

Environmental Sociology

ENVI 294-01 / SOCI 294-02

Professor: Marla D. Pérez Lugo

MTWRF 9:30-10:45 AM

Oct 28, 2020 - Dec 18, 2020

Olin Rice 243



Dear
Student:

Welcome to the Environmental Sociology course. I am Marla Perez Lugo, a Hubert Humphrey Visiting Professor from the University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez and your instructor for this class. During this module, we will be exploring the different ways in which human societies interact with their environments. From the social causes for environmental degradation to the characteristics of the environmental movement, this is a survey course that will allow us to learn in an introductory way about how the discipline approaches some of the most important problems and issues of our time. Some of those are climate change, environmental justice, energy transitions, community resilience, etc. The course is based on the premise that environmental problems and issues ARE SOCIAL in their causes and in their consequences. This social-scientific approach is particularly important due to the emphasis that we as a society put on the natural sciences in the understanding of environmental problems and on new technologies for their solution. I mean, the natural sciences and technologies are relevant, but not the only parts of the puzzle.

Given our new normal in living with COVID-19, our course will be mostly online but we could change to hybrid if the circumstances allow it. The structure of the course is the following: we will meet on zoom (or in person) every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday for lectures, class discussion and guest speakers. On Monday, you will be working on a weekly forum, reacting to the readings and other assignments. Fridays are "reading/working on your own" day, getting ready for the next week. This means that we will meet in person three times a week and the rest of the course will be covered through independent work. Please be advised that this course has a Moodle page that you must search and enroll in. In this Moodle page, you will see and have access to all the materials, readings and assignments that we will be using. Moodle is meant to provide the structure for the in-person dimension and the platform for our online interactions. However, I am sure that we all understand that we need to be flexible in our approach to the class, just in case the state's and the school's guidelines change. In the meantime, I would like to adapt the structure of the course to the needs of the majority of the students. Please start by answering to the short survey in Moodle called "[housekeeping](#)", available in the first block. Your answers will help me to design the course more effectively. Also, if you all agree, we can start a group chat in WhatsApp to facilitate communication among us.

I recognize that you may have concerns about many things that are likely to affect your learning this semester: your own health and well-being and that of your loved ones, pervasive and continual racism and anti-Blackness, money, housing, food, etc. Please know that many of us at Macalester are working to support all students in relation to these and other concerns. If you have financial concerns that may not be met by Financial Aid, please access [Macalester's Emergency Aid Program](https://www.macalester.edu/financialaid/emergencyaid/) (<https://www.macalester.edu/financialaid/emergencyaid/>). *The Emergency Aid Program is also the place to go if you do not have access to a reliable computer or internet; someone will connect you with the appropriate people inside Information Technology Services.*

Thank you again for enrolling and I am looking forward to meet you all,

Marla



This is me: Puerto Rican, mother of 5, wife and environmental sociologist



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Course Description

This course provides an introductory survey to the various sociological approaches to understanding the relationships between humans and their environments. Using a comparative approach, the course explores the social, cultural and structural factors that impact those relationships at different levels of analysis (individual, group/organizational, institutional and societal). Some of the concepts that will be discussed are: The New Environmental Paradigm and other functionalist approaches such as ecological modernization, political ecology, and social constructionism. We will also include some more practical approaches such as environmental justice, perception of risk, environmental governance and decision-making, natural resources management and the sustainable management of critical infrastructure.

In this course we will be...

Unseating myths such as:

- Human intervention is the cause for all environmental problems
- Science is neutral and objective. Therefore, scientific endeavors do not have political causes or consequences.
- Environmental education and consciousness are the solution to environmental problems not only at the individual level but at the government level as well.
- Citizens participation in environmental decisionmaking should be limited to those with scientific knowledge.



