

SOCIOLOGY 005: PLANET IN PERIL ~ ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND SOCIETY **Boston College, Fall 2006**

Course Information

Course ID #1510

Classroom: Gasson 309

Class time: Tuesday & Thursday 3:00 PM

Section: 01 Exam Group: 13

Course Website: Please visit WebCT regularly.

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Office hours: Wednesday 1:30 - 3:30 PM,

Thursday 1:00 - 2:45, and by appointment

Course Overview and Goals

This course is an introduction to environmental sociology. During the semester we explore the relationship between human societies and the larger natural environment of which they are a part. Our principle focus is contemporary society, especially present-day American society, but in order to gain some perspective on our contemporary ecological circumstances, we also review the history of resource use, wilderness preservation, pollution, various environmental movements, and other developments with significant ecological implications. To broaden our perspective further, we also look at ecological issues and practices in other societies. As we pursue these investigations, we make use of a cross-section of sociological modes of analysis.

A central theme that emerges in this course is that the environmental issues we face are almost always profoundly social issues, as well. Sociology points us beyond technical and scientific issues to the social roots of contemporary environmental issues. Why have some societies treated their environment differently than others? What makes the way modern societies interact with their environment different from the way earlier ones did? Is it technology and industrialization? Is it our economic system? Is it too much or too little democracy? Does religion or culture make a difference? Does science help, or is it actually part of the problem? Sociology also raises questions that have significant justice implications. How do power and status affect whose ideas about natural resources are given priority? And who actually suffers the effects of pollution, toxic waste, loss of biodiversity, and environmental degradation?

Since this is an introductory course, students are not expected to have a background in sociology or in environmental science. Certainly, any background you do bring will enhance your appreciation of the material we cover, but we should cover enough new and interesting ground that everyone will be on a more or less equal footing.

In keeping with the introductory nature of this course, we will cover a fairly wide range of topics, but at the same time, we will not be able to pursue any in great depth. As a result, you will not walk away with final answers to all the questions we raise. Instead, we will give contour to those questions: We will highlight their significance and begin to understand how to approach them. We will review certain established lines of thought and analysis. We will try to understand where the issues raised fit into the larger scheme of things. In other words, our goal is to provide a foundation for an informed, critical approach to contemporary environmental issues in society.

Ultimately, sociology is part of a larger attempt to gain a critical and reflexive grasp of what is taking place in society and how we should respond. The boundaries between what you read in the news, other social commentary, and sociology itself are not hard and fast. What sets sociology apart is its theoretical nature, its reliance on evidence, and the rigor of its standards of argument. Sociology strives to be more systematic and empirical than other modes of reflecting on society. Nonetheless, sociology takes place in the same social world as these other modes of social reflection. It draws on them and contributes to them. This course will

examine how sociology can contribute to an important large-scale debate taking place in our society today, the debate concerning our responsibility for the state of the natural environment and, indeed, of the planet itself.

The notion that there are long-running, sophisticated debates taking place in society is crucial to note. It should constitute a central theme of your university education. Education at a prior stage emphasized mastering a certain body of knowledge and skills, usually as they were summarized in a textbook. But central to a university education is the admission that the answers are not "in the book". What you get from a university education is not the answers to debates taking place in society, but the resources you need to participate in them.

This course is also a Core course. At Boston College, courses in the Core are designed to serve a number of important objectives. They raise perennial questions, the deeper questions of human and social existence. They include a substantial historical component, because history provides a crucial perspective on the origins of our society and on the very disciplines in which we are engaged. Core courses further enrich our perspective by taking into account the cultural diversity of the world in which we live. They expose us to the range of methods that characterize a discipline. They include a significant writing component. And they provide some opportunity for assimilating the material we have covered on a more personal, existential level. How this course addresses these objectives is spelled out below.

Perennial questions: This course addresses certain larger, perennial philosophical 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 are the justice considerations this provokes?

