

ENVS 201: Introduction to Environmental Studies—Social Sciences
Spring 2010 Monday/Wednesday 10:00-11:50 16 PAC

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Office hours: Wednesday noon-2 pm or by appointment



This course introduces some of the major contributions of the social sciences to understanding how and why environmental problems happen. Environmentally harmful human behavior is not simply a fact of life: it is a product of specific social conditions, which can be studied, understood, and *changed*. This course therefore examines the social 'root causes' of environmental problems, as well as social approaches to resolving them. We will be discussing ideas such as 'neo-Malthusianism', 'consumerism', 'sustainability', 'market-based mechanisms', 'social ecology' and 'environmental justice'. Students will practice applying these conceptual approaches by using them to analyze the root causes, consequences, and possible solutions to specific environmental topics. We will focus on issues that include global warming, consumerism, and biodiversity conservation.

Course requirements: The course grade will be based on the following: three in-class quizzes (30%); attendance and participation (20%), 4 weekly reading journals (20%); and group project and presentation (30%). The quizzes will consist of multiple-choice and true/false questions and will be based on all course materials: lectures, readings and videos. Quizzes will *not be announced* in advance, so full attendance and preparation for lectures is essential. Attendance will be taken every day of class and students are responsible for signing the attendance sheet. If a student misses a class when a quiz is administered, he or she will forfeit the points for the quiz as well as for attendance. The only exception to this rule is in the case of documented health or family emergencies.

Lecture outlines will be available on Blackboard after the class but these cannot replace in-class note-taking. Cell phones must be turned off during class. Since there are no discussion sections for this course, a portion of class time will be dedicated to discussion of the day's assigned readings, lecture and/or video. Active participation in discussion is expected of all students. Any student experiencing difficulty with the class for any reason, including due to a disability, should get in touch with me as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made in advance.

There is no textbook. All required readings can be accessed in 'Course Documents' on the blackboard webpage for this course: <http://blackboard.uoregon.edu>

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Schedule and REQUIRED readings (must be read before class each day)

Lect 1 March 29	Introduction & overview: social science perspectives on the environment Discussion and organization of group projects	
Lect 2 March 31	Case Study I: The case of global warming – what went wrong?	(Cunningham 1998; Henson 2006; Whitty 2006) (Video: <i>Age of Stupid</i>)
Lect 3 April 5	Case Study I contd : what went wrong in Copenhagen?	(Athanasίου 2010; Yearwood Jr. and McKibben 2009; IISD 2009; Narain 2009; UNFCCC 2009)
Lect 4 April 7	Case Study II : Elwha Dam – what went right ?	(Grossman 2004; Downing 2004; Stokstad 2006; Shigley 2008) (Video: <i>Unconquering the Last Frontier</i>)
Part I: Root causes of environmental problems—social science perspectives		
Lect 5 April 12	Overpopulation	(Newbold 2007, Chapters. 1 & 6; United Nations 2007)(Videos: <i>Paul Ehrlich & the Population Bomb; Blaming Women</i>)
Lect 6 April 14	Economic growth and consumerism	(McKibben 2007; De Graaf 2001; Myers 2004; Roberts 2006) (Video: <i>The Story of Stuff; Advertising & the End of the World</i>)
Lect 7 April 19	Political economy	(Foster 1999 Chapters. 1 & 6; Easterbrook 2003)(Video: <i>Congo - Heart of Darkness</i>)
Lect 8 April 21	Trade, globalization and environment	(<i>The Economist</i> 1999; Gallagher 2004; Esty 2001; Rodrik 2002; Pope 2002; Eviatar 2005; Reynolds 2004) (Video: <i>Global Banquet</i>)
Lect 9 April 26	Ideas of nature	(Kinsley 1995, 1995; Dean 2007; Leopold 1949)(Video: <i>Is god Green?</i>)
Part II: Social science solutions to environmental problems		
Lect 10 April 28	‘Sustainability’: what does it mean?	(Barr and Gilg 2006; Kates et al 2005; Redclift 2005; Rees 1997; Maniates 2002)(Video: <i>Easter Island</i>)
Lect 11 May 3	Environmental economics and ‘green’ markets	(Alam 2008; Ackerman 2008; BBC 2006; Doyle 2008) (Video: <i>Grounds for Hope</i>)
Lect 12 May 5	Ecological economics and natural capitalism	(Arrow et al. 1995; Daly 1993; Rees 2003; Lovins, Lovins, and Hawken 1999) (Video: <i>The Nature of Business</i>)
Lect 13 May 10	Environmental Communication and Conflict Resolution	(Milstein 2009; Burger et al 2009; Simon 2009) (Video: <i>Ecotoons</i>)
Lect 14 May 12	Environmental justice	(Joseph 2005; Srinivasan et al. 2008; Wissenburg 2006; Harcourt 2008) (Video: <i>Green/ The Wrath of Grapes</i>)
Part III: Applying social science concepts to real-world environmental problems		
Lect 15 May 17	Biodiversity & conservation	(Whitty 2007; Quammen 2006; Dowie 2008)
May 19	Class presentations	Part I
May 24	Class presentations	Part II
May 26	Class presentations	Part III
May 31	Memorial Day (no class)	
Lect 16 Dec. 2	Conclusions	(Shellenberger and Nordhaus 2004)