With evidence based arguments such as:

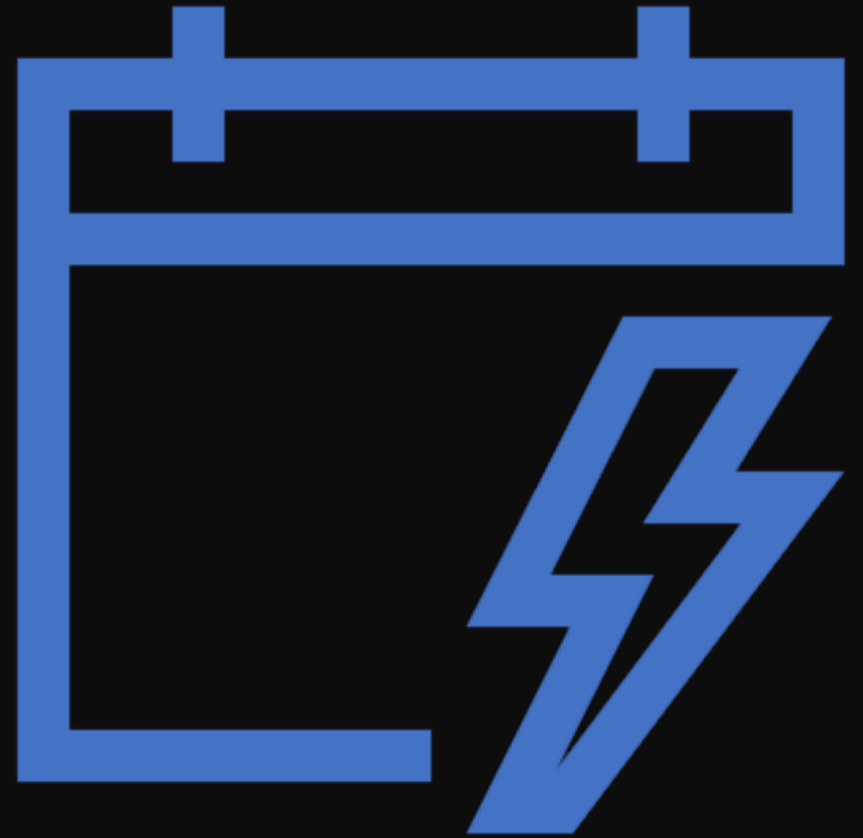
- ✓ Humans are integral part of ecosystems.
- ✓ Science is influenced and sometimes determined by cultural, political and economic processes.
- ✓ Environmental decisionmaking is not always based on scientific data and is bias against minorities and communities with low socio-economic characteristics.
- ✓ Even though there is plenty of environmental education, the environment continues to deteriorate.

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this course, the student will be able to

1. Identify sociological explanations for the definition of environmental problems, their causes and consequences.
2. Distinguish between normative statements and explanations that are based on empirical evidence.
3. Distinguish between environmental problems and environmental issues.
4. Apply the main perspectives in environmental sociology to the understanding and analysis of contemporary environmental issues in the United States and the world.

Topics & Schedule



DATES	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS	GUEST SPEAKERS
Oct 28-Nov 6	The Sociological Imagination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write in the discussion forum • Watch “Pleasantville” • Watch “The Rise of the Planet of the Apes” • Watch “The Others” • Read “The Sociological Imagination” • OPTIONAL - Read Chapter 1 & 2 Introduction to Sociology textbook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fernando Tormos, PhD (Wednesday November 4th)
Nov 9-13	Applicability of Sociological and the emergence of environmental sociology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write in the discussion forum • Watch “Puerto Rico: The Perfect Storm” • Watch Dr. Riley Dunlap’s Lecture on the birth of environmental sociology • Read Environmental Sociology: A New Paradigm • Read Theories in Environmental Sociology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandy Smith Nonini, PhD (Wednesday November 11th)
Nov 16-27	Human Ecology and Ecological Modernization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write in the discussion forum • Read Hardin, Garrett (1968) "The Tragedy of the Commons." Science, 13, December 1968, Vol 162, pp 1243-48. • Read Berkes, F. D. Feeny, BJ McCay and JM Acheson (1989) "The Benefits of the Commons." Nature, Vol 340, No. 6229, pp 91-93. • Read Mol, Arthur P.J. (2010) "Ecological modernization as a social theory of environmental reform" in the International Handbook of Environmental Sociology. • Read Emissions and COVID-19 • Watch “Project Drawdown” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joan Asencio, MBA (Wednesday November 18th)
Nov 30- Dec 4	Political Ecological perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write in the discussion forum • Watch Inequality in America • Read Gould, Pellow and Schnaiberg (2004) Interrogating the Treadmill of Production. Organization & Environment, Vol. 17 No. 3, September 2004 296-316 • Read Mascarenhas, Michael (2015) "Environmental Inequality and Environmental Justice" in Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology • Read Garcia (2017) “The Multiple Layers of Environmental Injustice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ibrahim Lopez, MUP (Tuesday, November 24th) • Anais Roque, MA (Thursday November 26th)
Dec 7-11	The social construction of environmental issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write in the discussion forum • Read "US Environmental Movement" in Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology • Read "Social Construction of Environmental Issues and Problems" in Environmental Sociology. • Read "Environmental movement in the global South" in Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology • Read “Pulling Down Our Monuments” • Read “The Dirty Secrets Of ‘Clean’ Electric Vehicles” • Read “American environmentalism’s racist roots have shaped global thinking about conservation” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrea Parker, PhD (Wednesday, December 2nd) • Jonathan Castillo, MPH (Wednesday, December 9th)