Historical approach: In order to gain a critical perspective on the ecological issues that have arisen in contemporary society, this course traces the social history of these issues. It also traces the history of thought about ecological and environmental matters, both in the United States and, to a lesser extent, in the developing world. And it reviews the emergence of key institutions for addressing these matters.

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. To the extent that we can, we will hear what people have to say in their own voice.

Methodology in social science: Throughout the semester we will make use of a full range of the modes of analysis that social scientists have developed for exploring the questions we consider. These methods include demography, Marxist analysis, historical methods, statistical analysis, the construction of nature and social issues, framing, cultural analysis, rational choice and "game" theory, and world systems theory. More than exploring particular modes of sociological analysis, in this course we will also reflect more generally on the crucial contribution that a sociological perspective can lend to any question.

Writing: This course also includes a significant writing component. There are four critical essays and two written exams. (See the sections "Critical Essays" and "Exams" below for more information.) All essays should be carefully written. They will be graded with care.

Creating a personal philosophy: The overall goal of this course is not merely to accumulate facts and abstract ideas, but to be able to follow and participate in contemporary debates concerning ecological issues. In particular, the final classes of the course and the fourth essay explore ways of integrating what we have learned on a more personal, existential level. Insofar as we are members of the university community, consumers, members of religious and community groups, citizens, and (in the future) workers or corporate decision makers, what are the implications of what we have studied for the lives we are to lead?

Course Outline and Reading Assignments

Note: "**Course text**" refers to readings in one of the texts available for purchase at the B.C. Bookstore.
"**eText**" refers to a reading on "Readings" page of Course Website, which you access via your WebCT.

9/5-7 Definitions, Issue, Debates

Defining Ecological Issues

Frey, "Environmental Problems from the Local to the Global". eText. (optional)

Population, Food, and Hunger

Brown, "Eradicating Hunger". eText.

Eberstadt, "World Population Prospects for the 21st Century: Specter of 'Depopulation?'". eText.

Human Progress versus Ecological Collapse

Bailey, "The Progress Explosion: Permanently Escaping the Malthusian Trap". eText.

Lomborg, "Things Are Getting Better". eText.

9/12-14 The Economic System

Industrialization or Capitalism?

Foster, "Ecological Conditions before the Industrial Revolution". Course text (chapter 2).

_____, "The Environment at the Time of the Industrial Revolution". Course text (chapter 3).

The Modern Economy and its Ecological Implications

Foster, "Expansion and Conservation". Course text (chapter 4).

_____, "Imperialism and Ecology". Course text (chapter 5).

Consumer Society

Bell, "Consumption and Materialism" (chapter 2). eText.

Marx, "The Fetishism of the Commodity and its Secret". eText.

Recommended: Gardner, Assadourian, Sarin, "The State of Consumption Today". eText.

9/19-21 Modern Environmentalism

The Origins of Modern Environmentalism

Guha, "The Ideology of Scientific Conservationism". Course text (chapter 3).

_____, "The Growth of the Wilderness Idea". Course text (chapter 4).

The Sixties – A New Paradigm Emerges

Guha, "The Ecology of Affluence". Course text (chapter 5).

Sale, "Sixties Seedtime". eText (chapter 2).

Mainstream U.S. Environmentalism Since the Sixties

Sale, "Doomsday Decade". eText (chapter 3).

Sale, "Reagan Reaction". eText (chapter 4).

Sale, "Endangered Earth". eText (chapter 5).

➔ **First Essay due 9/26: Ecological Issues in Historical Perspective.**

9/26-28 Modern Environmentalism (continued)

The Limits of the Traditional Debate

Gottlieb, "Resources and Recreation: Limits of the Traditional Debate". Course text (chapter 1).

Locating Environmentalism in the Context of Social History

Gottlieb, "Urban and Industrial Roots: Seeking to Reform the System". Course text (chapter 2).

Environmentalism as Part of a Larger Social Critique

Gottlieb, "The Sixties Rebellion: The Search for a New Politics". Course text (chapter 3).

