



SOCI 247

Environment & Society



This course introduces students to the major environmental challenges of the 21st century from a social science perspective. Modern societies that have sought to conquer natural limits have now conjured up unanticipated “environmental” consequences. Students will explore how human understandings of environmental “problems” as well as action towards environmental solutions are shaped by ways of thinking, social contexts and institutional power relations.

Professor Bantjes

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Office Hours: Please visit me to talk about the course, especially if you are having difficulties.

- Monday 12:45pm –5:00pm
- Tuesday 1:15pm – 2:00pm
- Thursday 3:45PM – 5:00pm

Drop Date: The last day to drop a second term half-course without academic penalty is March 10.

If for any reason you are falling behind in the course, you should assess before this date, preferably in consultation with your prof., to determine whether and how you are going to re-commit to the remainder of the course.

Classroom

MULH4030
Tuesday 3:45-5:00
Thursday 2:15-3:30

Readings

Perusall (<https://perusall.com/>)
Course Code: BANTJES-JXLJU

Assignments

<https://moodle.stfx.ca/>

Grading Scheme

Engagement with Readings (you need to pass this component to pass the course) – 30%
Participation in class – 5%
Local Nature Assignment (Feb 14) – 15%
Research Proposal (Mar 7) – 10%
Research Essay [or debate] (April 4) – 17%
Final Exam – 23%

Outline:

1 - A Sociological Perspective

- Maniates, Michael F. 2001. "Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World?"
- Rebecca Solnit. "Big oil coined 'carbon footprints' to blame us for their greed. Keep them on the hook"
- NPR. "Is Plastic Recycling A Lie? Oil Companies Touted Recycling To Sell More Plastic"

2 - Harmony with Nature

- Cronon, William. 1983. "Seasons of Want and Plenty."

3 - Alienation from Nature

- Fletcher, Robert. 2017. "Connection with Nature Is an Oxymoron: A Political Ecology of "Nature-Deficit Disorder"."
- Cohen Medical Associates. "Nature Deficit Disorder Has Real Consequences"
- The Guardian. "The Human Signature: Edward Burtynsky's Anthropocene"

4 - Mediating Structures: Food

- NRDC. Industrial Agriculture 101
- ETC Group. 2021. "Did You Know That the Digitalization of Agriculture Could Affect Farmers' Rights?"
- Zuboff. 2019. "Surveillance Capitalism In Today's Digital Age"
- CGP Grey. 2017. "How Machines Learn."

5 - Species Extinction

- Weston, Phoebe. 2022. "Humans V Nature: Our Long and Destructive Journey to the Age of Extinction."
- Greenfield, Patrick. 2022. "The Biodiversity Crisis in Numbers - a Visual Guide.""
- Weston, Phoebe. 2022. "Cop15 in Montreal: did the summit deliver for the natural world?"
- Monbiot. "For more wonder, rewild the world"

6 - Neoliberal Disinformation

- Dunlap, Riley and Aaron McCright. 2012. "Organized Climate Change Denial."
- Schiffman, Richard. 2022. "Climate Deniers Shift Tactics to 'Inactivism'."
- Monbiot. "Neoliberalism, Climate Change, Migration"

7 - Capitalism and Climate

- Guerrero, Dorothy. 2018. "The Limits of Capitalist Solutions to the Climate Crisis."
- Earthrise. "Can Capitalism Solve the Climate Crisis?"
- Monbiot. "Neoliberalism, Climate Change, Migration"

8 - Technological Prevarication

- McLaren, Duncan. 2020. "Guest Post: A Brief History of Climate Targets and Technological Promises."
- Biello, David. 2017. "How Far Can Technology Go to Stave Off Climate Change?"
- McKibben. 2022. "The Fusion Breakthrough Suggests That Maybe Someday We'll Have a Second Sun"

9 - State and Environmental Action

- Mazzucato, Mariana. 2015. "The Innovative State: Governments Should Make Markets, Not Just Fix Them."
- whitehouse.gov "FACT SHEET: The Recovery Act Made the Largest Single Investment in Clean Energy in History, Driving The Deployment Of Clean Energy, Promoting Energy Efficiency, And Supporting Manufacturing"
- Leffer, Lauren. 2022. "Renewable Energy Set to Overtake Coal Power Globally by 2025."

10 - Overconsumption

- Hamilton, Clive. 2010. "Consumerism, Self-Creation and Prospects for a New Ecological Consciousness."
- Monbiot, George. "Is the rise in mental health issues linked to consumerism and toxic media?"

11 - Degrowth

- Stuart, Diana, Ryan Gunderson and Brian Petersen. 2020. "The Degrowth Alternative."