Reading list

- Ackerman, Frank. 2008. Climate economics in four easy pieces. *Development* 51:325-331.
- Alam, Khorshed. 2008. Cost-benefit analysis of restoring Buriganga River, Bangladesh. *Water Resources Development* 24 (4):593-607.
- Arrow, Kenneth, Bert Bolin, Robert Costanza, and Partha Dasgupta. 1995. Economic growth, carrying capacity, and the environment. *Science* 268 (5210):520 (2 pages).
- Athanasiou, Tom. 2010. Forward from Copenhagen: the Emissions Emergency is a Crisis of Justice. <http://eii.org/journal/index.php/eij/article/copenhagen>
- Barr, Stewart, and Gilg, Andrew. 2006. Sustainable lifestyles: Framing environmental action in and around the home. *Geoforum*, 37: 906-920.
- BBC. 2006. Climate change fight 'can't wait': The world cannot afford to wait before tackling climate change, the UK prime minister has warned. Tuesday, 31 October.
- Burger, Joanna, Gochfeld, Michael, and Pletnikoff, Karen. 2009. Collaboration versus communication: The Department of Energy's Amchitka Island and the Aleut Community. *Environmental Research*, 109 (4): 503-510.
- Cunningham, Mary Ann. 1998. Tragedy of the Commons. In *Environmental Encyclopedia*, edited by W. P. Cunningham. Detroit: Gale.
- Daly, Herman. 1993. Steady-state economics: a new paradigm. *New Literary History* 24 (4):811 (6 pages).
- De Graaf, John. 2001. *Affluenza*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Dean, Cornelia. 2007. Science of the soul? 'I think therefore I am' is losing force. *New York Times*, June 26, Science, 1.
- Dowie, Mark. 2008. The Wrong Path to Conservation. *The Nation*:11-17.
- Downing, Jim. 2004. Elwha dam removal gets final go-ahead. *Seattle Times*, August 6. http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2001998230_elwha06m.html
- Doyle, Alistair. 2008. Economics seen bolstering case to protect nature. *CommonDreams.org* October 9.
- Easterbrook, Gregg. 2003. Axle of Evil: America's twisted love affair with sociopathic cars. *The New Republic* January 20:27-35.
- Esty, Daniel C. 2001. Bridging the trade-environment debate. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 15 (3):113-130.
- Eviatar, Daphne. 2005. A Toxic Trade-off. *The Washington Post*, August 14, B1.
- Foster, John Bellamy. 1999. *The vulnerable planet: a short economic history of the environment*. New ed. New York: Monthly Review Press, Chs. 1 & 6 (pp. 11-33, 108-124).
- Gallagher, Kevin P. 2004. Paying for NAFTA. *NACLA Report on the Americas* 38 (1):47.
- Grossman, Elizabeth. 2004. Restoring the Elwha River could change public thinking about America's rivers. *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, December 12. <http://www.fwee.org/news/getStory?story=1316>
- Harcourt, Wendy. 2008. Editorial: Walk the talk: Putting climate justice into action. *Development*, 51: 307-309.
- Henson, Robert. 2006. *The rough guide to climate change*. London; New York: Rough Guides: Distributed by Penguin Group.
- IISD. 2009. A brief analysis of the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference. *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, 12 (459): 27-29.
- Joseph, Pat. 2005. Robert Bullard Interview, Race and Poverty are out of the closet: Hurricane Katrina exposes the wounds of environmental injustice. *Sierra*, 90(6): 28-29.
- Kates, Robert W., Thomas M. Parris, and Anthony Leiserowitz. 2005. What is sustainable development? *Environment* April:8-21.
- Kinsley, David R. 1995. Christianity as Ecologically Harmful. In *Ecology and Religion: ecological spirituality in cross-cultural perspective*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

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- Lovins, Amory B., L. Hunter Lovins, and Paul Hawken. 1999. A road map for natural capitalism. *Harvard Business Review* 77 (3):145-158.
- Maniates, Michael. 2002. Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World? In *Confronting Consumption*. The MIT Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- McKibben, Bill. 2007. Reversal of Fortune. *MotherJones* April-May: 32-43, 87-88.
- Milstein, Tema. 2009. Environmental Communication Theories. *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory*. Eds. Littlejohn, Stephen and Foss, Caren. Sage Publications, Los Angeles, CA. 344-349.
- Myers, David G. 2004. What is the good life? *Yes!* (30):12-16.
- Narain, Sunita. 2009. Copenhagen: Excluding people and voices for an unfair deal. *Outreach*: 1-2.
- Newbold, K. Bruce. 2007. *Six billion plus: world population in the twenty-first century*. 2nd ed, *Human geography in the new millennium*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
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- Quammen, David. 2006. An endangered idea. *National Geographic* October: 62-67.
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- Roberts, Sam. 2006. Fatter, taller and thirstier Americans. *The New York Times*, December 15.
- Rodrik, Dani. 2002. Globalization for whom? *Harvard Magazine* (July-August):29-31.
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- Shigley, Paul. 2008. Dam Yanking. *Planning* 74 (8):36-39.
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- Srinivasan, U. T., S. P. Carey, E. Hallstein, P. A. T. Higgins, A. C. Kerr, L. E. Koteen, A. B. Smith, R. Watson, J. Harte, and R. B. Norgaard. 2008. The debt of nations and the distribution of ecological impacts from human activities. *Proceedings Of The National Academy Of Sciences Of The United States Of America* 105 (5):1768-1773.
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- The Economist*. 1999. Why greens should love trade. (October 7):17-18.
- UNFCCC 2009. Copenhagen Accord. http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/cop_15/application/pdf/cop15_cph_auv.pdf Access date: February 17, 2010, 10:29 am.
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- Whitty, Julia. 2006. The Thirteenth Tipping Point: Twelve Global Disasters and One Powerful Antidote. *Mother Jones*:44-51, 100-101.
- Wissenburg, Marcel. 2006. *Global and ecological justice: Prioritizing conflicting demands*. *Environmental Values*, 15 (4): 425-440.
- Yearwood Jr., Rev. Lennox and McKibben, Bill. 2009. People, let's get our carbon down. *The Nation*: 17-18.