

SOCI 160-01: ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY
Langiappe, 2006

Professor Scott Frickel
Office: 220 Newcomb Hall
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Class: MTWR, 12:30 – 1:45, Newcomb 23A
Office hours: by appointment
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Course description and objectives

Environmental sociology involves the study of the interrelationships between human societies and the natural environment. Centered in one of the most polluted and wettest regions in the nation, New Orleans provides a laboratory for exploring these dynamics first-hand. Post Katrina, this is more true than ever. Through readings, intensive discussion, and research, we will explore our urban ecosystem, paying close attention to nature-society interactions and their historical and contemporary consequences.

Required Text and Articles

The textbook for this course is available at University Center Bookstore.

Michael M. Bell, *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, second edition (Pine Forge Press, 2004).

Additional readings available for download online (see below).

Other Requirements

To undertake field research required for this course, students will need to move around the city and document what they see. Access to a detailed city map, a camera, and some form of transportation (i.e. bicycles) is required.

Policies

Learning by Doing. Students are expected to take active responsibility for their learning. This means regularly attending class and other assigned activities, arriving prepared, cooperating with others, sharing your thoughts, and respecting the rights and opinions of others even when you may disagree with them.

Written Work. All written work must be typed and double-spaced, with 12-point font and 1-inch margins. *Always* make an extra copy to keep for your files! Penalties will be assessed for spelling and grammatical errors and for late assignments.

Grade Disputes. Disagreements about grades and grading occasionally arise. I do not discuss grade disagreements immediately before, immediately after, or during class or through e-mail. Students who wish to discuss their grades with me may do so in person by appointment.

Honor Code: Academic honesty is expected of all students at Tulane University. Your responsibilities as a Tulane student include being familiar with the honor code and the plagiarism policy of the university. Cases of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the Honor Board and may result in a failing grade for the class, academic probation, or expulsion.

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities should talk to me and the Office of Disability Services (865-5113) *within the first two weeks of class* so that we can establish guidelines and make arrangements for test taking and other assignments.

Grading

Course grades will be based on attendance (20%), participation (30%), and team research portfolios (50%).

Attendance. I will take attendance each class period. More than two unexcused absences will count ½ letter grade against your final grade for the course. Legitimate excuses include situations that are practically beyond your control, for example, illness, family medical emergency, or job interview. Personal travel plans are *not* legitimate reasons for missing class.

Participation. Participation will be based on three forms of intellectual exchange. First, students will submit a 2-page written memo on that week's readings to the Black Board Discussion Forum at least 24 hours prior to each class discussion. Second, prior to class, each student will submit a comment thread to two other student memos. Third, each student will be expected to actively participate in the class discussion that grows from our online exchange.

Research Portfolios. A major portion of this course will be devoted to research documenting the historical development of hazardous industries in New Orleans' and their unintended social and environmental consequences. Details provided in class.

Topics and Reading Schedule

- Week 1 (5/15-18) Introduction to environmental sociology and research project**
Bell, Ch. 1; Frickel, "Katrina, contamination, and the organization of ignorance"
http://www.ndsciencehumanitiespolicy.org/katrina/meetings/march%20readings/FrickelEssay_3.pdf
- Week 2 (5/22-25) Risk and Disaster**
Bell, Ch. 9; Lakoff, "From disaster to catastrophe,"
<http://understandingkatrina.ssrc.org/Lakoff/>
- Week 3 (5/29-6/1) Resources and Consumption**
Bell, Ch. 2; Houck, "Can we save New Orleans?," read pp. 1-31`
http://www.law.tulane.edu/Houck_CanWeSaveNewOrleans.pdf
- Week 4 (6/5-8) Cities as Growth Machines**
Bell, Ch. 3; Graham, "Cities under siege," <http://understandingkatrina.ssrc.org/Graham/>
- Week 5 (6/12-15) Environmental Health and Justice**
Bell, Ch. 5; Allen, "Environmental justice and after-disaster planning,"
<http://www.ndsciencehumanitiespolicy.org/katrina/meetings/march%20readings/AllenEJDisaster.pdf>
- Week 6 (6/19-22) Rehabilitating New Orleans**
Bell, Ch. 10; Klaver and May, "Vulnerability and resilience: NOLA,"
<http://www.ndsciencehumanitiespolicy.org/katrina/meetings/march%20readings/KlaverMay.pdf>
- Week 7 (6/26-29) Project Assessment and Wrap-up**