Introduction to Community & Environmental Sociology

Soc/CESoc 140 – Spring 2012

MW 4:35-5:25
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“It’s hard to know exactly what locality might mean in a world in which other places are constantly part of our own worlds.” –Arjun Appadurai, Modernity at Large
What this course is about. This course is an introduction to Sociology that focuses on the study of people and the places where they live. It is organized around a set of questions about how power structures the everyday life of communities and about the possibilities for organizing everyday life differently. In it, we will explore how the processes we have come to call globalization are changing the way we live in communities and relate to our environment. This will lead us to tackle some of today’s most pressing social and environmental conflicts and crises both in the U.S. and abroad. Some key questions that we will address are: “is economic growth necessary for well-being?” “what does community mean in the current era of globalization?” and “can projects organized at the community level survive and thrive in a global economy?” A key theme of the course will be the interconnectedness of events and processes unfolding in different parts of the world.

Course goals include gaining an understanding of a set of key concepts: “community,” “place,” “development,” “growth,” “environment,” “sustainability,” “globalization,” and “neoliberalism;” learning how these concepts are involved in contemporary debates about what is fair, just and desirable for the places where we live and the world as a whole; identifying important actors in processes affecting community and environment, including government, corporations, transnational institutions and social movements; and developing the ability to critically evaluate arguments about the impacts of global change on local places and processes. In order to accomplish these goals, the course is divided into two sections. In the first section, we will define our terms, explore the debates surrounding them, and develop a conceptual framework for moving forward. In the second, we will examine a series of issues marked by tension between the projects of communities and economic globalization, including: local economic integration, environmental justice, local food movements, food sovereignty and security, deindustrialization, migration, and resource control.

Participation. The quality of our collective experience in this course depends on your participation. Participation means ATTENDING class, as well as keeping up with the readings and being able to discuss them thoughtfully in class. I will not post lecture notes on-line (although I may post power-point slides); the material covered in the lecture is not the same as what you will find in the readings. You will not be able to get a passing grade in this course if you do not attend lectures. You are required to attend your discussion section. If you miss more than 2 discussion section meetings, you will lose points (four points per session missed). Students will not lose points when they are absent from class to observe religious holidays, or have a doctor’s excuse. Make-up exams require prior notice and are only allowed if you are seriously ill or have a serious family emergency. I encourage debate based on careful reading of materials and we will work to cultivate an environment of respect for one other’s views.

Computer Use in Class. I realize that we all depend on our computers and that there is a strong temptation to check email and use the web during lecture. At the same time, you are making a large investment of time and financial resources in your education, and that you need to pay attention in class and participate in discussions in order to reap the benefits. Many students have complained to me that when others are using their computers for non-class-related purposes the quality of discussion for everyone declines. Our TA will monitor computer use, will speak to you if you are using it for purposes other than note-taking, and if this happens more than once, you will be asked to turn off the device.
Books/Readings:


2. Nazario, Sonia, *Enrique’s Journey* [Go Big Read book—I will pass out coupons for your free copy]

3. Course reserve readings. A print version is available at Student Print (in the Memorial Union) and electronic copies on our Learn@UW website.

Plagiarism: All of the work that you submit for this class must be your own work, and you are required to quote and cite all references properly. Although this appears straightforward, it can sometimes be confusing. Wherever you are unsure about quoting and citing, please come see me or your TA to figure out the best strategy. If you use a web-based source, you can always cite the URL. For information about plagiarism policy: [http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html#points](http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html#points)


Academic Honesty: The UW takes academic honesty very seriously. If you are found to be cheating on exams or papers, you will receive a grade of F and will be reported to the Dean of Students.

Accommodations: I wish to include fully any students with special needs in this course. Please let me know (the earlier the better) if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction or evaluation procedures in order to enable you to participate fully. The McBurney Resource Center will provide useful assistance and documentation.

Nighttime Safety

UW-Madison has established several transportation and walking escort services to help you stay safe while getting around campus and nearby areas after dark. To make use of services such as UWMadison SAFEwalk and SAFEride programs, see: [http://transportation.wisc.edu/transportation/safeservices.aspx](http://transportation.wisc.edu/transportation/safeservices.aspx)
Assignments

I. Response papers (7).  
You will complete SEVEN one-page response papers. Each paper is worth 10 points for a total of 70 points. Response papers are due in-class on the day assigned (2/1, 2/15, 2/29, 3/12, 3/21, 4/11, 4/23). Late papers will not be accepted.

