

Meets:

Synchronous sessions:

Tuesday and Thursday 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

Room: Online

Instructor: Sergio Cabrales

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 06:30 pm - 07:00 pm (Before synchronous sessions, zoom link provided on Canvas)

E-mail: smc224@pitt.edu

Course Rationale and Description

In this course, students will gain insight into the current state of the environment and its relationship with societies globally. We will explore the relationship between the environment and human societies through the lenses of **mobilization**, **disasters**, and **climate change**. Additionally, the course will examine the social, economic, and political factors contributing to environmental impacts.

Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Describe the interactive relationship between the environment and social actors manifested in mobilization, disasters, and climate change.
- Examine instances of how societies and the environment have interacted throughout history and worldwide with a critical approach.
- Reflect upon the academic, civic, and professional applications of the sociological study of the environment.

Required Texts

Required and supplementary readings (papers), and films will be posted to Canvas.

Classroom Policies

Teaching statements and policies on administrative tasks.

In my sociology classes, I present real situations (no matter how theoretical the discussion is) with pragmatic elements applicable to social, political, and personal transformation. I try to make the students competent at mastering sociological concepts and theories and developing their critical thinking while familiarizing them with various authors and schools of thinking. I do this through assignments, such as essays, that require analysis and posturing. In our classes, it is common to ask: "What do you think of this author or case?"; not necessarily, "What does this author say?". In this way,

students will join current academic discussions in the sociological field, bringing their valuable contextualized contributions.

Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity.

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity. This class will not tolerate plagiarism, nonoriginal work, and cheating. **Please ensure you properly cite authors, papers, and materials that are not your own.** Be careful with this policy, especially in writing assignments and class discussions.

E-mail Policy

Each student is issued a University e-mail address upon admittance. The University may use this e-mail address for official communication with students. Students are expected to read emails sent to this account regularly. Failure to read and respond to university communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications.

I will respond to your email consultation, usually within 24 hours on regular business days (Monday-Friday). If you do not receive my response within 24 hours, it likely means I did not receive your email; **please resend and verify the accounts.**

Copyright Notice

These materials may be protected by copyright. United States copyright law, 17 USC section 101, et seq., in addition to university policy and procedures, prohibits unauthorized duplication or retransmission of course materials. See the Library of Congress Copyright Office and the University Copyright Policy.

Statement on Diversity and classroom culture guidelines

As an educator, I aim to teach my students about the advantages of having a diverse group of classmates and to create a safe and welcoming environment where everyone can express themselves freely.

Names and Pronouns

If you go by a different name or gender pronoun than the one you are officially enrolled in, please feel free to share it in our Zoom discussions. Students are expected to refer to each other by preferred names and pronouns during class and discussions.

Accessibility and Accommodations

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting accommodations, especially regarding Zoom, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Office of Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890/412-624-3346 (Fax), as early as possible in the term.

Disability Resources and Services will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. For more information, visit <http://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drsabout>.

Course Requirements and Grades

The following tasks and assignments should be completed by the due.

Individual and weekly discussion posts on Canvas (4) – 20 points, 5 points each week—

Every week, as noted in the schedule, students should post two to three paragraphs (**no less than 450 words**) on the Canvas discussion board to react to the week's readings, cases, and lectures.

The posts should answer three questions very clearly:

- (a) What are the main concepts that we have gone over this week? (Please try to summarize the week's readings, cases, and lectures in your own words instead of copying and pasting excerpts)
- (b) From your perspective, what was the most noteworthy aspect of the readings and subsequent discussion? Why?
- (c) What other cases, examples, or opinions contributes to your understanding of the main that we have gone over this week?

As noted in the schedule, these paragraphs will be due on Friday by 11:59 pm.

Quizzes – Essays (2) – 60 points total, 30 points each—

You will write two quizzes-essays during the course: one in Week 3 and another in Week 6. In these quizzes-essays, we will focus on the authors and materials covered in the course by that moment (see the topics in the next section). I will provide more details regarding the extension and format the week before each quiz is due.

Film Viewing Guide - 10 points.

For Week 4, you have a film to watch. The film viewing guide will provide three questions for you to answer based on your reflections on the documentary.

In-class participation and assistance - 10 points.

During every synchronous session, I will record attendance and keep track of students' interventions, comments, and contributions for future reference. You will receive credit based on this at the end of the term.

Grades, dates, and scale

Late Work will be lowered a half grade if turned in a day late; a full grade if turned in two to three days late. Work will not be accepted after three days, except in extenuating circumstances that you have discussed it with me in advance.

98-100% = A +
93-97% = A
90-92 = A-

88-89 = B+
83-87 = B
80-82 = B-

78-79 = C+
73-77 = C
70-72 = C-

68-69 = D
Below 68 = F

Schedule

Required readings (R), Supplementary Readings (S), and films are available on Canvas. The schedule follows this structure:

Unit X

Week X.

Date: Session's topic
Assigned readings.

Graded Assignment.

Unit 1. Societies and the Environment – Concepts and Frameworks

Week 1.

