

**The Chinese University of Hong Kong
The Department of Sociology**

**SOCI3239 Issues in Environment and Society
Term 2, 2021 – 2022**

ABRIDGED COURSE OUTLINE FOR REFERENCE

Date: Every Thursday
Time: 11:30 – 13:15
Venue: CC Lib CK TSE
Mode of teaching: Face-to-face

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Course Overview

This course is designed to help students acquire fundamental knowledge and skills to examine and analyze the various environmental challenges in contemporary societies from a sociological perspective. Recognizing that environmental problems are often intricately connected with the conditions of societies that they are situated in, we will explore the processes underlying social and environmental changes as well as the consequences that those processes may entail at national, regional, and global levels. Substantive topics to be covered include limits of growth and development, sustainable production and consumption, climate change and global governance, and environmental movement. The course also aims to promote an awareness and understanding of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) framework put forward by the United Nations in 2015 so as to facilitate a broader discussion and reflection on how individuals and societies can work together and find solutions to those environmental challenges.

Course learning outcomes

1. Describe and explain the major sociological concepts, theories, and approaches that examine the relationship between environment and societal development
2. Identify and critically analyze the processes underlying social and environmental changes as well as the consequences that those processes may entail at national, regional, and global levels
3. Understand the United Nation's framework of Sustainable Development Goals
4. Reflect on their own potential and capability to act for sustainable development

Assessment

1. Short response exercise (20%)

In the short writing exercise, students will be asked to analyze an environmental issue in a society as reported in academic or media journal. Students are expected to analyze the environmental issue by identifying and applying the relevant and significant concepts, theories, and perspectives learned in the course. Further instruction for the short writing exercise will be announced to all students toward the middle of the term.

Due date: **To be announced (Veriguide Assignment Number 1)**
Word limit (maximum): English 1,500 words (excluding end-of-text reference list)
中文 1,800 字 (不包括文末參考書目)
Format: Font size 12 and double-line spacing

2. Final take-home essay (50%)

In the final take-home essay, students will be asked to demonstrate their critical understanding of the concepts, theories, and perspectives learned throughout the course. It is necessary to engage in dialogue with major sociological debates in the relationship between environment and society. Further instruction for the final take-home essay will be announced to all students toward the end of the term.

Due date: **To be announced (Veriguide Assignment Number 2)**
Word limit (maximum): English 2,000 words (excluding end-of-text reference list)
中文 2,300 字 (不包括文末參考書目)
Format: Font size 12 and double-line spacing

Some important points to note for the submission of written assignments (both the short writing exercise and the final take-home essay) are as follows:

1. Please submit a soft copy of the assignment with a signed Veriguide receipt to the submission portal at the Blackboard module of the course. Do NOT submit via email. Late submission will be subject to penalty. The grade of the submission will be lowered by one subgrade for each day of late submission (e.g. late for one day, from B+ to B; submission late for less than a day will also be treated as a submission late for one day).
2. Your assignment must include proper in-text citation and end-of-text reference list. The recommended citation styles are the most updated versions adopted by the American Sociological Association (ASA) and the American Psychological Association (APA). Your attention is drawn to the following documents:
 - Honesty in Academic Work: A Guide for Students and Teachers:
[https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_hm_files_\(2013-14\)/p03.htm](https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_hm_files_(2013-14)/p03.htm)
 - Guideline for proper citation format by Department of Sociology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong:
<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/soc/citation.pdf>

3. Please make sure that your essay has a cover page and please include the following information: **course code, course name, your full name (underline your surname), student identification number, and a word count (main text only, excluding cover page and end-of-text reference list)**

3. Tutorial Group presentation (30%)

Students will be invited to form smaller groups in your tutorial class for your group assessment. The number of students in each group will depend on the size of the tutorial class. Each group will select a topic of interest that discusses the relationships(s) between environment and society in local, national, regional, and/or global context(s). Each group will then give a presentation on the chosen topic and lead a discussion with fellow classmates, which aim to promote better understanding on the topic. Further instruction be announced to all students in the first tutorial session.

Regarding honesty in academic work

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures.

- In the case of group projects, all members of the group should be asked to sign the declaration, each of whom is responsible and liable to disciplinary actions, irrespective of whether he/she has signed the declaration and whether he/she has contributed, directly or indirectly, to the problematic contents.
- For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment.