For general information on good writing see the UW Writing Center website (www.wisc.edu/writing/) or visit the Writing Center in 6171 Helen C. White (also satellite locations).

II. Revised and expanded response paper (1).  
You are required to revise and expand ONE of these responses to turn in on 5/7. Choose your favorite response paper and do a modest amount of additional research; expand, improve and clarify your argument; polish your writing and turn in a THREE-PAGE version on 5/7. This revised essay is worth an additional 20 points (above and beyond the first 10 you earned on the response paper).

III. Exams  
Midterm 1 (2/22, in class) 100 points  
Midterm 2 (3/26, in class) 100 points  
Final (non-cumulative, during exam period) 100 points  
Response Papers 70 points  
Revised response paper 30 points  
Total value of all assignments: 400 points

Grading Scale  
376-400 points = A  
280-307 = C  
356-375 = A/B  
240-279 = D  
332-355 = B  
below 240 = F  
308-331 = B/C

If you have questions about a grade, speak to your TA or to me first. If the question is not resolved, speak with the Chair of Community & Environmental Sociology, Daniel Kleinman, who will attempt to resolve the issue and inform you of the appeals procedure if no resolution is reached informally.

Suggestions for doing well in this course

1. Keep up with the readings, and do the assigned readings before they are discussed in class.
2. Take notes while you read. Afterwards, write a few sentences about the main point(s) of the piece. Jot down any questions you have about the readings, and bring these to class.
3. Attend class. In lecture and in section, be prepared to ask questions or offer comments about the readings, how they relate to lecture material, or current events.
4. Take notes. It is not enough to simply copy down the terms and diagrams presented on the board or screen. You need to write down important points from lecture and discussion as well.
5. If you must miss class, get class notes from another student whom you trust to be a good note-taker.
6. Attend office hours. Both Jacki and I are glad to meet with you outside of class. If you cannot attend scheduled office hours, let us know and we will find another time.
# Course Schedule

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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READINGS AND READING QUESTIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 23</td>
<td>Introduction to Course</td>
<td><em>What is Community and Environmental Sociology? Course goals. How to do well in this course.</em></td>
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<td><strong>PART 1</strong> <strong>DEFINING KEY TERMS AND DEBATES</strong></td>
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| Jan 25  | Community/Place     | C. Wright Mills, “The Promise”  
Bill McKibben, ch. 1  
Wolfgang Sachs, “One World”  

*Ungraded assignment: bring a definition of community to class*  

*How is the meaning of community changing? What kinds of community are there? What is the difference between space and place? What does Sachs mean by “cosmopolitan localism?” How are local and global connected?* |
| Jan 30  | Community/Place     | McKibben, ch. 3  
Alexis deTocqueville, “How the Americans Combat Individualism by the Principle of Self-Interest Rightly Understood”  

*How have values of individualism shaped U.S. culture? What kinds of activities do we still organize “communally?” Are those activities threatened or thriving?* |
| Feb 1   | Development/Growth  | McKibben, ch. 4  

*What are the advantages that McKibben sees in locally-integrated economies? What forces work against local integration? How can we achieve fairness and transparency when goods are traded over long distances?*  

**Response paper #1**: Choose an example of what de Tocqueville called “self-interest rightly understood.” Explain how it arguably works to serve the individual’s interest and the greater good at the same time. Do you agree with this concept?
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<th>Date</th>
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<th>Reading</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 6</td>
<td>Development/Growth</td>
<td>Amartya Sen, “The Ends and Means of Development”</td>
<td><em>How is development conventionally measured? How does Sen argue that we should measure development? What does he mean by “freedom?”</em></td>
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<td>Special Event- Paul Farmer</td>
<td>Paul Farmer, anthropologist and medical doctor and founder of highly regarded international public health non-profit Partners in Health will give Wisconsin Union Directorate Distinguished Lecture February 7th at 7:30 in Memorial Union. If you attend and write a one-page summary and response, you can substitute this for Response Paper #3.</td>
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<td>Feb 8</td>
<td>Environment/Sustainability</td>
<td>McKibben, ch. 5 and afterword Venkatachalam Ambumozhi and Armin Bauer, “The Impact of Global Recession on Sustainable Development and Poverty” Sharon Begley, “The Recession’s Green Lining” Fiona Harvey, “Worst Ever Carbon Emissions Leave Climate on the Brink” In-class film: “The Story of Stuff”</td>
<td><em>How is the trade-off between growth and environmental sustainability different for poor countries than for rich ones? What kinds of conflict does this create? Are there ways to reduce poverty and improve the standard of living without adopting a “western” pattern of growth? How has the global recession affected the environment?</em></td>
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<td>Feb 13</td>
<td>Environment/Sustainability</td>
<td>Vandana Shiva, “Resources” Marilyn Waring, “A Woman’s Reckoning”</td>
<td><em>How do our conventional economic measurements account for depletion of resources and environmental harm? What valuable resources do they fail to measure?</em></td>
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*Is globalization new? What does Giddens identify as the “skeptical” vs. “radical” positions on globalization? What does he see as the major risks associated with it?*

