

ES - 106A - Environment and Society

Spring 2022



Trevien Stanger, M.S.

tstanger@smcvt.edu

Office hours: Wed 9:30-11 over Zoom

"The good thing about science is that it's true whether or not you believe in it." Neil Degrasse Tyson

"The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

"That Land is a community is the basic concept of ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics." - Aldo Leopold

Course Description:

Environmental Studies is an interdisciplinary field that examines environmental issues from the perspectives of the humanities, social sciences, and the natural sciences. Environmental problems require solutions that involve sound science, workable public policy, viable and ethical economic strategies. This course is a social science-based investigation of the complex relationship between humans and their environment. The emphasis will be on both the impact people have on the environment in relation to social, economic and political contexts as well as how environmental scarcity shapes human interactions. Important concepts such as ecosystems, resources, sustainable development, carrying capacity, climate change adaptation/mitigation and economic utility will be introduced as well as an overview of political economy, institutions for environmental governance and issues of ecological economics.

Required Texts:

- Lee, Kai N., William Freudenburg, and Richard Howarth, 2013. *Humans in the Landscape* New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. ISBN: 978-0-393-93072-6. **NOTE: USED COPIES ARE FINE.**
- Steinberg, Theodore. *Down to Earth*. Oxford ; New York : Oxford University Press FREE ONLINE EDITION through the SMC Library.

<http://library.smcvt.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat01985a&AN=SMC.515470&site=eds-live&scope=site>

NOTE: if you do not enjoy and/or have a hard time reading this on your computer, feel free to purchase a copy. Any addition should suffice.

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COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Students will:

1. systematically and logically employ historical, political, economic, sociological, psychological, and cultural and moral perspectives (including their theories and methods) to address the interrelationship of human behavior and environmental change;
2. analyze and evaluate the various explanations social scientists offer for human-caused environmental problems;
3. demonstrate an understanding of the significance of race-, class-, and gender-based environmental inequalities, and how overcoming environmental inequalities improves the human condition and promotes social justice;

4. communicate the way in which various aspects of human social life—such as cultural beliefs and values, authority structures/institutions, race/class/gender, political economy/labor, self/mind—result in environmental change, and how the application of social science knowledge can promote a more just world for future generations.

Means of Evaluation and Description of Major Assignments

TOTAL: 400 points

Participation, short assignments, and open-note quizzes: 100 points

See below for more info on participation. If you think this is going to be an issue for you, please reach out ASAP.

Mid-term Exam: 100 points

This exam will cover all reading and classwork for modules 1 through 4. Expect a mix of multiple choice and short answer.

Final Exam: 100 points

This final exam will be cumulative. Expect the same format as the mid-term.

Reflective Essay: 100 points

This essay will give you the chance to integrate course content with your own reflections on environmental studies as a discipline and as a guiding ethos for your own environmental behaviors. The purpose of this paper will be to track your grasp of key concepts and how it influences your overall understanding and perspective of the environment. Through this process of meta-cognition – thinking about your thinking – you will track how your personal beliefs and value systems evolve as you engage with new experiences and perspectives. More TBA.

This is to be typed, 12 point font, stapled, and free of punctuation errors, and handed in on time.

Participation and Citizenship

Learning and teaching take place best in an atmosphere of intellectual open-mindedness. All members of the academic community are responsible for supporting freedom and openness through rigorous personal standards of honesty and fairness.

"Students are expected to devote a minimum of 20 hours per week on average to each 4-credit course during the 6 week summer semester."

Grading Policy

Papers and assignments (discussions, quizzes, etc) are due in class **on or before** the date listed in the module. Unless you have made a prior agreement with me, I will take off one grade level (A becomes A-) for each class day an assignment is late. ***All papers will be submitted through Canvas.***

Papers with an undue number of errors of punctuation, spelling, or grammar will be marked down and may be returned ungraded for correction. Written work will be evaluated in terms of your depth of critical analysis, thoughtfulness of reflection, clarity of writing, and ability to address issues raised in the text and in class on the topic at hand.

Grades given reflect the following criteria of judgment:

F: Failure to meet minimum requirements

D: Unsatisfactory, but some effort to meet minimum requirements

C: Satisfactory; meets minimum requirements of assignment but not much more

B: Good to Very Good: thoughtful reflection, good analysis, clear writing style

A: Excellent depth of critical analysis, thoughtfulness of reflection, and writing style; demonstrate creativity and mature analytical skills in going beyond the primary requirements of the assignment

All papers will be submitted through Canvas.

Academic Integrity

You are responsible for knowing the Academic Integrity Code of the college, which we will discuss at length; you may visit the following link to read the policy: <http://www.smcvt.edu/On-Campus/Offices-and-Services/Academic-Affairs/Academic-Integrity-Policy.aspx>

If you are found in a significant violation of academic integrity, you will fail this course and be subject to further disciplinary action, which can include expulsion from the college. If you have any questions about citing sources used in your papers or assignments, or other ethical issues pertaining to research/coursework please raise them before the assignment is due.

Accommodations for Learning Differences

If you have a documented learning difference or suspect that you might have one, talk to your Professors as soon as possible. Accommodations can be made to help you manage the work for this course. These conversations will be confidential. Adaptation of methods, materials, or testing may be made as required to provide for equitable participation in compliance with College policies and federal and state law. [Ms. Antonia Messuri is the SMC coordinator for this facet of College policy. If appropriate, the instructors will work with Ms. Messuri to ensure equitable access to materials, assessments etc.].

CLASS SCHEDULE

ALL OF OUR WORK WILL HAPPEN WITHIN WEEKLY **MODULES**. Please familiarize yourself with this right away and let me know if you have any trouble.

Questions?! Always ask - if you're not sure about something then you're probably not the only one!

SAMPLE SCHEDULE, THOUGH OURS WILL LOOK A LITTLE DIFFERENT

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
Sun Jul 11, 2021	Assignment Channel Island Fox	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Discussion #1 - Forget Shorter Showers	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Personal Environmental Profile	due by 11:59pm
Sun Jul 18, 2021	Assignment Cumulative Quiz Wk 1 &2	due by 11:59pm
Sun Jul 25, 2021	Assignment WK3f - Hetch Hetchy: Yea or Nay? Yay or Nah?	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment WK3e - Preservationism vs Conservationism	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment WK3g - Hetch Hetchy Reflection	due by 11:59pm

Sun Aug 1, 2021	Assignment Mid Term Exam	due by 11:11pm
Sun Aug 1, 2021	Assignment WK4c - A Campus Land Ethic?	due by 11:59pm
Sun Aug 8, 2021	Assignment WK5f - Life-Cycle Analysis	due by 11:59pm
Wed Aug 11, 2021	Assignment WK6 - Reflective Essay Proposal and Draft	due by 11:59pm
Fri Aug 13, 2021	Assignment Climate Change Quiz	due by 11:59pm
Sun Aug 15, 2021	Assignment E & S Final Exam	due by 11:59pm
Sun Aug 15, 2021	Assignment WK6g - Time to Panic?	due by 11:59pm
Sun Aug 15, 2021	Assignment Reflective Research Essay	due by 11:59pm