Tuesday, June 27: Overview of the Course

(R) Pellow, David N., and Hollie Nyseth Brehm. 2013. "An Environmental Sociology for the Twenty-First Century." *Annual Review of Sociology* 39(1):229-250.

Thursday, June 29: Environmental Sociology: Our approach

(R) Falzon, D., Roberts, J. T., & Brulle, R. J. (2021). Sociology and climate change: A review and research agenda. *Handbook of Environmental Sociology*, 189-217.

(S) Peek, L., Wachtendorf, T., & Meyer, M. A. (2021). Sociology of disasters. *Handbook of Environmental Sociology*, 219-241.

First weekly post due on Friday, June 30.

Week 2.

Tuesday, July 4: Independence Day – No Class

Thursday, July 6: Environmental Justice: A Framework

(R) Mohai, P., Pellow, D., & Roberts, J. T. (2009). Environmental justice. *Annual review of environment and resources*, 34, 405-430.

(R) Parks, B. C., & Roberts, J. T. (2006). Globalization, vulnerability to climate change, and perceived injustice. *Society and Natural Resources*, 19(4), 337-355.

(S) [PBS News Hour]. (2012, October 9). Conversation From our Archive: Chicago's 1995 Heat Wave [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOBpx3RJmUk>

(S) [France 24 English]. (2022, February 15). Climate change: Lessons from the 1995 Chicago heatwave [Video]. Youtube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-xXzxMZGX74>

Second weekly post due on Friday, July 07.

Unit 2. Environmental Movements

Week 3

Tuesday, July 11: Origins of environmental movements

(R) Johnson, Erik W, and Jordan Burke. 2021. "Environmental Movements in the United States." Pp. 495-515 in *Handbook of Environmental Sociology*: Springer.

(S) Rome, Adam. 2003. "'Give Earth a Chance: The Environmental Movement and the Sixties."

Thursday, July 13: Environmental Movement's constraints.

(R) McAdam, Doug. 2017. "Social Movement Theory and the Prospects for Climate Change Activism in the United States." *Annual Review of Political Science* 20:189-208.

(S) Norgaard, Kari Marie. 2006. "'We don't really want to know: environmental justice and socially organized denial of global warming in Norway." *Organization & Environment* 19(3):347-70.

(S) Glennon, R. Size does count, at least for French Fries: Minnesota's straight river. From *Water Follies: Groundwater pumping and the Fate of America's Fresh Waters*.

Mid-term Essay due on Friday, July 14: 30 points

Week 4

Tuesday, July 18: Actions of environmental movements **(No synchronous session)**

(R) **Film.** [TransitionTowns]. (2013, November 25). *In Transition 2.0: A story of resilience and hope in extraordinary times* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFQFBmq7X84&t=557s>

Short-film guide: 10 points.

Thursday, July 20: Actions of environmental movements

(R) Fisher, Dana R, and Sohana Nasrin. 2021. "Climate activism and its effects." *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*: 683.

(S) Ayling, Julie and Neil Gunningham. 2016. "Non-state governance and climate policy: the fossil fuel divestment movement." *Climate Policy* 17(2):131-49.

(S) Ordner, James P. 2017. "Community action and climate change." *Nature Climate Change* 7(3):161-63.

Third weekly post due on Friday, July 21.

Unit 3. Societies and “Natural” Disasters

Week 5

Tuesday, July 25: “Natural” Disasters: socioeconomic and political autopsies

(R) Film: [DW]. (2022, November 14). Climate change or politics? - Why Madagascar is going hungry | DW Documentary [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVQm5lTRMO0&t=6s>

(R) Stallings, R. A. (2002). Weberian Political Sociology and Sociological Disaster Studies. *Sociological Forum*, 17(2), 281–305.

(S) Gawronski, V. T., & Olson, R. (2013). Disasters as Crisis Triggers for Critical Junctures? The 1976 Guatemala Case. *Latin American Politics and Society*, 55(2), 133–149. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-2456.2013.00196.x>

Thursday, July 27: “Natural” Disasters: sociopolitical triggers

(R) Olson, R., & Gawronski, V. (2010). From disaster event to political crisis: A “5C+A” framework for analysis. *International Studies Perspectives*, 11(3), 205–221.

(S) Slettebak, R. T. (2012). Don’t blame the weather! climate-related natural disasters and civil conflict. *Journal of Peace Research*, 49(1), 163–176.

Fourth weekly post due on Friday, July 28.

Week 6

Tuesday, August 01: Micro approach: “Natural” Disasters and behavior.

(R) Penta, S., Wachtendorf, T., & Nelan, M. M. (2020). Disaster Relief as Social Action: A Weberian Look at Postdisaster Donation Behavior. *Sociological Forum*, 35(1), 145–166.

(R) Solnit, R. (2009). A paradise built in hell: The extraordinary communities that arise in disaster. Penguin.

Review of the book: Bernardini, & Hart, D. (2011). A paradise built in hell: the extraordinary communities that arise in disaster [Review of A paradise built in hell: the extraordinary communities that arise in disaster]. *Journal of Moral Education*, 40(1), 123–125. Routledge.

Thursday, August 03: Review session.

Final-term Essay due this day during the session. 30 points