**Response Paper #2:** Think of two activities you engage in that are valuable to you but that do not form part of “market economy”—that is, that are not bought or sold or counted as part of our Gross Domestic Product. Explain why you (and others) engage in these activities and how they intersect with, and perhaps support, other activities that ARE measured in GDP.

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<th>Feb 20</th>
<th><strong>Globalization/Neoliberalism</strong></th>
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<td>Robert Pollin, “What’s Wrong with Neoliberalism”</td>
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<td>Waldon Bello, “Global Civil Society”</td>
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*What is the Washington Consensus? What is the difference between neoliberalism and classical economic liberalism? What does Pollin mean by the “Keynes problem?” The “Polanyi problem?”*

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<th>Feb 22</th>
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<td>PART II CASE STUDIES</td>
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<td><strong>Community and Economy: The Case of Wal-Mart</strong></td>
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*How does Wal-Mart differ, as a template for business, from the model provided by General Motors at mid-20th century? What key innovations have given Wal-Mart its market power? Does Wal-Mart affect communities and workers of the global North and South in the same way?*
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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Jared Bernstein and Josh Bivens, “The Wal-Mart Debate: A False Choice between Prices and Wages”</td>
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<td>How is Wal-Mart’s growth strategy linked to poverty? How do state and local governments subsidize Wal-Mart and other low-wage employers? Why do some communities oppose the building of Wal-Mart stores in their community?</td>
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<td>Response paper #3: Write a short essay in which you describe all of the consumer purchases you have made in the past week. Where did you purchase these items? Where did the items come from? What kinds of local/global connections are entailed in your consumer practices?</td>
<td>Alternative: summary and response to Paul Farmer talk (February 7th).</td>
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<td>Mar 5</td>
<td>Communities and Their Environments: Environmental Justice</td>
<td>Paul Mohai, David Pellow, and J. Timmons Roberts, “Environmental Justice”</td>
<td>Why is exposure to pollution and other environmental risks unequally distributed by race and class? How does “growth machine politics” influence environmental risk? What new forms of environmental justice activism are emerging?</td>
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<td>Beverly Wright, “Living and Dying in Louisiana’s Cancer Alley”</td>
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<td>Mar 7</td>
<td>Communities and Their Environments: Environmental Justice</td>
<td>Zoltan Grossman, “Unlikely Alliances: Treaty Conflicts and Environmental Cooperation Between Native American and Rural White Communities”</td>
<td>How have some local groups overcome a NIMBY [Not In My Back Yard] mentality to form regional cross-race/class alliances against environmental harms? How is the struggle for environmental justice at work different from the movement to protect community living spaces?</td>
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<td>David Pellow and Lisa Park, “The Political Economy of Work and Health in Silicon Valley”</td>
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<td>Mar 12</td>
<td>Communities and Their Environments: Resource Debates</td>
<td>William Finnegan, “Leasing the Rain”</td>
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<td>Maude Barlow, “Our Commons Future is Already Here”</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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| Mar 14   | Food and Community: Eating Locally?        | McBibben, ch. 2  
What is a food system? How can we characterize the dominant “food system” in the U.S. today?  
What are some of the costs of long-distance procurement of food? According to McKibben and Kloppenburg et al., what are some benefits of sourcing food locally? |
Michael Pollan, “Power Steer”  
Mark Bittman, “Is Junk Food Really Cheaper?”  
What is a foodshed? What is a commodity chain? How transparent is our current food system? |
| Mar 21   | Food and Community: Fair Trade Initiatives | Guest Speaker: Matt Earley of Just Coffee  
Response Paper #5: Keep a food diary for one day. Attempt to trace the origins of each element of your diet. Reflect on what you find. |
| Mar 26   | Food and Community: Food Sovereignty       | Walden Bello, “Manufacturing a Food Crisis”  
Eric Holt-Gimenez and Lauren Peabody, “Solving the Food Crisis”  
“Nyéléni Declaration on Food Sovereignty”  
Are famines natural or social disasters? What are the most important factors undermining community food security today? What does “food sovereignty” mean? |
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>Mar 28</td>
<td>MID-TERM 2</td>
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<td>Apr 2 and 4</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
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Anna Lappé, “Who Says Food Is a Human Right?”  
The Nation, “Ten Things to Reduce Hunger” |
| Apr 11     | Work and Community: Deindustrialization                              | David Moberg, “Maytag Moves to Mexico” 
Jane Collins, “Deterritorialization and Workplace Culture” 
Andrew Martin, “In Company Town, Cuts but No Layoffs” 

