

ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY

Sociology 565

Spring 2022 (CREF #52274)
Tu/Th 9:40–11:00 AM
Horton 307

Prof. Cliff Brown

Email: cliff.brown@unh.edu
Office Hours: Tu 11:00 AM–12:30 PM & by appointment
Location: McConnell 341B

Pandemic Safety: COVID-19 will necessarily impinge on the semester. The university will adhere to public health guidelines, and these may change. We must be prepared to adapt to evolving conditions on campus and beyond, and we all have a responsibility to protect our own health and the health of others. Violations of the COVID protocols by even a single individual can cause significant disruptions or discontinuation of in-person academic activities. I will be checking your Wildcat Pass regularly, and I will show you mine. I will also need to track your seating for possible contact tracing. The entire UNH community must prepare for changing instructional circumstances, including individual courses or the entire campus moving to remote instruction, which may require adjustments to course assignments and assessments. Diligence and communication will be important throughout the semester. Monitor all course announcements and campus email. Please feel free to contact me about how the class is going at any time. My goal is to make this a successful learning experience for you despite the challenges of the moment.

Description: Environment and Society focuses on the complex interactions between human communities and the natural world. The course considers the ways that social systems, the built environment, and related technologies produce environmental changes, and in turn, how shifts in resources, air and water quality, climate, biodiversity, and ecosystems compel societies to adapt. The course will help you appreciate the interplay between environmental, technological, and social forces. It is also a lower-level elective in the sociology major and minor and fulfills the Environment, Technology, and Society category of the Discovery Program. Major topics include (1) theoretical approaches to environmental issues, (2) production, consumption, and technology, (3) food and agriculture, (4) risk assessment and the unequal impacts of environmental threats, (5) population and development, (6) the consequences of climate change, (7) environmental beliefs and ideologies, and (8) the roles of environmental movements and public policy.

Objectives: By the end of the semester, you should have a good working knowledge of the sociological concepts, theories, methods, and evidence relevant to the study of the environment. More specifically, you should be able to:

- Discuss and write about environmental sociology and explain how it informs our understanding of the changing natural world.
- Evaluate research that relates to course themes and understand its implications.
- Apply a global perspective to environmental issues and challenges.
- Understand how the analysis of evidence helps us see the complex linkages between environmental, social, and technological processes.
- Demonstrate “environmental literacy” as evidenced by your knowledge of environmental issues, environmental change, and society’s role in both.

Instructor: My office hours are Tuesdays from 11:00 AM–12:30 PM or by appointment. Please contact me any time you have questions or concerns about the class. The best way to reach me is through email at cliff.brown@unh.edu.

Teaching Assistant: Tyrus Parker is the teaching assistant for this course. He will help me lead course discussions, assist with grading, and be available to review your work and answer your questions. His office hours are Mondays 1:00–2:00 PM or by appointment in McConnell 338. You can reach him by e-mail at tyrus.parker@unh.edu.

Note: Please email us directly rather than using the Canvas messaging system.

MATERIALS

- Bell, Michael M., Loka L. Ashwood, Isaac S. Leslie, and Laura H. Schlacter. 2021. *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, 6th edition. Los Angeles: Pine Forge.

The text is available on Canvas under "First Day Course Materials." Digital access is included in your tuition and fees bill, but you may opt out if you prefer to obtain the required materials another way.