References

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- Garcia-Lopez, G. A. (2018). The multiple layers of environmental injustice in contexts of (un) natural disasters: the case of Puerto Rico Post-Hurricane Maria. *Environmental Justice*, 11(3), 101-108.
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- GOULD, K, DAVID N. PELLOW and ALLAN SCHNAIBERG (2004) "INTERROGATING THE TREADMILL OF PRODUCTION Everything You Wanted to Know About the Treadmill but Were Afraid to Ask." *Organization & Environment*, Vol. 17 No. 3, September. Pp 296-316
- Hannigan, J. (2014). *Environmental sociology*. Routledge.
- Hardin, Garrett (1968) "The Tragedy of the Commons." *Science*, 13, December 1968, Vol 162, pp 1243-48.
- Lackey, R. T. (2007). Science, scientists, and policy advocacy. *Conservation Biology*, 21(1), 12-17.
- Macionis (2015) *Sociology*. 16th Edition. Pearson.
- MacKendrick, N. (2017, December). Out of the labs and into the streets: scientists get political. In *Sociological Forum* (Vol. 32, No. 4, pp. 896-902).
- Mills, C. W. (2000). *The sociological imagination*. Oxford University Press.
- Mol, Arthur P.J. (2010) "Ecological modernization as a social theory of environmental reform" in the *International Handbook of Environmental Sociology*. Redclift, M. R., & Woodgate, G. (Eds). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- [Prakash Kashwan](https://theconversation.com/american-environmentalisms-racist-roots-have-shaped-global-thinking-about-conservation-143783) "American environmentalism's racist roots have shaped global thinking about conservation". *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/american-environmentalisms-racist-roots-have-shaped-global-thinking-about-conservation-143783>
- [Reilly, Sean](https://www.eenews.net/stories/1063580943?utm_source=Energy+News+Network+daily+email+digests&utm_campaign=c8d4ee5beb-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_05_11_11_46_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_724b1f01f5-c8d4ee5beb-89252643) (2020) Study of emissions and virus deaths implicates EPA policy. *E&E News*. Published: Friday, July 17, 2020. https://www.eenews.net/stories/1063580943?utm_source=Energy+News+Network+daily+email+digests&utm_campaign=c8d4ee5beb-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_05_11_11_46_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_724b1f01f5-c8d4ee5beb-89252643

Assignments/Grading

Participation in
Forum discussions
(70%)

Final alternative
Representation
(30%)

Policies

Macalester's [academic integrity policy](https://www.macalester.edu/academicprograms/academicpolicies/academicintegrity/) (<https://www.macalester.edu/academicprograms/academicpolicies/academicintegrity/>)

- Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty in their college work; violations of academic integrity are serious offenses. Students found guilty of any form of academic dishonesty -- including, for instance, forgery, cheating, and plagiarism -- are subject to disciplinary action.
- *Forgery* includes the alteration of college forms, documents or records, as well as the signing of such forms or documents by someone other than the proper designee.
- *Cheating* is the dishonest or unauthorized use of materials for academic work. Examples of cheating include:
 - *Copying another's papers or notes during an exam
 - *Talking about a test or looking at another's paper during an exam
 - *Altering a graded exam or paper without informing the instructor and resubmitting it for re-grading
 - *Gaining unauthorized access to past exams from a course
 - *Removing tests from a classroom or office without prior consent
 - *Discussing an exam you have taken with other students, either from your class or from another section of the same course, who have yet to take that exam
 - *Providing false or exaggerated excuses to postpone due dates
 - *Lying to an instructor or college official to improve your grade or to get special privileges
 - *Submitting work done in another class without prior permission of both instructors
 - *Having another person do your work for a course (including unauthorized collaboration)

- *Plagiarism* is the unacknowledged use of another person's work (words, ideas, data, etc.) in a graded or published piece or in a speech. The following are examples of plagiarism:
 - copying all or parts of another person's paper, article, or notes and representing it as your own
 - submitting a paper copied in full or in part from one purchased from a paper writing service or obtained electronically
 - failing to fully cite (author, article title, book or journal, page number, date of publication) each instance where you have incorporated another's ideas or quoted words into your own written or oral work.
- While instances of forgery and cheating are often clear cut, cases of plagiarism can be more complicated. Plagiarism can be intentional, as when a student knowingly submits as one's own work a purchased paper, or a paper that was written entirely or in part by another student. But plagiarism may also be the result of misuse of sources, which occurs when writers cite information incorrectly or incompletely. In this case, the author may make a good faith effort to acknowledge the sources, but because this is a learning process, a student author may make errors in documentation and integrating quotes and paraphrases into their own work. While unintentional, the misuse of sources is still plagiarism. It is very important, therefore, for students to make sure they understand how to properly cite sources, to take advantage of the research and writing assistance provided by staff in the library and the MAX Center, and to confer with their instructors when they are unsure if they are using sources appropriately.


Disability Statement and Accommodations:

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Macalester College works hard to ensure that all facilities and programs are accessible to all students. Accommodations are based on individual need substantiated by the appropriate process. What is reasonable is also determined by what is essential to this course. Any students who believe that they may need accommodations due to disability impacts should contact the Disability Services office by emailing disabilityservices@macalester.edu, or by calling 651-696-6974 to schedule an appointment to discuss your individual needs. Students should then follow up with me directly to discuss accommodations for this course.

Macalester's policies and practices related to community health and well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic

(<https://www.macalester.edu/covid-19/return-to-campus/community-commitment/>).

- “Our individual and community health depends on our choices and actions. Our ability to stay safer is only as strong as our shared commitment to each other. We are asking each of you—students, staff, and faculty—to be flexible and adopt new behaviors to support the well-being of our community and keep each other as healthy and protected as possible. The elements of our community commitment come from the Minnesota Department of Health and other public health guidance. We each have a role to play in our culture of mutual care, accountability, and safety.
- The coronavirus does not differentiate an individual's particular identities, characteristics, or roles. Inequitable societal structures, however, have led to disparate impacts, resulting in higher burdens of illness among members of BIPOC communities and other historically marginalized groups. Macalester College reaffirms its commitment to creating a community free of any form of bias, harassment, or discrimination.
- As part of this community's culture of mutual care and accountability, we all will:
 - Always wear a face covering that covers both nose and mouth when indoors, and outdoors when six-foot physical distancing cannot be maintained; Maintain a physical distance of six feet with people outside of my pod;
 - Wash hands regularly throughout the day or use hand sanitizer when soap and water aren't readily available;
 - Cover coughs and sneezes with sleeve or elbow;
 - Comply with signage and move through spaces as directed;
 - Clean shared items and surfaces; Use the app provided by the college to conduct a daily health self-check;
 - Stay home if ill or experiencing COVID symptoms; Seek testing when experiencing COVID symptoms;
 - Follow guidelines to isolate, if tested positive, or quarantine, if considered a close contact or awaiting test results;
 - Participate in public health measures such as contact tracing;
 - Complete the Mac Stays Safer training before arriving on campus;
 - Follow posted guidance or specific instructions provided by department or programs (e.g. lab spaces, athletic teams)



For any questions or
comments... or to converse
about the meaning of life



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