10/3-5 Social Justice and Environmental Issues

Gender, Justice, and Environmental Issues

Gottlieb, "Gender and Place: Women and Environmentalism". Course text (chapter 6).

Race, Justice, and Environmental Issues

Gottlieb, "Ethnicity as a Factor: The Quest for Environmental Justice". Course text (chapter 7).

Race, Justice, and Environmental Issues (continued)

Haggerty, "Crisis at Indian Creek". eText.

Grossman, "The People of Color Environmental Summit". eText.

10/10-12 Social Justice and Environmental Issues (continued)

Social Class, Justice, and Environmental Issues

Gottlieb, "A Question of Class: The Workplace Experience". Course text (chapter 8).

Social Class, Justice, and Environmental Issues (continued)

Levenstein, "Dying for a Living". eText.

Foster, "The Limits of Environmentalism Without Class". eText.

➔ *Second Essay due 10/17: Ecological Issues as Social Issues.*

10/17-19 Cultural & Religious Factors

The Debate on Christianity and Ecology

White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis". eText.

Allitt, "American Catholics and the Environment, 1960-1995". eText.

Recommended: Christiansen, "Ecology and the Common Good". eText.

Christian Environmentalism

Kearns, "Saving the Creation". eText.

Shibley, "The Greening of Mainline American Religion". eText.

Testing the Lynn White Thesis

Eckberg, "Varieties of Religious Involvement and Environmental Concerns". eText.

Greeley, "Religion and Attitudes toward the Environment". eText.

10/24-26 Midterm, Review, and Perspective

Voluntary Review Session

Midterm Exam

Go over Midterm, preview of remaining topics

10/31-11/2 Cultural & Religious Factors (continued)

Ecology and "Postmodern" Religion

Taylor, "Earth- & Nature-Based Spirituality I: From Deep Ecology to Radical Environmentalism".
_____, "Earth & Nature-Based Spirituality II: From Earth First! and Bioregionalism to Scientific Paganism and the New Age". Both eTexts.

Resources for an Ecological Ethic in Native American Traditions

Kinsley, "Mistassini Cree-Hunting as Religious Ritual". eText.
Grim, "Native North American Worldviews and Ecology". eText.

Resources for an Ecological Ethic in Hinduism and Buddhism

Narayanan, "Water, Wood, and Wisdom: Ecological Perspectives from the Hindu Traditions." eText.
Swearer, "Principles and Poetry, Places and Stories: The Resources of Buddhist Ecology". eText.

11/7-9 Cultural & Religious Factors (continued)

Resources for an Ecological Ethic in Chinese Traditions

Tu, "The Ecological Turn in New Confucian Humanism". eText.
Miller, "Envisioning the Daoist Body in the Economy of Cosmic Power". eText.

Culture, Rationality, and Modernity

Tu, "Beyond the Enlightenment Mentality." eText.
Murphy, "Rationalization and Ecological Irrationality" (chapter 2). eText.

11/14-16 Environmentalism Abroad

Perspectives from the Developing World

Guha, "The Southern Challenge". Course text (chapter 6).
Shiva, "Let Us Survive: Women, Ecology and Development". eText.

Environmental Movements in Taiwan and Thailand

Lee & So, "Environmental Movements in Taiwan". eText (chapter 2).
_____, "Environmental Movements in Thailand". eText (chapter 5).

Environmental Movements in the Philippines

Lee & So, "Environmental Movements in the Philippines". eText (chapter 6).
_____, "Culture and Asian Styles of Environmental Movements". eText (chapter 8).

11/21-28 Rational "Self-interest", Collective Regimes, and the Global Commons

➔ *Third Essay due 11/28: The Cultural Construction of Ecological Issues*

Rational Choice, Collective Behavior, and Ecology

"The Prisoners' Dilemma". eText.

Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons". eText.

Read first part: Olson, "A Theory of Groups and Organizations" (chapter 1). eText.

