

Environment and Society

Spring 2007

Laurel Phoenix

Office: MAC A324

Classroom: MAC 105, MWF 10:00 – 10:50

Email: phoenixl@uwgb.edu

Office Hours: Th 11-12, F 12-12:30, or by appt.

Course Objectives:

As a general education course, this course provided an understanding of the social sciences, including: major concepts of social, political, geographic and economic structures; and the impact that social institutions and values have on individuals and groups in a culture.

More specifically, this course provides a framework for students to relate social attitudes and actions concerning resource use to the current state of the physical environment. The relationship between humans and our biophysical environment will be investigated at local, national, and global levels to understand how personal attitudes, cultural beliefs, economics, politics, technology and available resources combine to create varying environmental problems across the landscape. The following questions will guide our readings and discussions:

- In what ways do human beings contribute to environmental problems?
- How have societies responded to environmental problems?
- What is the distribution and severity of public and ecological risks?
- How many people can the Earth support, and with what level of consumption of resources?
- How do social attitudes affect policy, consumption, and conservation?
- How do environmental ethics shape attitudes? Do intergenerational equity, environmental justice, animal rights, etc. have standing in law and policy?
- Can current institutions and laws developed to deal with environmental pollution and resource use resolve the more fundamental issues arising out of increasing conflicts over land use, energy, food, and growth?
- Can technological fixes solve environmental problems?
- Can “getting the prices right” solve environmental problems?
- Are there limits to economic growth and/or human development?
- Can we live sustainably and/or equitably in a global community?

The range of issues covered during the semester are as follows:

- Environment, ecosystems and environmental problems
- History and Geography of Global Change – distribution, intensity, and type of problem
- Culture and civilization, human systems
 - Cultural influences on environmental attitudes
 - Population, resource availability, food
 - Energy use, consumerism, technology
 - Industrial and non-industrial societies
- Environmental health
- Social dilemmas – environmental justice
- Annoyance, uncertainty and risk
- Institutions, property rights, rights of the polity
- Environmental attitudes and behavior
- Environmental ethics
- Environmental movements
- State and environmental policy

- Transforming Structures: Markets, Politics, and Policy
Markets, externalities, goods without price, scarcity, economic efficiency and opportunity cost, political economy
- Globalization
- World Trade, International Environmental Policy
- Sustainability

Course Requirements

Class attendance and participation in discussions and activities is an important part of this course. Midterms and the final will give the students an opportunity to integrate issues through essay format. Grade evaluation is based on the following:

Attendance/homeworks/ participation	15%	
1 st midterm	25%	Feb. 16, Friday
2 nd midterm	25%	Mar 30, Friday
Final	<u>35%</u>	May 11. Friday, 10:30-12:30
	100%	

Activities in the class will include leading and participating in topical discussions of readings, discussing various views, group decision-making practicums for developing policies that incorporate environmental ethics and justice in policy outcomes. Information will be presented through text readings and journal articles on reserve at Cofrin, lecture/discussion, and a variety of visuals (slides, overheads, etc.). Bring your Atlas, maps and 6 colored pencils to class each day.

Required Texts:

- 1) Allen, John. 2001. Student Atlas of World Geography, 4th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- 2) Walters, Mark J. 2003. Six Modern Plagues: and How We Are Causing Them. Washington, D.C., Island Press.
- 3) Brown, Lester. R. 2004. Outgrowing the Earth. New York: Norton.
- 4) There will be many readings available through electronic reserve at the library.
- 5) You will need to buy blank maps at the bookstore, I will announce in class how many.

Important notes:

- The final is only given at the allotted time in the campus schedule. **NO exceptions**
- Creating a distraction in class will result in your dismissal from class. Distractions include talking, passing notes, personal grooming, using electronic equipment of any kind, etc.
- Do not email me to tell me that you won't be in class, or to ask what an assignment was.

Students with Disabilities

Note:

Consistent with the federal law and the policies of the University of Wisconsin, it is the policy of the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay to provide appropriate and necessary accommodations to students with documented physical and learning disabilities. If you anticipate requiring any auxiliary aids or services, you should contact me or the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities at 465-2841 as soon as possible to discuss your needs and arrange for the provision of services.

General Sequence of Overarching Topics Covered, subtopics not listed

Media vs. knowledge

Sustainability

Ecosystems and environments

Coexistence and competition with other species

Resources – The foundation of industry and society

Renewable and Non-renewable

Who controls which resources?

Population

Population vs. consumerism

Do you need it, or do you want it?

The Ends of Affluence

Energy

Agriculture – Farming and Pharming

Cubits of death (famine)

Food contamination

Factory farms - CAFOs

Land – Cows, pigs, chickens, turkeys

Sea - Shrimp, fish

The Empty Ocean

Current laws

Divide and conquer

Industry and govt.

Limits to economic growth

Getting prices right

Globalization

Race to the bottom

Private profit (privatization)

Global climate, ozone, and international treaties

Humans contribute to environmental problems

Public and ecological risks

Sacrifice zones

Hormone disruptors

Technological fixes to environmental problems

Risk and uncertainty

Social attitudes

Property rights

Topics listed with associated good books for further reading:

Media vs. knowledge

Sustainability

Ecosystems and environments

- Frey, Richard Scott, ed. (2000). *The Environment and Society Reader*. New York, NY: Allyn & Bacon.
- Schnaiberg, Allan and Kenneth Gould. (1993). *Environment and Society: The Enduring Conflict*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.
- Tellegen, Egbert and Maarten Wolsink. (1998). *Society and Its Environment: An Introduction*. Newark, NJ: Gordon and Breach.

