



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 2155B-200
Environmental Sociology
Winter 2024

Wednesdays 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm

Delivery Method – Blended

See Zoom tab in OWL for class meeting links

Exams will be held in person

Instructor: Dr. Kim Shuey

Office Hours: by appointment via Zoom

Email: kshuey@uwo.ca

Course Description:

This class examines the social causes of environmental problems, their connection to economic activity, and the over-time consequences of human interactions with their natural environment. A sociological approach to these issues includes a discussion of power, social inequality and environmental justice and an exploration of individual, social, and political solutions.

Prerequisite(s): None

Antirequisite(s): Sociology 2220A/B, Sociology 2298A/B taught in 2020/2021

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

In this class you will be introduced to a sociological approach to understanding the ways humans interact with and are connected to their natural environments. This course will allow you to explore individual, social, and political solutions to environmental destruction as well as the role of social factors such as consumption, technology, politics, and population size.

This course will include synchronous learning and guided activities to help you engage and reflect on environmental issues that we are discussing in class. **NOTE:** Class meetings will be held via Zoom (see OWL site for links) and involve structured lectures, activities, and class discussions of course material. It is expected that you use a webcam and share video during our class meetings. Exams will be held in person.

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Understand the link between environmental problems, social problems, and social inequality
- Recognize and explain the ways in which health, consumption, the economy, science, technology, development, and population shape environmental conditions
- Understand the influence of political institutions on environmental practices
- Recognize and explain how culture, ideology, moral values and social relations shape our thoughts and actions with regard to the environment
- Identify some practical solutions to bring about a just ecological society
- Draw on the “environmental sociological imagination” to understand their own behaviour and experiences related to the environment and to join the dialogue regarding practical solutions

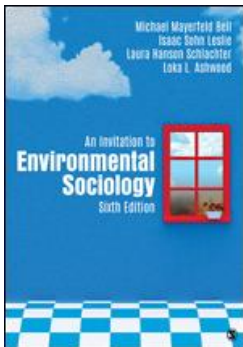
Course Material:

Technical Requirements:

Stable internet connection, computer with working microphone and webcam.

Required Text(s):

Bell, M., Ashwood, L., Leslie, I., and Schlachter, L. (2020). [**An Invitation to Environmental Sociology, Sixth Edition.**](#) Sage. (ISBN: 9781506366005). Options for purchase or rental are available from the UWO bookstore. https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2023B&courses%5B0%5D=200_UW/SOC2155B



Any additional required materials, including short videos and additional readings, will be available online or posted on OWL.

Communication:

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<http://owl.uwo.ca>) on a regular basis for news and updates and for any posted resources. This is the primary method by which information and announcements will be disseminated to all students in the class.

Contact me via email at kshuey@uwo.ca

Method of Evaluation:

The course is based on class lectures and readings. Lectures also cover material that is not discussed directly in the course readings, but for which you are responsible. Conversely, you also are responsible for the material covered in the readings even if the material is not reviewed in class. The mid-term and final examinations will include multiple choice, short answer questions, and short essays.

The evaluation methods described below in the course outline are essential requirements for the course.

Evaluation Breakdown:

Midterm: February 28, 2 hours, in-person in ASSIGNED CLASSROOM (HSB-40)	30%
Final exam: April Exam period TBA, 2 hours, in-person	30%
Assignment 1, uploaded prior to class time on 2/14	15%
Assignment 2, uploaded prior to class time on 3/27	15%
Attendance	10%

Midterm exam: 30%

The 2-hour exam will be held in person, during class time, in the originally scheduled classroom. It is mixed format, including a range of types of questions (multiple choice, short answer, longer answers) that cover all elements of the course to date. Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Final Exam: 30%

The 2-hour exam will be held in person. It is mixed format, including a range of types of questions (multiple choice, short answer, longer answers). Multiple choice questions will only cover material since the midterm. Essay questions might ask questions geared towards assessing your engagement with the course materials across the semester. Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Assignments: 2 x 15%

The purpose of these assignments is for you to develop your 'Environmental Sociological Imagination' and critical thinking skills by applying what you are learning in class. Each Assignment involves a combination of preparatory research to provide context and a focused application. Topics, length, and additional instructions will be provided in class. Assignments should be submitted in OWL by the start of class on the day they are due.

Attendance: 10%

Class attendance and participation are important to learning. This element is meant to reward students who come to class and take part in the group learning experiences, while also providing the flexibility to miss a few classes for health or other reasons. Attendance will be taken at some point during the class. We will meet a total of 11 times, not including the midterm exam date.

Attending 9, 10 or all 11 classes = 10 points

Attending 7 or 8 classes = 7 points

Attending 5 or 6 classes = 5 points

Attending 4 or fewer classes = 0 points

**It is expected that you use a webcam and share video during our class meetings and discussion. Please let me know if there are reasons this is not possible. If you are on campus and have difficulty finding a quiet spot, the course has a classroom assigned that is available for you to use during class time.

Student Absences:

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below.

Assessments worth more than 10% of the overall course grade:

For work totaling 10% or more of the final course grade, students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible, who in turn should advise me of the extension appropriate for your situation. Please also contact me immediately to make me aware of the situation and discuss an approved extension.

Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam will be required to write a makeup exam. The course professor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test. See section on Absences below for further details.

Unexcused late assignments:

Unexcused late assignments will receive a 5% late penalty per day for up to 5 days past the due date. At that point the assignment will no longer be accepted.

Academic Policies:

Please review the Department of Sociology “[Important Academic Policies](https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic_Policies.pdf)” document https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic_Policies.pdf for additional information regarding:

- Scholastic Offences
- Plagiarism
- Copyright
- Academic Accommodation
- Accessibility Options
- Mental Health

Use of AI:

Within this course, students are permitted to use AI tools exclusively for information gathering and preliminary research purposes. It is essential that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop their own ideas, arguments and perspectives. Students expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources of information and avoiding plagiarism. Written assignments must reflect the student's own thoughts and independent written work. Students should also generate their own figures (e.g., graphs, diagrams) rather than using AI generated ones. By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and effective learning environment that promotes critical thinking, independent inquiry and allows them to produce original written contributions. The same principles also apply to the use of translation software to support the writing the essays and other written assessments.

Course Schedule and Readings

January 10	Introduction to the course
January 17	Chapter 1: Environmental Problems and Society
January 24	Chapter 2: Health and Justice
January 31	Chapter 3: Consumption and Materialism
February 7	Chapter 4: Money and Markets
February 14	Chapter 5: Technology and Science **ASSIGNMENT 1 due**
February 21	READING WEEK
February 28	MIDTERM
March 6	Chapter 6: Population and Development
March 13	Chapter 7: The Ideology of Environmental Domination
March 20	Chapter 8: The Ideology of Environmental Concern
March 27	Chapter 10: Mobilizing the Just Ecological Society **ASSIGNMENT 2 due**
April 3	Chapter 12: Living in the Just Ecological Society