

SOCIOLOGY 005: PLANET IN PERIL ~ ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND SOCIETY
Boston College, Spring 2007

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| Course Information | Instructor: Michael Agliardo, SJ | TA: David Harker |
| Course ID # 6382 | michael.agliardo@bc.edu | HarkerD@bc.edu |
| Classroom: Cushing 209 | (617) 552-4645 (O), -8218 (H) | (609) 712-3426 (M) |
| Class time: MWF 1:00 | Office: McGuinn Hall 519B | Office: McGuinn Hall 410A |
| Section: 01 | Office hours: Tue 2:00-4:00, | Office hours: Wed 11-1 |
| Exam Group: 06 | Thu 10-11:45 & by appointment | & 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 often 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 interacted differently with their environment than others? What makes the impact of modern societies on the natural environment so much more pronounced than that of earlier societies? Is it population growth? technology and industrialization? modern economic systems? 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 how certain people see nature, and how do their ideas then affect those without power? And who actually suffers the effects of pollution, toxic waste, loss of biodiversity, and environmental degradation?

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.

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.

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 curriculum 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 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 social thinkers, women and men, and authors of various religious and ethnic backgrounds into the curriculum. 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 social 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, as well. 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 a university community, consumers, participants in religious and community groups, citizens, and (in the future) workers and/or administrative 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.

Definitions, Issue, Debates

Defining Ecological Issues

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

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.

The Economic System

Industrialization or Capitalism?

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

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

The Modern Economy and its Ecological Implications

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

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

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.

Modern Environmentalism

The Origins of Modern Environmentalism

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

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

The Sixties – A New Paradigm Emerges

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

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

Mainstream U.S. Environmentalism Since the Sixties

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

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

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

➔ **First Essay due 2/9: Ecological Issues in Historical Perspective.**

The Limits of the Traditional Debate

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

Locating Environmentalism in the Context of Social History

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

Environmentalism as Part of a Larger Social Critique

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

Social Justice and Environmental Issues

Gender, Justice, and Environmental Issues

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

Race, Justice, and Environmental Issues

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

Race, Justice, and Environmental Issues (continued)

Haggerty, "Crisis at Indian Creek". eText.

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

Social Class, Justice, and Environmental Issues

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

Social Class, Justice, and Environmental Issues (continued)

Levenstein, "Dying for a Living". eText.

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

➔ **Second Essay due 2/28: Ecological Issues as Social Issues.**

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.

Testing the Lynn White Thesis

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

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

Christian Environmentalism

Kearns, "Saving the Creation". eText.

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

Midterm, Review, and Perspective

Voluntary Review Session

Midterm Exam

Go over Midterm, preview of remaining topics

Cultural & Religious Factors (continued)

Ecology and "Postmodern" Religion

Taylor, "Earth- & Nature-Based Spirituality I: From Deep Ecology to Radical Environmentalism". eText.
Kinsley, "Deep Ecology: From Anthropocentrism to Biocentrism" (chapter 14). eText.
_____, "Ecoactivism" (chapter 15). eText.
Recommended: Kinsley, "Contemporary Ecotheology" (chapter 12). eText.

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.

Resources for an Ecological Ethic in Chinese Traditions

Kinsley, "Chinese Religions: Ecological Themes". eText.
Tu, "The Ecological Turn in New Confucian Humanism". eText.
For further study: 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.

Environmentalism Abroad

Perspectives from the Developing World

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

Environmental Movements in Taiwan and Thailand

Hsiao, "Environmental Movements in Taiwan" (book section). eText.
Lee & So, "Environmental Movements in Thailand" (book section). eText.

Environmental Movements in the Philippines. Also: Asian Culture and Environmentalism

Magno, "Environmental Movements in the Philippines". (book section). eText.
Hsiao & others, "Culture and Asian Styles of Environmental Movements". (book section). eText.

➔ Third Essay due 4/18: *The Cultural Construction of Ecological Issues*

Rational "Self-interest", Collective Regimes, and the Global Commons

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.

For further study: 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.

Democracy, Civil Society, and Ecology

The Emergence of Global Civil Society

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

Local and International Eco-Social Movements

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

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

Ecology and Global Civil Society

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

Lee & others, "The Impact of Democratization on Environmental Movements" (section). eText.

→ Fourth Essay due 5/4: Ecological Issues and Our Social World.

Response and Responsibility

Alternative Economics - tentative

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

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

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

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.

Final Exam

Voluntary Review Session

Final exam will take place Tuesday, May 8th from 12:30 to 3:30 PM.

About the Readings

The preceding Course Outline shows the order in which we will cover the readings. We will do so at the rate of approximately one unit / set of readings per class. On the Homepage of the Course Website (see your WebCT), you will find a section entitled "Important Information and Announcements". There each Friday evening the assignments for the week to come will be posted.

During class I will often refer to the readings and offer some background to the larger debates in which they figure. At times I will supplement the readings with other material or alternative perspectives. On other occasions I will take out time to introduce a broader set of ideas or theoretical considerations. Then I may not refer directly to any particular reading. Nonetheless, it will always be to your benefit to keep pace with the readings. Then you will be most able to follow and participate in class discussion.

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. The assigned essays refer back to the course readings and lectures.

Doing the readings and attending the lectures constitutes the primary means for accomplishing the goals of this course. There are no further research projects or term papers. You are expected to master the readings and participate in class regularly.

One further comment: The readings were *not* chosen because the point of view each presents is somehow the official point of view of this course. They were chosen because they reflect the state of debate in society today; or 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.

Where to Get the Readings

Each reading assignment in the Course Outline (above) is followed by the notation "**Course text**" or "**eText**". Those followed by "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, 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*.