Assignments without the properly signed declaration will not be graded by teachers.

Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

The submission of a piece of work, or a part of a piece of work, for more than one purpose (e.g. to satisfy the requirements in two different courses) without declaration to this effect shall be regarded as having committed undeclared multiple submissions. It is common and acceptable to reuse a turn of phrase or a sentence or two from one's own work; but wholesale reuse is problematic. In any case, agreement from the course teacher(s) concerned should be obtained prior to the submission of the piece of work.

The copyright of the teaching materials, including lecture notes, assignments and examination questions etc., produced by staff members/ teachers of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) belongs to CUHK. Students may download the teaching materials produced by the staff members/ teachers from the Learning Management Systems, e.g. Blackboard adopted by CUHK for their own educational use, but shall not distribute/ share/ copy the materials to a third-party without seeking prior permission from the staff members/ teachers concerned.

Regarding grading system

Grade Descriptors

- A Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
- A- Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.
- B Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.
- C Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
- D Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.
- F Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.

Schedule of Lecture

Date	Topic	Description	
TBA	01	Introduction	
TBA	02	Understanding environment and society I	
TBA	03	Understanding environment and society II	
		Lunar New Year Holiday	
TBA	04	Mind the gap between knowledge and action	
TBA	05	Is there a limit to growth?	
TBA	06	Greening consumption	
TBA	07	Sustainable production and development	
TBA	08	Climate change and global governance	
TBA	09	Environmental Justice	
TBA	10	Environment movement	
TBA	11	Water as a valuable resource for life	
		Reading week	
TBA	12	Hunger around the world	
TBA	13	Conclusion	

TBA refers to “To be arranged”

Note: Due to the volatile circumstance of the ongoing pandemic, the arrangement of the course may be subject to change. Please pay attention to any further announcement from the university as well as the course.

List of readings by topics

Topic 01 Introduction

Required reading

Auriffeille, D. M., & King, L. (2020). Environmental problems require social solutions. In L. King, & D. M. Auriffeille (Eds.), *Environmental sociology: From analysis to action* (4th ed., pp. 1-22). Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

Suggested reading

Pellow, D. N., & Brehm, H. N. (2013). An environmental sociology for the twenty-first century. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 39(1), 229-250.

Topic 02 Understanding environment and society I

Required Reading

Mol, A. P. J., & Spaargaren, G. (2000). Ecological modernisation theory in debate: A review. *Environmental Politics*, 9(1), 17-49.

Suggested reading

York, R., & Rosa, E. A. (2003). Key challenges to ecological modernization theory: Institutional efficacy, case study evidence, units of analysis, and the pace of eco-efficiency. *Organization & Environment*, 16(3), 273-288.

Topic 03 Understanding environment and society II

Required Reading

Burns, T. J., Kick, E. L., & Davis, B. L. (2003). Theorizing and rethinking linkages between the natural environment and the modern world-system: Deforestation in the late 20th century. *Journal of World-Systems Research*, 9(2), 357-390.

Suggested reading

Moore, J. W. (2003). "The modern world-system" as environmental history? Ecology and the rise of capitalism. *Theory & Society*, 32(3), 307-377.

Topic 04 Mind the gap between knowledge and action

Required Reading

Jensen, B. B., & Schnack, K. (1997). The action competence approach in environmental education. *Environmental Education Research*, 3(2), 163-178.

Suggested reading

Kollmuss, A., & Agyeman, J. (2002). Mind the gap: Why do people act environmentally and what are the barriers to pro-environmental behavior? *Environmental Education Research*, 8(3), 239-260.

Topic 05 Is there a limit to growth?

Required Reading

Dinda, S. (2004). Environmental Kuznets curve hypothesis: A survey. *Ecological Economics*, 49(4), 431-455.

Suggested reading

Jorgenson, A. K. (2005) Unpacking international power and the ecological footprints of nations: A quantitative cross-national study. *Sociological Perspectives*, 48(3), 383–402.

Topic 6 Greening consumption

Required Reading

Hinton, E. D., & Goodman, M. K. (2010). Sustainable consumption: Developments, considerations and new directions. In M. R. Redclift, & G. Woodgate (Eds.), *The international handbook of environmental sociology* (2nd ed., pp.245-261). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

Suggested reading

Jorgenson, A. K. (2003). Consumption and environmental degradation: Cross-national analysis of ecological footprint. *Social Problems*, 50(3), 374-394.

