



# EXTENDED CAMPUS

COLLEGE *of* PROFESSIONAL  
*and* CONTINUING STUDIES

## **SOC 5970-103: Special Topics/Seminar: Overview of Environmental issues from a Global/Strategic Perspective**

**Note:** The information on the site location and hours below is for informational purposes **only**. Out of an abundance of caution, this course will be held online using platforms and methods based on the professor's choice. **Please contact your professor for more information on actual meeting times.** This course will count as face-to-face for students who complete the required assignments and modules.

### **Course Description:**

The class explores the human interface with the natural environment through the sociological perspective, particularly in the late industrial era. We consider issues of social development and inequality, technology, demography, carrying capacity, and then consider how 'diseases of civilization' have become increasingly prevalent in modern society. As a central theme of the course, we consider the crucial role of culture in the relationship with the environment. The course concludes with looking at possible ways to think about the complex array of environmental issues as society moves into the Third Millennium.

The course will follow a lecture and discussion format. Discussion and questions are strongly encouraged. Students are expected to have read the text material prior to coming to class. During the course, we will cover a wide array of reading, research and ideas about the interface between humankind and the natural environment.

### **Class Dates, Location and Hours:**

Dates: October 5 – 20, 2020

Format: Online; contact your professor for more information

Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: September 6, 2020

### **Site Director and Information for VA Benefits:**

Location: Washington, D.C. Liaison Office - 2189 Crystal Plaza Arcade, Arlington, VA, 22202.

Hours: Monday - Friday 6:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m.; Saturday 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Sunday 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Email: [apwashington@ou.edu](mailto:apwashington@ou.edu). Phone: 703-418-4800.

### **Professor Contact Information:**

Course Professor: Thomas J. Burns, Ph.D.

Mailing Address: OU Dept of Sociology

331 KH

Norman, OK 73019

Telephone Number: (405) 325-1751

Email Address: [tburns@ou.edu](mailto:tburns@ou.edu)

Professor availability: The professor will be available via email to students before and after the class sessions. On-site office hours are half an hour before and after each class session, by appointment.

## Textbook(s) and Instructional Materials:

Student materials are available at the OU Bookstore Website at <https://ou.textbookx.com/institutional/index.php>. There is no longer a physical bookstore, the store will remain, but textbooks will not be stocked. The website has book selling, renting, buying, returning, and order tracking capabilities. If you need help with an order, or if you have any questions contact the toll-free phone at 1-(855)-790-6637, agents are available from 9a – 5p (EST) Monday – Friday. For more information or questions about textbooks, feel free to contact [apsyllabi@ou.edu](mailto:apsyllabi@ou.edu). Text prices are available online

1. Burns, T. J., & Caniglia, B.S. (2017). *Environmental sociology: The ecology of late modernity* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Norman, OK: Mercury Academic. ISBN 9781626670396. Make sure to get the second (2017) edition. There is a set of PowerPoint slides for the book, which are freely available on Canvas, and also on the publisher's website at: [http://mercuryacademic.com/environmental-sociology#.WV\\_fV4jyuUk](http://mercuryacademic.com/environmental-sociology#.WV_fV4jyuUk).
2. Materials posted on the OU Canvas learning management system: Access Canvas at <https://canvas.ou.edu>, enter your OU NetID and password, and select course to access material. If you require assistance with Canvas, please click on the Help icon. You can search the Canvas guides, chat with Canvas support, or contact OU IT.

## Class Preparation:

The course is designed to encourage class participation. Students who pay close attention to the lectures and who grasp the reading can have a reasonable expectation of doing well in the course. It is expected that with few exceptions (see the university website for bona fide reasons for missing), students will be in class each time, will have read the assigned material in advance, and be ready to discuss it. This will help you and will also, by extension, help to foster a highly positive learning environment, from which we all benefit.

## Course Outline:

### Setting the Stage – Course Overview

- Read Burns, Thomas J., and Beth Schaefer Caniglia, Chapters 1 & 2 (introduction and the unique view of environmental sociology) from *Environmental Sociology: The Ecology of Late Modernity*
- Look through Powerpoints for Burns and Caniglia, Chaps 1 & 2 (found in Modules section on Canvas)
- Look through Powerpoints for the *Eco Sapiens* model.
- Cobb, John, article on Economism or Planetism: The Coming Choice
- Dunlap, Riley, & William Catton, article on Human Exemptionalism and Environmental Sociology
- Norgaard, Kari, article on Climate Change Is a Sociological Problem

### History of Societies from an Ecological Perspective

- Diamond, Jared. 1997. Selections (Chapters 1, 6 & Epilogue) from *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. New York: Norton.
- Lenski, Gerhard E., Jean Lenski, and Patrick Nolan. 1991. "Types of Human Societies." In Lenski, Gerhard, Jean Lenski, and Patrick Nolan, *Human Societies*, 6e. N.Y.: McGraw-Hill.
- McNeill, J.R. *From Something New Under the Sun*