Books that students have found most useful 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 the "Course Bibliography" (below) for complete bibliographic information on all course readings.

Focus Questions

In order to help you get the most out of the reading assignments, at the end of each class I will give you a preview of the material for the class to come. On the Focus Questions page of the Course Website you will also find a series of questions pertaining to each unit. These focus questions serve to highlight key insights connected with the readings, at least for our purposes.

The focus questions also 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 at least a preliminary response. And doing so will help you to appropriate and synthesize the material 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.

The point is that you want to do more than simply get through the readings and arrive at class with a mass of inert information. Rather, you want to achieve active command of what you read. To that end, 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? Do you see contradictions within a given argument or claim, or with previous readings? How might this text relate to previous readings or to themes we are building in this course?

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.

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). So working with the focus questions is an investment that will payoff as you synthesize the material of this course.

Class Participation

During class I do not simply review the readings for the day. As noted above, I often provide background, supplement the readings, or present larger theoretical considerations. However, we will review and discuss many of the readings in substantial detail. I often begin class by soliciting your questions and feedback concerning the readings. I also ask questions of the class. This interaction helps 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.

In a large class, you may not always have the opportunity to actively participate in every discussion that takes place. However, ideally you will benefit from observations or questions raised by others, just as they will benefit from points you yourself raise. 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!)

I record class attendance by means of a sign-in sheet 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.

If something beyond your control arises, and you cannot attend class, then you can earn a make-up credit of sorts for that class. First, do the reading for a missed class and (if you are able) review another student's notes for that day. Then 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. You have one week from the missed class to make it up. Finally, you are also welcome to come by during office hours to ask specific questions about the material you missed.

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 assess the pattern that results. Were any absences due illness, joining the class late, or some other reason? If so, did you attempt to make up missed classes or otherwise keep up with class? And so forth. I do not follow a strict mathematical formula in determining your class participation grade.

In the end, class participation constitutes 10% of your final grade, so if your GPA is your bottom line, then that is how much class participation counts. But this is what it really means for your 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 grade.

Grades aside, I myself have always found that attending class consistently is like holding on to that thread that ties it all together. It is the principle of continuity, or the blueprint that helps you assemble all 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 essays are designed to encourage you to work with the readings and meet the goals of the course as outlined above ("Course Overview and Goals"). Let me repeat: **The main point of the essays is to work with the material we have covered in our readings and class discussions.** I certainly am interested in the originality of your answers to the questions posed in each topic. But at this juncture I am just as interested in how well you are able to master what other people have written and work with the subject matter we cover.

Think of each assignment this way: If you write a brilliant paper addressing the given topic, but in essence it is an essay you could have written without ever having taken this course, then it will earn a zero.

Also note that by making use of the essays to critically engage the course texts and lectures, you "warm over" this material, and so doing will then assist you in your exam preparation.

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 Friday 2/9

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?

Approximate length: **5 pages, 1200 to 1500 words.**

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

Second Essay - Due Wednesday 2/28

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?

Approximate length: **5 pages, 1200 to 1500 words.**

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

Third Essay - Due Wednesday 4/18

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".

Approximate length: **6 pages, 1500 to 1800 words.**

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

Fourth Essay - Due Friday 5/4

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?

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

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

Mode of Submission and Extensions

Please submit your assignments by email. If I have them in digital form, I can insert comments and make editorial suggestions using Microsoft Word's "Document Review" mode. Ideally, when you get the assignment back, also electronically, you will be able to readily track my suggestions and comments. Using Word I can open documents in most common formats. However, if you yourself do not have Word, you may not be able to track my responses. In that case, let me know, and either I will convert my response to an appropriate format, or if necessary 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 an assignment is late, it will lose one-half point (out of ten points for the assignment, i.e., 5%).

The Quality of Your Work

Writing is an important part of any Core course at Boston College. Please write your assignments with care. Present your ideas simply and clearly. Ground your discussion with references to course readings and class discussion. 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: Wed. March 14th

Final exam: Tue. May 8th

There will be a midterm and a final exam for this course. The midterm will take place during class on Wednesday, March 14th, and the final will take place from 12:30 to 3:30 PM on Tuesday, May 8th. 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 sheet. 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 relating to the issues raised in class; (2) explain central concepts reviewed in this course; (3) demonstrate mastery of the course readings; (4) distinguish between different modes of sociological analysis; (5) 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 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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Links to Further Resources

Here at Boston College

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| 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.html |
| Environmental Action Coalition (student group) | http://www.bc.edu/clubs/eac/ |

On the Web

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| Center for a New American Dream | http://www.newdream.org |
| Committee on Environment & Jewish Life (COEJL) | http://www.coejl.org/ |
| Earth Island Institute | http://www.earthisland.org/ |
| Earth First! (worldwide) | http://www.earthfirst.org/ |
| Earth First! Journal | http://www.earthfirstjournal.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/ |
| Evangelical Environmental Network | http://www.creationcare.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 |
| 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 |
| Nature Conservancy | http://www.tnc.org |
| Sierra Club | http://www.sierraclub.org |
| Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC) | http://www.seac.org |
| U.S. Catholic Bishops' Environmental Justice Program | http://www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp/ejp/index.htm |
| Union of Concerned Scientists | http://www.ucsusa.org |
| United Nations Environment Programme | http://www.unep.org/ |
| Waterkeeper Alliance | http://www.waterkeeper.org |
| Wilderness Society | http://www.wilderness.org |
| World Resources Institute | http://www.wri.org/index.html |
| World Wildlife Fund | http://www.worldwildlife.org |
| Worldwatch Institute | http://www.worldwatch.org |
| WWF - Conservation Action Network | http://takeaction.worldwildlife.org/index.htm |