Course Description. This course is designed as both a stand-alone class and a follow-on to the Boston College department’s other graduate courses in Environmental Sociology. We will look at a series of topics within environmental sociology, broadly defined. These include the sociology of climate change, food and agriculture, environmental activism, sustainable consumption and its politics (including the politics of fair trade), environmental justice, the Anthropocene and the emerging field of “new economics.” We will read a number of ethnographies that deal with various aspects of the environment. This is not a standard Environmental Sociology survey, which is typically organized by theoretical frameworks. As a topics course, rather than a survey, the scope is not intended to be complete. In addition, the course has a strong “cultural” bent, and qualitative bent, with considerable attention to issues such as sustainable consumption, food and culture, and cultural aspects of climate change.

This field, more than most, has strong inter-disciplinary linkages, but also intra-disciplinary ones. The sociology sub-fields of social movements, politics, agriculture, development, consumption, political economy, urban, health and medicine, science and technology and others all have important literatures that relate to environmental issues (eg., impact of toxins on health, environmental movements, alternative agriculture, urban sustainability, “green” consumption). We will also read some geographers, economists, and political scientists although the bulk of the readings will be from sociology.

Reading List. The required readings are set, but the lists of recommended readings are incomplete.

Requirements. Course requirements include coming to class each week prepared to discuss the readings, providing a weekly short (2-3 paragraph) written response to the readings to be posted Monday evenings by 8 pm, a
book review or a 4-5 page critical essay on one of the major readings in the class, and a 20 page seminar paper, due at the end of reading period. Details on the written assignments will be provided separately.

Books. The following books have been ordered through the Boston College Bookstore.

Alison Alkon and Julian Ageyman, eds., Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability (MIT Press, 2011)
Javier Auyero and Débora Alejandra Swistun, Flammable: Environmental Suffering in an Argentine Shantytown, (Oxford University Press 2011)
Daniel Jaffee, Brewing Justice: Fair Trade Coffee, Sustainability and Survival (University of California 2007)
Kari Marie Norgaard, Living in Denial: Climate Change, Emotion and Everyday Life (MIT Press 2011)

Reading List

I. Introduction

January 17 Introductions to Environmental Sociology and Environmental Crisis


James Boyce, “Is Inequality Bad for the Environment?” in Inequality, Cooperation, and Environmental Sustainability, Jean-Marie Baland, Pranab Bardhan and Samuel Bowles, eds. (Princeton 2006).

*****If you are not familiar with research on overshoot and climate change, I suggest reading:


Recommended:


January 24 Life in the Anthropocene


II. Food and Agriculture

January 31 Critical Perspectives on the Alternative Food Movement I


**February 7 Critical Perspectives on the Alternative Food Movement II**


**Recommended:**


### III. Climate Change

**February 14 Explaining Climate Inaction: Political Economy**


Dan Gilbert on what psychologists think about climate change inaction: [https://vimeo.com/10324258](https://vimeo.com/10324258)

**February 21 Climate Change Politics and Culture**


**February 24 Book review or critical essay due**

**February 28 Climate Change: Politics and Social Movements**

Donatella Della Porta and Louisa Parks, “Framing Processes in the Climate Movement: from Climate Change to Climate Justice, Routledge Handbook of
the Climate Change Movement, eds. Matthias Dietz, Heiko Garrelts (Routledge 2014).


Robert Wengronowitz, reading to be determined.

**Recommended:**


Kincaid, Graciela, and J. Timmons Roberts. 2013 “No Talk, but Some Walk: The Obama Administration’s First Term Rhetoric on Climate Change and its International Climate Budget Commitments.” *Global Environmental Politics* 13(4) November.


**IV. Environmental Justice**

**March 14 Toxics and Environmental Movements**

Javier Auyero and Débora Alejandra Swistun, *Flammable: Environmental Suffering in an Argentine Shantytown*, (Oxford University Press 2011), chs. TBA.


**Recommended:**

David N. Pellow, *Garbage Wars*

David N. Pellow and Lisa Park, *The Slums of Aspen*


V. The Anthropocene

March 21  No class

March 24 Workshop on Economic History in the Anthropocene

There will be a workshop at BC this week on economic history in the Anthropocene that will include a number of sociologists and papers of sociological interest. It will take place on March 24-25. In lieu of class this week, we will attend the workshop on March 24 and discuss the papers and some additional reading in class on March 28. The readings will be from the conference and will be provided prior to the conference.

March 28. Workshop Debrief and Debating the Anthropocene


VI. Global Environmental Issues

April 4 Governing the Commons I: Neoliberal Failures


April 11 Governing the Commons II: Sustainable Solutions


Recommended:
Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums*
New Economics Foundation, *Growth Isn’t Possible.*


**VII. Sustainability**

**April 18 The Fair and Sustainable Trade Movement**

Daniel Jaffee *Brewing Justice*, chs 1, 4-5, 7-9.

**April 25 Sustainable Consumption and its Politics**


**May 2 Sustainable Lifestyles and New Economics**


Foley, Duncan K. 2011. “Socialist alternatives to capitalism II: Vienna to Santa Fe,” Lecture at the Havens Institute at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. April 6-7, Madison, WI.


**Recommended:**


Seyfang, ch 6


Jackson, T. (2009) *Prosperity Without Growth*