### Individual and Cultural Priorities and Their Implications for the Environment

- Hardin, Garrett. 1968. "The Tragedy of the Commons." *Science*, 162(13 Dec.):1243-1248.
- Schnaiberg, Allen, and Kenneth Alan Gould. 1994. Selections from *Environment and Society: The Enduring Conflict*. Caldwell, NJ: Blackburn Press. (Preface, Chaps 1 & 2)
- Burns, Thomas J., and Beth Schaefer Caniglia, Chapter 3 (on the natural

- environment and the culture of late modernity) from Environmental Sociology
- Ridley, Matt, and Bobbi S. Low. 1994. "Can Selfishness Save the Environment?"

### **Public Health Outcomes of Environmental Problems**

- Burns, Thomas J., and Beth Schaefer Caniglia, Chapter 7 (on health, illness, and the natural environment) from Environmental Sociology
- Carson, Rachel. 1962. Selection from Silent Spring
- Steingraber, Sandra. 2010. Selected chapters from Living Downstream: A Scientist's Personal Investigation of Cancer and the Environment.
- Colborn, Theo, Dianne Dumanoski, and John Peterson Myers. 1997. "To the Ends of the Earth"
- McCormick, Sabrina. Sociology of Environmental Health

### **Social Movements, Political Discourse and the Natural Environment**

- Burns, Thomas J., and Beth Schaefer Caniglia. Chapter 8 on Environmental Social Movements from Environmental Sociology: The Ecology of Late Modernity.
- Burns, Thomas J., and Terri LeMoyné. 2001. "How Environmental Movements Can Be More Effective: Prioritizing Environmental Themes in Political Discourse." Human Ecology Review, 8(1):26-38.
- Dunlap, Riley E., and Aaron McCright. 2015. Challenging Climate Change: The Denial Countermovement.
- Harlan, Sharon et al. 2015. Climate Justice and Inequality.
- Caniglia, Beth Schaefer, Robert J. Brulle, and Andrew Szasz. 2015. Civil Society, Social Movements, and Climate Change.

### **Science and Technology in Late Modernity**

- Burns, Thomas J., and Beth Schaefer Caniglia, Chapter 4 on Science & Technology from Environmental Sociology: The Ecology of Late Modernity
- Schnaiberg and Gould, Environment and Society: The Enduring Conflict, Chapter 4
- Burns, Thomas J., and Tom W. Boyd. 2017. Flaws in the Scientific Method and Their Relevance for Energy Research: A Cautionary Tale

### **Population and Carrying Capacity and the Ability of Technology to Alter It**

- Cohen, Joel E. Selection from How Many People Can the Earth Support? (Chapter on Uniqueness of the Present). New York: Norton.
- Dietz, Thomas, and Eugene A. Rosa. 1994. "Rethinking the Environmental Impacts of Population, Affluence and Technology." Human Ecology Review, 1(Summer/Autumn):277-300.
- Bates, Diane C. Population, Demography, and the Environment.
- Dimick, Dennis. As the World Population Booms, Will Its Resources Be Enough for Us?

### **Ecological Paradoxes of Modernity and Capitalism**

- Burns, Thomas J., and Beth Schaefer Caniglia, Chapter 5 on Economics and the Environment from Environmental Sociology: The Ecology of Late Modernity
- Burns, Thomas J., and Thomas K. Rudel. 2015. Metatheorizing Structural Human Ecology at the Dawn of the Third Millennium. Human Ecology Review, 22(1):13-33.
- Heinberg vs. Bailey. Is Sustainable Development Compatible with Human Welfare?
- Brown vs. Lomborg. Is Humankind Dangerously Harming the Environment?

### **International Development, Inequality, and the Environment**

- Burns, Thomas J., and Beth Schaefer Caniglia, Chapter 9 (environmental issues in emerging economies) from Environmental Sociology: The Ecology of Late Modernity

- Gore, Al. 1993. "Ships in the Desert." In Gore, Al, *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit*, pp. 19-35. N.Y.: Plume/Penguin.
- Homer-Dixon, Thomas F. 1999. Selected chapters from *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence*
- Sirinskiene vs. Cussen. Should the Precautionary Principle become Part of National and International Law?