Recommended: Goldman, "Tragedy of the Commons or the Commoners' Tragedy". eText.

The Global Ecological Commons

Vogler, "The Governance of the Commons" (chapter 1). eText.

Global Ecological Regimes

Soroos, "Global Institutions and the Environment: An Evolutionary Perspective." eText.

Recommended: Brown, Chasek, & Porter, "The Emergence of Global Environmental Politics" (chapter 1) and "Actors in the Environmental Arena" (chapter 2). eText.

11/30-12/5 Democracy, Civil Society, and Ecology

Democracy, Civil Society, and Ecology

Brulle, "The Dynamics of the Environmental Movement". eText (chapter 10).

Recommended: Brulle, "Agency, Democracy, and the Environment". eText (chapter 11).

Local, International, and Global Eco-Social Movements

Wapner, "Greenpeace and Political Globalism". Course text (chapter 3).

_____, "The World Wildlife Fund and Political Localism". Course text (chapter 4).

Recommended: Wapner, "Friends of the Earth and Political Internationalism" (chapter 5). Course text.

Ecology and Global Civil Society

Lee & So, "The Impact of Democratization on Environmental Movements". eText (chapter 9).

Wapner, "Environmental Activism and World Civil Politics". Course text (chapter 6).

12/7 Response and Responsibility

➔ *Fourth Essay due 12/11: Ecological Issues and Our Social World.*

Alternative Economics - tentative

Daly, "The Shape of Current Thought on Sustainable Development". eText (Introduction).

Recommended: Daly, "Moving to a Steady-State Economy" and

"Elements of Environmental Macroeconomics". eText (chapters 1 & 2).

The University, the Churches, and Civil Society

Gardner, "Engaging Religion in the Quest for a Sustainable World". eText.

Uhl, "Process and Practice: Creating the Sustainable University". eText.

12/19 Final Exam

Final exam will take place Tuesday, December 19th from 9:00 AM to 12:00 noon.

About the Readings

The assigned readings constitute the bulk of the work you will have to do for this course. There are no problem sets, research projects, or term papers. Along with attending the lectures, doing the readings is the main vehicle for accomplishing the goals of this course.

Since the readings and lectures form the basis of this course, your primary task will be to master those readings and participate in class regularly. The Course Outline above lists the readings we will cover in a given week and the order in which we will do so. Keep pace with the readings to that you will be able to participate in class. During class we will refer to the readings, and I will offer some background to the larger debates in which they figure. If you do not prepare, you will not benefit fully from class.

The assigned essays all refer back to the course readings and lectures. In addition, they are designed warm over the material to help you when you prepare for the exams. In general, this course is designed so that each component builds upon the others in an integrated way. Therefore, if you keep up with the readings, you should find the papers and exams quite manageable.

One further comment: The readings were *not* chosen because the point of view they present is somehow the official point of view of this course. They were chosen because they reflect the state of the debate in society today; because they allow us to view the issues they treat from a range of vantages; or because (in most cases) they offer a perspective worthy of consideration, whether or not you ultimately find yourself in agreement. So read appreciatively but critically.

Focus Questions

In order to help you prepare, at the end of each class I will give you a preview of the readings for the next class. On the course website you will also find a series of focus questions pertaining to each unit. The focus questions highlight the main reasons the texts were assigned.

The focus questions give you an initial opportunity to work with the readings on your own. After you read the selections for a given class, review the relevant focus questions. Are you able to answer them? Perhaps not right off the bat. However, you should be able to go back over the readings and put together a response. Moreover, doing so will help you to appropriate and synthesize the material you just covered. You do not read in order to accumulate masses of inert data. You want to have active command of what you read.

By highlighting what is relevant in the assigned texts, the focus questions of each unit help you prepare to participate actively in class. In lecture, I may not always go back over the focus questions, but you are welcome to raise them yourself.

Finally, you should note that the midterm exam and two-thirds of the final exam are based on the focus questions (and on identifications which are included with the focus questions).