Topic 07 Sustainable production and development

Required Reading

Lélé, S. M. (1991). Sustainable development: A critical review. *World Development*, 19(6), 607-621.

Suggested reading

Corral, C. M. (2003). Sustainable production and consumption systems—cooperation for change: assessing and simulating the willingness of the firm to adopt/develop cleaner technologies. The case of the In-Bond industry in northern Mexico. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 11(4), 411-426.

Topic 8 Climate change and global governance

Required Reading

Falzon, D., Roberts, J. T., & Brulle, R. J. (2021). Sociology and climate change: A review and research agenda. In B. S. Caniglia, A. Jorgenson, S. A. Malin, L. Peek, D. N. Pellow, X. R. Huang (Eds.), *Handbook of environmental sociology* (pp. 189-217). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Suggested reading

Dietz, T., Shwom, R. L., & Whitley, C. T. (2020). Climate change and society. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 46, 135-58.

Topic 09 Environmental justice

Required Reading

King, L. (2020). Environmental justice and capitalism. In K. Legun, J. C. Keller, M. Carolan, & M. M. Bell (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of environmental sociology* (Vol. 1, pp. 452-469). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Suggested reading

Taylor, D. E. (2000). The rise of the environmental justice paradigm: Injustice framing and the social construction of environmental discourses. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 43(4), 508-580.

Topic 10 Environment movement

Required Reading

Mol, A. P. J. (2000). The environmental movement in an era of ecological modernisation. *Geoforum*, 31(1), 45-56.

Suggested reading

Kirk, J., Nyberg, D., & Wright, C. (2021). Divided yet united: Balancing convergence and divergence in environmental movement mobilization. *Environmental Politics*, DOI: [10.1080/09644016.2021.1981082](https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2021.1981082)

Topic 11 Water as a valuable resource for life

Required Reading

Budds, J., & McGranahan, G. (2003). Are the debates on water privatization missing the point? Experiences from Africa, Asia and Latin America. *Environment and Urbanization*, 15(2), 87-114.

Suggested reading

Bel, G., Fageda, X., & Warner, M. E. (2010), Is private production of public services cheaper than public production? A meta-regression analysis of solid waste and water services. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 29(3), 553–577.

Topic 12 Hunger in the world

Required Reading

Buttel, F. H. (2000). Ending hunger in developing countries. *Contemporary Sociology*, 29(1), 13-27.

Suggested reading

Jenkins, J. C., & Scanlan, S. J. (2001). Food security in less developed countries, 1970-1990. *American Sociological Review*, 66(5), 718-744.

Topic 13 Conclusion

Required Reading

Dobson, A. (2007). Environmental citizenship: Towards sustainable development. *Sustainable Development*, 15(5), 276–285.

Suggested reading

Dunlap, R. E. (2010). The maturation and diversification of environmental sociology: From constructivism and realism to agnosticism and pragmatism. In M. R. Redclift, & G. Woodgate (Eds.), *The international handbook of environmental sociology* (2nd ed., pp. 15-32). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Further reference:

General reference on environmental sociology

Bell, M. M., Leslie, I. S., Schlachter, L. H., & Ashwood, L. L. (2021). *An invitation to environmental sociology* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Gould, K. A., & Lewis, T. L. (2020). *Twenty lessons in environmental sociology* (3rd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

King, L., & Auriffeille, D. M. (Eds.). (2020). *Environmental Sociology: From Analysis to Action* (4th ed.). Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

Advanced reference on environmental sociology

Legun, K., Keller, J., Carolan, M., & Bell, M. (Eds.) (2020). *The Cambridge handbook of environmental sociology* (Vol. 1 & 2). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Redclift, M. R., & Woodage, G. (Eds.) (2010). *The International Handbook of Environmental Sociology* (2nd ed.). Cheltenham, U.K.: Edward Elgar.

Caniglia, B. S., Jorgenson, A., Malin, S. A., Peek, L., Pellow, D. N., & Huang, X. R. (Eds.) (2021). *Handbook of environmental sociology*. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Recommended Academic Journals

Environmental Politics

Environmental Sociology

Organization and Environment

Environmental Education Research

Recommended Resource Websites

Sustainable Development Goals, The United Nations

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>

Council for Sustainable Development, Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

<https://www.enb.gov.hk/en/susdev/council/index.htm>

Environmental Protection Department, Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

<https://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/top.html>