*What does the term “race to the bottom mean?”*  
*What is “deterritorialization?” How does deterritorialization make it more difficult for workers to organize? How does globalization affect service sector jobs differently from those in manufacturing?*

**Response Paper #6:** Find a recent news item that you believe reflects neoliberal globalization. Explain which aspects of neoliberalism it exemplifies and how it does so. What are the implications of this trend for communities and/or the environment? |
| Apr 16     | Work and Community: Joblessness                                      | Marc Levine, “The Crisis Deepens: Black Male Joblessness in Milwaukee”  
Van Jones, “The Green New Deal” 

*How is joblessness different from unemployment?*  
*Why is black male joblessness so high in Milwaukee? How does Van Jones’ “Green New Deal” propose to link environmental goals with job creation?* |
|            | Special Event: GNIES 6th Annual Earth Day Conference                 | [http://www.nelson.wisc.edu/events/earth_day/](http://www.nelson.wisc.edu/events/earth_day/)  
“Envisioning a Fairer Future: Sustainability, Security and Happiness on a Finite Planet”  
If you attend one of the talks (Worster, Schor, Alvarez or Zimba), and write a one-page summary and response, you can substitute this for Response Paper #7. |
| Apr 18 | Work and Community: Globalization and the International Division of Labor | Readings TBA  
What does “financialization” mean? How is it changing the global economy? Is there a relationship between globalization and economic crisis? What are the implications for jobs and for communities? |
| Apr 23 | Work and Community: Recession | Hope Yen, “Census: Recession Taking Toll on Young Adults”  
Katherine Newman and David Pedulla, “An Unequal Opportunity Recession”  
Ronald Brownstein, Children of the Great Recession”  

Which groups are experiencing disproportionate unemployment in the current recession? What are some likely consequences for young workers? How are many young people responding?  
Response Paper #7: Interview someone over the age of 50 about their most recent job. Ask them to reflect on how jobs have changed over the course of their work-life and report on what they tell you.  
Alternative: Attend any one of the featured lectures at the 6th Annual Nelson Institute Earth Day Conference (Worster, Schor, Alvarez or Zimba) and write a 1-page summary and response. |
Tina Rosenberg, “Why Mexico’s Small Corn Farmers Go Hungry”  
Jill Harrison et al., “Immigrant Dairy Workers in Rural Wisconsin Communities”  
Jill Harrison et al., “A Look into the Lives of Wisconsin Immigrant Dairy Workers”  

How are global migration patterns changing? How did the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) affect migration from Mexico to the US? How are immigrant workers being incorporated into the Wisconsin dairy sector? |
| Apr 30 | Work and Community: Migration | Nazario, Sonia, Enrique’s Journey, chs. 1-3  
As you read Enrique’s story, make a list of questions about background and context (perhaps related to Central American history, the Honduran economy, |
or U.S. immigration policy changes) that you would like to have answered, and bring them to class.

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| May 1      | Work and Community: Migration              | Nazario, chs. 4-7 and afterword
Again, make a list of questions raised by the reading. |
| May 7      | Globalization: A Reprise                   | What have we learned about the prospects for the “local” and the “small-scale” in an increasingly global economy? |
| May 9      | Wrap-up and review                         | Revised Response Paper due                                                        |
| May 14     | Final Exam                                 |                                                                                   |
| 5:05-7:05 pm |                                             |                                                                                   |