Where to Get the Readings

Each reading assignment in the Course Outline (above) is followed by the notation "**Course text**" or "**eText**". A reading followed by the designation "Course text" can be found in one of the texts available for purchase at the Boston College Bookstore. Those followed by "eText" can be found on the "Readings" page of the Course Website, which you can access via your WebCT.

The Course texts, available for purchase at the B.C. bookstore under "required texts" for SC005, are:

- Foster, John Bellamy. 1999. *The Vulnerable Planet*.
Gottlieb, Robert. 2005. *Forcing the Spring*.
Guha, Ramachandra. 2000. *Environmentalism*.
Wapner, Paul. 1996. *Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics*. Albany: SUNY Press.

The most useful of books for this course have also been made available at the Reserve Desk in O'Neill Library. In addition to the above Course texts, the reserve list includes the following:

- Bailey, Ronald. 2000. *Earth Report 2000*.
Bell, Michael Mayerfeld. 2004. *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*.
Brown, Janet W., Pamela S. Chasek, and Gareth Porter. 2000. *Global Environmental Politics*.
Bullard, Robert D., ed. *Unequal Protection: Environmental Justice and Communities of Color*.
Christiansen, Drew and Walter Grazer. 1996. *And God Saw That It Was Good*.
Faber, Daniel J. 1998. *The Struggle for Ecological Democracy*.
Frey, R. Scott. 2001. *The Environment and Society Reader*.
Lomborg, Bjorn. 2001. *The Skeptical Environmentalist*.
Merchant, Carolyn. 1980. *The Death of Nature*.
Ruether, Rosemary R. 1996. *Women Healing Earth*.
Schor, Juliet B. and Douglas B. Holt, eds. 2000. *The Consumer Society Reader*.
Tucker, Mary Evelyn and John A. Grim. 1994. *Worldviews and Ecology*.
Vig, Norman J., and others. 2005. *The Global Environment*.
Vogler, John. 1995. *The Global Commons*.

See "Course Bibliography" (below) for complete bibliographic information on all course readings.

Class Participation

In class, I provide background information for the readings, and I highlight what in the readings is significant for our purposes. We review and discuss many of the readings. I often begin class by soliciting your questions and feedback concerning the readings. I also ask questions of the class. Sometimes I will choose a person who has raised his or her hand in response to a question. Sometimes I will choose my "volunteers" at random. This interaction will help me gauge what made sense, what needs to be stressed, and so forth. For your part, please show up to class having done the reading for that day. That will give me something to work with.

The point is that you will not have done your job if you simply got through the readings and arrived at class with a mass of inert information. Plan to give yourself the time you need to begin to pull it all together: What were the readings about? What made sense? What questions do you have? How might this relate to previous readings or to themes we are building in the course? Do you see contradictions within a given argument or claim, or with previous readings? The more you take active command of the readings, the more you will get out of class. Our goal is not only to understand the readings, but also to gain some critical perspective on the concepts and analyses they provide. That means being able to go beyond the written text itself. In other words, the answers are not "in the book" somewhere. With that in mind, you cannot succeed in this class if you fail to attend and participate in class. That is where this course takes place. We do this show live.

Attendance will be recorded by means of a sign-in sheet that is passed around at the beginning of class. If you arrive late, you not only disrupt class; you may also miss the opportunity to sign in. Please be considerate and arrive on time.

I will try to keep track of the contributions you make to class. (I will not go out of my way to record lack of preparation, but I am sure it will make due impression, as well.)

If something beyond your control arises, and you cannot attend class, then you earn a make-up credit for that class in one of two ways. First, do the reading for a missed class and (if you are able) review another student's class notes. Then 1) either review the focus questions and see me during my office hours to go over them and the class you missed, or 2) email me written answers to the focus questions so that I can gauge whether or not you have grasped the main points of the unit.

I will give a number of quizzes throughout the semester, some announced in advance, some unannounced. Some may be graded plus, check, and minus. Others may not be graded. I may simply use them for gauging how well the class is assimilating the readings or for other pedagogical purposes.

