15 Stolen Harvest, Chaps 5 & 6

W, 10/17 Stolen Harvest, Chap 7 & Afterword
*Group Project Meetings*

F, 10/19 ES, Chap 6 (Oakland’s Fruitvale Transit Village)

M, 10/22 ES, Chap 7 (American Environmentalism) & Chap 9 (Environmental Justice)

W, 10/24 ES, Chap 8 (Turning Public Issues in Private Troubles)
*Group Project Meetings*

Part 4: Media/Popular Culture & Science/Health
F, 10/26 ES, Chap 17 (Touch the Magic)

M, 10/29 ES, Chap 19 (Selling “Mother Earth”: Advertising & the Myth of the Natural)

W, 10/31 ES, Chap 20 (The Social Construction of Cancer)
& Chap 21 (Science in Environmental Conflicts)
*Group Project Meetings*

F, 11/2 Film & Exam Review

M, 11/5 *In-class Exam*

Part 5: Food & the Environment
W, 11/7 Omnivore’s Dilemma, Intro, Chaps 1, 2, 3

F, 11/9 Omnivore’s Dilemma, Chaps 4, 5, 6, 7

M, 11/12 Omnivore’s Dilemma, Chaps 8 & 9

W, 11/14 Omnivore’s Dilemma, Chaps 10, 11, 12
*Group Project Meetings*
F, 11/16  Guest Speakers
M, 11/19  Omnivore's Dilemma, 13, 14
W, 11/21  Omnivore's Dilemma, Chaps 15, 16
F, 11/23  No class-Holiday
M, 11/26  Omnivore's Dilemma, Chaps 17, 18
W, 11/28  Omnivore's Dilemma, Chaps 19, 20

Part 6: Environment Social Movements

F, 11/30  *2nd Reflection Paper Due*
*Group Project Meetings*

M, 12/3  ES, Chap 22 (Risk & Recruitment)
Group 1 Presentation

W, 12/5  ES, Chap 24 (Coalition between Native American & Environmental Organizations in Opposition to Development)
Group 2 Presentation

F, 12/7  On-line course reading ("Perspectives on Ecoterrorism" by R. Amster)

M, 12/10  ES, Chap 26 (A Special Moment in History: The Future of Population)
Group 3 Presentation

W, 12/12  ES, Chap 28 (Cleaning the Closet: Toward a New Fashion Ethic)
Group 4 Presentation

F, 12/14  ES, Chap 29 (On the Trail of Courageous Behavior)
Group 5 Presentation

M, 12/17  Final Exam (4-5:55pm) *There is no final exam in this class*
However, we WILL be meeting at 4pm to hand in your portfolios and see any remaining group action project presentations.
*Portfolios Due (including group action papers)*
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: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services & Resources to discuss their needs for accommodation (www.d.umn.edu/access/), and inform me as soon as possible so I can adjust relevant course materials or assignments to meet your needs.

Counseling: Call 726-8155 for an appointment or visit (www.d.umn.edu/hlthserv/counseling) Consider seeking counseling if you are: Searching for ways to cope with college life, having conflicts with roommates, co-workers, friends, feeling lonely, inadequate, or having trouble "fitting in", questioning the course of romantic relationships, concerned about your sexuality, dealing with difficult family situations, feeling tense, stressed, anxious, irritable, or uncertain, experiencing a lack of motivation, concerned about alcohol or drug use, eating problems, difficulty grieving a loss, experiencing sexual harassment or other kinds of discrimination, dealing with a crisis such as sexual assault or rape, recovering from sexual or physical abuse or incest (excerpt from the UMD counseling website).

~Food for Thought~

We could have saved the Earth but we were too damned cheap.

— Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

What good is a house, if you haven't got a decent planet to put it on?

-Henry David Thoreau

Lisa: "Do we have any food that wasn't brutally slaughtered?"
Homer: "Well, I think the veal died of loneliness."

— Matt Groening, The Simpsons