REQUIREMENTS

- 1) **Participation (10%).** This class will generally follow a mixed lecture and discussion format. I encourage your questions and comments, and I will provide frequent opportunities for your participation. Complete the readings and any other assigned content *prior to class* so that you can ask questions and understand connections to in-class material. Ideally, participating verbally in class enhances proficiency in public speaking and maximizes the exchange of ideas. Please make every effort to respect others' views. There are three main ways to participate.
 - Our regular class sessions provide opportunities to ask questions and share ideas. Your participation promotes your own learning and the learning of your peers. Everyone benefits from a robust dialogue. You will enjoy the class more – and you will learn more – if you are engaged.
 - Your 50-Word Sentences (see below) will help you engage the course content more deeply, allowing you to develop insights to share with the class. On dates when you have a 50-Word Sentence due, I will expect you to be ready to respond to questions or share your reflections on the material. These are low-stakes, low-pressure opportunities for dialogue.
 - Two discussion groups, each comprised of half the class, will meet during class time twice during the semester to discuss an environmentally-themed video. These sessions will allow you to reflect on course material, engage with others, and share ideas.
- 2) **Quizzes (25%).** To encourage your diligence and to help me gauge your understanding of the material, I will give brief quizzes throughout the semester. Quizzes will cover readings and content from current or recent readings, lectures, and discussions. These assessments will help you prepare for class and *must be taken on Canvas before 9:30 AM on the due dates*. There are no make-ups for missed quizzes, but the lowest score is automatically excluded from your grade calculation.
- 3) **Assignments (25%).** These consist of short writing exercises throughout the semester that provide opportunities to reflect on course themes and content. *Submit all assignments on Canvas before 9:30 AM* on the appropriate dates. Because these are designed to help you prepare for class, late submissions are subject to a 50 percent penalty. Please do not treat these as throwaway exercises that can be dashed off in a few minutes before class. Take your time, be thoughtful, and write clearly. I will explain these assignments in class and there will be more guidance on Canvas.
 - 50-Word Sentences (20%): For each of four dates allocated to you, you will convey one or more of the core arguments in the reading assigned for your due date in a single sentence of no more than 50 words. The goals are to help you see how details and evidence relate to the "big picture" and to cultivate writing skills via repeated, focused tasks.
 - QQTP (5%): For each of your two group discussions, write a question, select a quote, and develop a talking point prompted by the assigned video. Your question should be something about which you would like to hear others' views. The quote should be a phrase or a few sentences that effectively capture an important point, idea, or insight. The talking point should state your position on some particular dimension of the content. *Bring these to your discussion group meetings* in addition to submitting them on Canvas.
- 4) **Exams (40%).** Four multiple-choice and true/false exams will cover course readings, lectures, and discussions. Exams will be delivered through Canvas and are not cumulative. Exams will not be rescheduled without advance approval. Missed exams receive a grade of zero.

SCHEDULE

I have designed the course so that the readings, lectures, videos, discussions, and assignments are mutually reinforcing. Each of these will add depth and nuance to your understanding. For this to work, it is important that everyone adhere to the schedule below. The schedule lists daily topics, assigned material, and dates for exams and quizzes. Note that the readings vary in length, so it will be important to plan carefully. By each date listed, you should have done the following in this order: (a) completed the assigned material, (b) taken any posted quiz before 9:30 AM, and (c) submitted any assignment that you have due.

Part 1: Consumption, Technology, and Population

- Tuesday
1/25
- Course Introduction
- The sociological perspective
 - Semester overview and course requirements

- Thursday
1/27
- Sociology and the Environment
- Read for class pp. 1-29

- Tuesday
2/1
- Naturework
- Read for class pp. 29-50
 - **Quiz 1** due before 9:30 AM

- Thursday
2/3
- Health and Justice
- Read for class Chapter 2

- Tuesday
2/8
- Consumption and Materialism
- Read for class Chapter 3
 - **Quiz 2** due before 9:30 AM

- Thursday
2/10
- Money and Markets
- Read for class Chapter 4

- Tuesday
2/15
- Advertising, Consumption, and the Environment
- Watch "Advertising at the Edge of the Apocalypse" (link on Canvas in the 2/15 module)
 - **Discussion Group 1** meets to discuss the video; bring QQTP

- Thursday
2/17
- EXAM 1** (9:40-11:00 AM)

- Tuesday
2/22
- Technology as Social Structure
- Read for class pp. 149-163

- Thursday
2/24
- Science and Risk
- Read for class pp. 163-179
 - **Quiz 3** is due before 9:30 AM

- Tuesday
3/1
- Population and Development
- Read for class pp. 181-202

- Thursday
3/3
- Food, Hunger, Agriculture, and the Environment
- Read for class pp. 202-216
 - **Quiz 4** due before 9:30 AM

- Tuesday
3/8
- Industrial Agriculture
- Watch "King Corn" (link on Canvas in the 3/8 module)
 - **Discussion Group 2** meets to discuss the video; bring QQTP

- Thursday
3/10
- EXAM 2** (9:40-11:00 AM)

Part 2: Culture, Ideology, and Environmental Beliefs

Tuesday 3/22 The Ideology of Environmental Domination

- Read for class Chapter 7

Thursday 3/24 The Ideology of Environmental Concern

- Read for class Chapter 8
- **Quiz 5** due before 9:30 AM

Tuesday 3/29 The Human Nature of Nature

- Read for class pp. 287-299

Thursday 3/31 Lessons from “Natural” Disasters

- Read for class pp. 299-317

Tuesday 4/5 Climate Change

- Read “Cascades” (on Canvas)
- **Quiz 6** due before 9:30 AM

Thursday 4/7 The Human Epoch

- Watch “Anthropocene” (link on Canvas in the 4/7 module)
- **Discussion Group 1** meets to discuss the video; bring QQTP