OK, you may ask, so how does all this ultimately affect my grade? I keep track of attendance, quiz scores (for the rare graded quiz), and participation in class discussion; if you make up a class, I record that, as well. In the end, I look it all over to see the pattern that results. Were any absences the result of illness, joining the class late, or some other cause? Was there an attempt to make them up, or more broadly, to keep up with what is going on in class? And so forth. I do not follow a strict mathematical formula in determining your class grade.

In the end, class participation constitutes 10% of your final grade, so if your GPA is the outcome about which you "rationalize" your education, then that is what class participation counts for: 10%. But this is what it really means when it comes to figuring out your final grade: Rarely do I let the class participation component of your grade hurt you. Instead, if warranted, I try to use it to boost your final grade.

Grades aside, I myself have always found that attending class consistently is like holding on to that cord that ties it all together. It is the principle of continuity, the blueprint that helps you assemble the pieces / ideas / readings so that you have more than a grab bag full of "stuff" at the end of it all. And just on the level of raw discipline, it keeps you moving forward during those times when you are feeling discouraged (or lazy).

Critical Essays

The four course papers are designed to help you work with the readings and meet the goals of the course as outlined above ("Course Overview and Goals"). I certainly am interested in the originality of your answers to the questions posed in each topic. At the same time, I more interested in how well you are able to work with the subject matter we cover in this course and master what other people have written. **The main point of the essays is to work with the material we have covered in our readings and class discussions.** Think of each assignment this way: If you write a brilliant essay addressing the given topic, but in essence it is a paper which you could have written without ever having taken this course, then it will earn a zero.

Please take the time to plan your essays well. They are short assignments. That means you only have a brief space in which to construct a thoughtful response, and one which incorporates as much reference to the readings and lectures as you can manage.

First Essay - Due Wednesday 9/26

General topic: Contemporary Ecological Issues in Historical Perspective

What are the foundational ecological issues that societies face? What is distinctive about contemporary environmental issues? What are some of the key turning points and developments that have led to our current ecological circumstances?

More details regarding this assignment will be announced the week prior to its due date.

Approximate length: 5 pages, 1200 to 1500 words.

Second Essay - Due Monday 10/17

General topic: Ecological Issues as Social Issues

Ecological issues involve more than technical or scientific problems. They almost always are intertwined with a whole range of social issues. Discuss **one** way in which this is the case. You can focus on the relationship of the ecological practices of a society to other aspects of the culture of that society (for example, its economic system). You can discuss how ecological issues are caught up in the relationship between groups in a given society (employers and workers, dominant and minority groups, men and women, different social classes). Or you can discuss the evolution of environmentalism as a social movement. How were environmental issues framed by different groups or at different periods of history?

More details regarding this assignment will be announced the week prior to its due date.

Approximate length: 5 pages, 1200 to 1500 words.

Third Essay - Due Friday 11/28

General topic: The Cultural Construction of Ecological Issues

Environmental issues are not just matters of uninterpreted fact. How people make sense of the issues at stake and how they then shape their actions and institutions in response, is a function of the categories, concepts, and existing culture of a given society. Write an essay showing how ecological issues and environmental activism are "constructed" in light of the existing cultural framework of a group. You can cite a particular group or religious tradition within a society, a social movement, or the difference that culture makes for the overall practices of a given society, its "ecological regime".

More details regarding this assignment will be announced the week prior to its due date.

Approximate length: 6 pages, 1500 to 1800 words.

Fourth Essay - Due Wednesday 12/11

General topic: How can we make a difference?

Take an organization, movement, or other initiative in which you are interested – it can be a campus group, a local community-based organization, a church-based initiative, a consumer or corporate program, a piece of legislation, or a national or international group or movement – and discuss it in light of your own personal concerns. Bring to bear some of the topics we have covered in this course. What approach or construction of things is being advocated? What social group is doing the advocating? To whom are they appealing? What judgments would you tentatively draw about this group?