Coexistence with other species

- Catton, William R. Jr. (1980). *Overshoot: The Ecological Basis of Revolutionary Change*. Chicago, IL: University Of Illinois Press.

Resources

Good books:

- Glennon, R. (2002). *Water Follies: Groundwater Pumping and the Fate of America's Fresh Waters*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.
- Abromovitz, Janet N. (1998). *Worldwatch Paper #140: Taking a Stand: Cultivating a New Relationship with the World's Forests*.
- Abramovitz, Janet (1996). *Imperiled Waters, Impoverished Future: The Decline of Freshwater Ecosystems* (Worldwatch Paper 128). Washington D.C.: Worldwatch Institute.
- (2004). *State of the World 2004 Special Focus: The Consumer Society*.

Population

Population vs. consumerism

Good books:

- Lasn, Kalle. (1999). *Culture Jam: How to Reverse America's Suicidal Consumer Binge – and Why We Must*. New York, NY: Quill.
- Schor, Juliet B. and Douglas B. Holt. (2000). *The Consumer Society Reader*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Rosenblatt, Roger. (1999). *Consuming Desires: Consumption, Culture, and the Pursuit of Happiness*. Washington D.C.: Island Press.
- Kane, Hal. (2001). *Triumph of the Mundane: The Unseen Trends That Shape Our Lives and Environment*. Washington D.C.: Island Press.
- Hays, C. L. (January 1, 2003). *Preaching Against the 'Evil' of Consumerism*. The New York Times (www.nytimes.com).

Energy

Agriculture

- Gilbert, Dennis. 2003. *The American Class Structure: In an Age of Growing Inequality*. 6th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Cubits of death (famine)

Factory farms (land and sea)

Food contamination

Current laws

Divide and conquer

Good books:

Mokhiber, R. & Weissman, R. (1999). *Corporate Predators: The Hunt for Mega-Profits and the Attack on Democracy*. Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press.

Stauber, John and Sheldon Rampton. (1995). *Toxic Sludge is Good for You: Lies, Damn Lies and the Public Relations Industry*. Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press.

Industry and govt.

Good books:

Silverstein, K. (1998). *Washington at \$10 Million a Day: How Lobbyists Plunder the Nation*. Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press.

Rampton, Sheldon and John Stauber. (2001). *Trust Us, We're Experts: How Industry Manipulates Science and Gambles With Your Future*. New York, NY: Penguin.

Tokar, Brian (1997). *Earth For Sale: Reclaiming Ecology in the Age of Corporate Greenwash*. Boston, MA: South End Press.

Gonzalez, George A. (2001). *Corporate Power and the Environment: The Political Economy of U.S. Environmental Policy*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Bollier, David. (2002). *Silent Theft: The Private Plunder of our Common Wealth*. New York: Routledge.

Limits to economic growth

Getting prices right

Daly, Herman E. and Kenneth N. Townsend, eds. (1994). *Valuing the Earth: Economics, Ecology, Ethics*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Globalization

Korton, D. C. (1995). *When Corporations Rule the World*. West Hartford, CT and San Francisco, CA: Kumarian Press, Inc. and Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Race to the bottom

Private profit (privatization)

Good books:

Ward, D. R. (2002). *Water Wars: Drought, Flood, Folly, and the Politics of Thirst*. New York, NY: Riverhead Books.

Barlow, M. & Clarke, T. (2002). *Blue Gold: The Fight to Stop the Corporate Theft of the World's Water*. New York, NY: The New Press.

Global climate, ozone, and international treaties

Humans contribute to environmental problems

Good books:

Markowitz, G. & Rosner, D. (2002). *Deceit and Denial: The Deadly Politics of Industrial Pollution*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Hofrichter, R. (ed.) (2002). *Toxic Struggles: The Theory and Practice of Environmental Justice*. Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers.

Wilson, Duff. (2001). *Fateful Harvest: The True Story of a Small Town, A Global Industry, and a Toxic Secret*. New York: HarperCollins.

Public and ecological risks

Hofrichter, Richard, Ed. (2000). *Reclaiming the Environmental Debate: The Politics of Health in a Toxic Culture*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Sacrifice zones

Hormone disruptors

Schettler, Ted M.D., Gina Solomon, M.D., Maria Valenti, and Annette Huddle. (1999). *Generations at Risk: Reproductive Health and the Environment*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Colborn, T., Dumanoski, D., & Myers, J. P. (1996). *Our Stolen Future: Are We Threatening our Fertility, Intelligence, and Survival?—A Scientific Detective Story*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, USA Inc.

Technological fixes to environmental problems

Risk and uncertainty

Social attitudes

Property rights

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Related Good Books:

ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY WEB SITES

DEMOGRAPHICS:

<http://demography.anu.edu.au/VirtualLibrary/>

www.Trinity.edu/~mkearl/demorap.html

www.popcouncil.org

www.populationinstitute.org/

www.zpg.org/ Zero Population Growth

ETHICS:

www.cep.unt.edu/novice.html/ History of...

<http://environlink.netforchange.com/>

www.utm.edu/research/iep/e/environm.htm

JUSTICE:

http://nvc.cc.ca.us/~janet/INFO_ET/pages_Environmentaljustice/page_Environmentaljustice1.html

<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~jrajzer/nre/>

www.ecok.edu/~polsci/envrjust/ejlinks/ejlinks.html

HEALTH:

www.hooked.net/users/verdant/index.htm

www.vironweb.org/issues/enough/index.htm/#cont

<http://ehis.niehs.nih.gov/>

www.nsc.org/ehc.htm