Tuesday 4/12 **EXAM 3** (9:40-11:00 AM)

Part 3: Environmental Movements, Sustainability, and Policy

Thursday 4/14 Mobilizing the Just Ecological Society

- Read for class Chapter 10
- **Quiz 7** due before 9:30 AM

Tuesday 4/19 Environmental Movements

- Read for class “Earth Day and the Evolution of the Environmental Movement” (on Canvas)

Thursday 4/21 Environmental Justice

- Read for class “The Origins of Environmental Justice” (on Canvas)
- **Quiz 8** due before 9:30 AM

Tuesday 4/26 Transitioning to the Just Ecological Society

- Read for class pp. 353-364

Thursday 4/28 Policy and Sustainability

- Read for class pp. 364-376
- **Quiz 9** due before 9:30 AM

Tuesday 5/3 Living in the Ecological Society

- Read for class Chapter 12

Thursday 5/5 Reconstituting Daily Life

- Watch for class “Normal is Over 1.1” (link on Canvas in the 5/5 module)
- **Discussion Group 2** meets to discuss the video; bring QQTP
- **Quiz 10** due before 9:30 AM **Note:** *the quiz includes the above video*

Tuesday 5/17 **EXAM 4** (8:00 AM-10:00 AM)

POLICIES

Academic Honesty: Violations of academic honesty include but are not limited to cheating, unauthorized collaboration, and plagiarism, and they will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Please note that allowing someone else to submit answers or other coursework on your behalf constitutes a violation of academic honesty for both parties. The UNH policy is fully described in the *Student Rights, Rules, and Responsibilities* handbook (<http://www.unh.edu/student-life/handbook>).

Attendance: Regular attendance is essential for your success and is a component of participation. I appreciate being informed if you have to miss class, but I generally do not make a distinction between excused and unexcused absences. Absence from class is a lost opportunity to participate, raise questions, engage the material, and learn. Therefore, the fact of missing class is more significant than the reasons for any particular absence. You will learn more and do better if you attend class regularly. If you experience a prolonged absence, please work with me and the T.A. to catch up on missed material.

Canvas: Your grades, any handouts, Internet links, slides presented in class, and this syllabus will be available online through the Canvas site (<https://mycourses.unh.edu>). Delivery of exams and quizzes and all assignment submissions will also occur through Canvas. Therefore, you will need to have reliable Internet access for this course. Please submit all work online by the posted deadline to receive consideration for full credit. If you wait until just before the deadline to submit your work, then you assume the risks associated with technological problems or lack of familiarity with the platform.

Curtailed Operations or Modality Change: If UNH curtails operations or moves to remote teaching, it may be necessary to make adjustments to the course schedule and to move lecture material or course content online. Please check email and the Canvas website for updates.

Grading: Assignment scoring rubrics, the grade weights attached to course requirements, and the following information will help you understand how I assess your work.

You all have the same opportunity to do well in this class, and everyone will be graded on the same basis for the same work. I do not offer extra-credit or special make-up assignments to individuals. We all lead complicated lives with multiple and competing demands associated with school, work, and family. However, it is your job to fulfill the requirements for this class. As a general rule, I do not curve scores or round final grades up to the next highest mark. Once the class is over, so is your opportunity to earn a higher grade. Please check your grades regularly and contact me with any questions.

Grading Scale		
Excellent	A	95 – 100
	A-	90 – 94.99
	B+	87 – 89.99
Superior	B	83 – 86.99
	B-	80 – 82.99
	C+	77 – 79.99
Satisfactory	C	73 – 76.99
	C-	70 – 72.99
	D+	67 – 69.99
Marginal	D	63 – 66.99
	D-	60 – 62.99
Failing	F	0 – 59.99

Student Accessibility Services: If you have a documented condition that requires accommodations, please contact Student Accessibility Services (<https://www.unh.edu/studentaccessibility>).

Technical Support: UNH support staff can help you with questions about Canvas, computer and software issues, and other technical matters. You can get help online (<https://www.unh.edu/it/>), in person at the Academic Technology Support Center in the library, or by phone at 862-4242.

Your Responsibilities: I want all students to successfully complete the course. Toward that end, I will assume that you have read this syllabus within the first day or two of the class, that you understand the course requirements, and that you agree to be bound by my policies as a condition of your enrollment. If you have questions, please let me know.