More details regarding this assignment will be announced the week prior to its due date.

Approximate length: 5 to 6 pages, 1400 to 1800 words.

Mode of Submission and Extensions

Please submit your assignments to me by email. If I have them in electronic form, I can insert comments and make editorial suggestions using Microsoft Word in "Document Review" mode. Ideally, when you get the assignment back, also electronically, you will be able to readily track my suggestions and comments. Using Microsoft Word I can open documents in most common formats. However, if you do not have compatible software, you may not be able to track my responses very conveniently. In that case, let me know, and either I will convert my response to an appropriate format, or as a last resort I will give you a hard copy with my suggestions and comments (and your grade, of course).

Your assignments are due by **midnight** of the due date. If you need an extension, please email me by **noon** of the due date. Let me know in brief what the problem is **and when you expect to complete the assignment**.

Generally, I am happy to grant an extension for a day or two, especially if that does not involve pushing beyond the meeting time of the next class. Longer extensions are not as easily arranged. I try to have all the papers back to students within a class or two so that I can make a few general comments about how people did. Late papers delay that process. Also, I am concerned about students falling behind in the course.

Normally, for each *unexcused* day it is late, an assignment will lose one-half point (out of ten points for the assignment, i.e., 5%).

The Quality of Your Work

Writing is an important dimension of any Core course at Boston College. Please write your assignments with care. I will review them accordingly. Be sure to present your ideas clearly. For example, if you find yourself trying to include ten different ideas into the same sentence, why not try ten smaller sentences instead? Finally, be sure to proofread and polish your work.

Turning in slapdash, poorly executed work is not acceptable in the business world, and it certainly is not acceptable at the university. To benefit from having your writing reviewed, it pays to turn in the best work you can.

Exams

Midterm exam: October 24th

Final exam: December 19th

There will be a midterm and a final exam for this course. The midterm will take place during class on Tuesday, October 24th, and the final will take place from 9:00 AM to 12:00 noon on Tuesday, December 19th. Short of a documented medical emergency or other exigency, students are required to be present for the midterm and final exams as scheduled. If an "exigency" arises which a student can anticipate, he or she must take the exam **prior to the scheduled time**, not after.

A week or so before each exam, I will distribute a preview. It will indicate the format of the exam and the units for which you are responsible. If members of the class would like to organize a voluntary review session, I am happy to facilitate that process.

The point of the midterm and final exams is *not* simply to derive your grade. That certainly is part of it. At the same time, your exams also have an important *pedagogical* dimension. In other words, the whole process of preparing for and taking the exams should serve the larger educational goals of this course.

Given the goals of this course, your exams will require you to do a number of things. You will be asked to: (1) identify key persons, events, and developments that have shaped environmental issues in U.S. society and the global community; (2) explain central concepts reviewed in this course; (3) demonstrate mastery of the course readings; (4) distinguish between different modes of sociological analysis; (5) be able to compare and otherwise integrate the various components of this course.

The ideal is to be able to incorporate the particular facts and ideas we cover into a larger capacity for critical analysis. The exams are designed to develop this ability. The midterm emphasizes mastery of the first three items listed above. The final exam requires you to be able to address the other two, as well.

To do well on the exams, view the exam questions as *opportunities*. In other words, do not think in terms of minimum requirements—what is the minimum you can write to provide an answer on a purely literal level? Instead, think of exam questions as openings for showing what you know. I construct exam questions so that they provide entree for commenting on issues that are central to the course, so you should find considerable leeway for writing an intelligent response that draws on what you have learned.

Again, there is a larger goal that even grades themselves are supposed to serve, and that is your education. So ideally, you will learn something from taking the exams in this course.

Grading Policy

I do not distribute grades in this course based on a curve. In other words, there are no predetermined number of A's, B's, C's, and so forth. I am happy to give out as many A's as people earn.

So that you can accomplish as much as you can in this course, I try to make the course expectations and the basis of your grade clear. I also try to make clear the concrete steps you can take to do well. If my expectations or your task are not clear, please raise the matter in class, or come in to see me during office hours.

You will be graded out of 100 points, distributed as follows:

First paper	10
Second paper	10
Midterm exam	20
Third paper	10
Fourth paper	10
Class participation and quizzes	10
Final exam	30

Your points earn the following grade equivalents:

	87 - 89	= B+	77 - 79	= C+	67 - 69	= D+	
95 - 100	= A	84 - 86	= B	74 - 76	= C	65 - 66	= D
90 - 94	= A-	80 - 83	= B-	70 - 73	= C-	below 65	= F

What if you improve as the semester proceeds? In fact, that is an expectation, and the grading standards will rise accordingly. Be aware of this. What you produce for the third paper or the final exam should be more impressive and sophisticated than what you produce for the first paper or the midterm. And I am sure it will be.

If you receive a grade on an assignment or exam that you believe does not give you full credit, then you are welcome to drop me a note or come in and see me. In order to receive the credit you think you deserve, simply show me that what you have produced is worth more credit.

Of course, even when each assignment is graded appropriately, there are times when the numbers do not add up to the full story. I will try to have your grades ready as soon after the final exam as I can. If for some reason you believe your final grade for the course is not appropriate, then, again, be prepared to make your case. I will take into account what you have to say and, if warranted, will make an adjustment.

Academic Integrity

In brief, academic integrity means you must cite your sources and not misrepresent someone else's work as your own. Please review and be aware of the university standards for plagiarism and academic integrity. University policy can be found at www.bc.edu/integrity.

The university is a community of learning. Any community is based on trust. Students who do not take that trust seriously will be asked to leave this course.

SOCIOLOGY 005: PLANET IN PERIL ~ ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES & SOCIETY
Boston College, Fall 2006

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SOCIOLOGY 005: PLANET IN PERIL ~ ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES & SOCIETY

Links to Further Resources

Here at Boston College

The Environmental Studies Program	http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/envstudies/
The Urban Ecology Institute	http://www.urbaneco.org/
Urban Sciences Research & Learning Group	http://inkido.indiana.edu/mikeb/urslg/urslhome .
Environmental Action Coalition (student group)	http://www.bc.edu/clubs/eac/

On the Web

Center for a New American Dream	http://www.newdream.org
EarthFirst! (worldwide)	http://www.earthfirst.org/
EarthFirst! Journal	http://www.earthfirstjournal.org/
Earth Island Institute	http://www.earthisland.org/
EarthJustice	http://www.earthjustice.org
Earthwatch Institute	http://www.earthwatch.org
Environmental Defense (e)	http://www.edf.org
Environmental Defense Action Network	http://actionnetwork.org/
Greenpeace International	http://www.greenpeace.org/
GreenpeaceUSA	http://www.greenpeaceusa.org
Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship	http://www.stewards.net/About.htm
League of Conservation Voters	http://www.lcv.org
MassPIRG	http://www.masspirg.org
Nature Conservancy	http://www.tnc.org
National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Page	http://www.nccecojustice.org
National Parks & Conservation Association	http://www.npca.com
National Religious Partnership for the Environment	http://www.nrpe.org
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)	http://www.nrdc.org
Sierra Club	http://www.sierraclub.org
Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC)	http://www.seac.org
Union of Concerned Scientists	http://www.ucsusa.org
United Nations Environment Programme	http://www.unep.org/
U.S. Catholic Bishops' Environmental Justice Program	http://www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp/ejp/index.htm
Waterkeeper Alliance	http://www.waterkeeper.org
Wilderness Society	http://www.wilderness.org
World Resources Institute	http://www.wri.org/index.html
Worldwatch Institute	http://www.worldwatch.org
World Wildlife Fund	http://www.worldwildlife.org
WWF - Conservation Action Network	http://takeaction.worldwildlife.org/index.htm