**As the Earth and Its Inhabitants Move into the Future**

- Revisit *Eco Sapiens* Powerpoints
- Look at Powerpoints on Unwinding Wicked Environmental Problems in the Late Modern Age
- Gore, Al. 1993. "A Global Marshall Plan." In Gore, Al, *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit*. N.Y.: Plume/Penguin.
- Burns, Thomas J., and Beth Schaefer Caniglia, Chap 10 on Catalysts for Change; & Chap 11 on Bringing It Together and Moving Ahead, from *Environmental Sociology: The Ecology of Late Modernity*.
- Burns, Thomas J., Tom W. Boyd, and Carrie M. Leslie. 2019. *Regenerative Development and Environmental Ethics: Healing the Mismatch between culture and the Environment in the Third Millennium*

**Assignments, Grading and Due Dates:**

**Exam:**

The Exam is a take-home and will be given out on the last day of class and due a week later. Exam material is taken directly from the readings, lectures and class discussions. There is a set of study guides that students in the past have found useful in helping to organize and focus on key ideas. If you know what is on the study guides, I have every confidence you will do well on the Exam; these flow from the lectures and the reading; and dovetail with the main currents of the class discussions.

**Course Paper:**

You will write a paper discussing one of the major topics (chosen from those that we cover in class or, with prior permission, another related topic). The target length is 16-20 pages (including title and abstract pages, and references, in 12 pt type, double-spaced, in ASA or APA format). There are numerous references generally available for virtually all of the areas we cover. As a target, you should plan on having about 20 references for your paper’s bibliography. It is permissible and expected that some of the references will include the material from the class, from both required and recommended lists. While it is OK to get a few references from the internet, most should be from books or scholarly papers. Each reference should, of course, be properly cited.

About Recommended Readings: In addition to the course text, there are a number of articles uploaded on the course website, available for you to read and to download. Many times, students find themselves wishing to dig deeper into a topic. For virtually all of the topics, there are additional recommended readings uploaded on the class website (in addition to the required readings there). These are not listed on the syllabus (which has only the required readings) but they are there in Canvas for your edification and studying pleasure, so dig in when you get a chance! These are great when you start working on your class paper in particular. Also, students preparing for comprehensive exams find these resources on the class website most useful.

**Grading:**

This is a letter-graded course: A, B, C, D, or F.

Assignment	Due Date	Percent of Grade
Exam	October 20, 2020	40%
Class participation, In-class Quizzes and Small Group Discussions & Presentations	During class sessions	30%

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Percent of Grade</b>
Final Paper	November 10, 2020	30%

**Notice:** Failure to meet assignment due dates could result in a grade of I (Incomplete) and may adversely impact Tuition Assistance and/or Financial Aid.

## **POLICIES AND NOTICES**

### **Attendance/Grade Policy**

Attendance and participation in interaction, individual assignments, group exercises, simulations, role playing, etc. are valuable aspects of any course because much of the learning comes from discussions in class with other students. It is expected that you attend all classes and be on time except for excused emergencies.

Excused absences are given for professor mandated activities or legally required activities such as emergencies or military assignments. It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Unavoidable personal emergencies, including (but not limited to) serious illness; delays in getting to class because of accidents, etc.; deaths and funerals, and hazardous road conditions will be excused.

If you are obtaining financial assistance (TA, STAP, FA, VA, Scholarship, etc.) to pay all or part of your tuition cost, you must follow your funding agency/institution's policy regarding "I" (Incomplete) grades unless the timeline is longer than what the University policy allows then you must adhere to the University policy. Students who receive Financial Aid must resolve/complete any "I" (Incomplete) grades by the end of the term or he/she may be placed on "financial aid probation." If the "I" grade is not resolved/completed by the end of the following term, the student's Financial Aid may be suspended making the student ineligible for further Financial Aid.

Students are responsible for meeting the guidelines of Tuition Assistance and Veterans Assistance. See the education counselor at your local education center for a complete description of your TA or VA requirements.

### **Academic Integrity and Student Conduct**

Academic integrity means honesty and responsibility in scholarship. Academic assignments exist to help students learn; grades exist to show how fully this goal is attained. Therefore all work and all grades should result from the student's own understanding and effort.

Academic misconduct is any act which improperly affects the evaluation of a student's academic performance or achievement. Misconduct occurs when the student either knows or reasonably should know that the act constitutes misconduct. Academic misconduct includes: cheating and using unauthorized materials on examinations and other assignments; improper collaboration, submitting the same assignment for different classes (self-plagiarism); fabrication, forgery, alteration of documents, lying, etc...in order to obtain an academic advantage; assisting others in academic misconduct; attempting to commit academic misconduct; destruction of property, hacking, etc...; intimidation and interference with integrity process; and plagiarism. All students should review the Student's Guide to Academic Integrity at [http://integrity.ou.edu/students\\_guide.html](http://integrity.ou.edu/students_guide.html)

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. All students should review policies regarding student conduct at <http://studentconduct.ou.edu/>

### **Accommodation Statement**

The University of Oklahoma is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your local OU Site Director.

### **Adjustment for Pregnancy/Childbirth-Related Issues**

Should you need modifications or adjustments to your course requirements because of documented pregnancy-related or childbirth-related issues, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss. Generally, modifications will be made where medically necessary and similar in scope to accommodations based on temporary disability. Please see <http://www.ou.edu/content/eoo/faqs/pregnancy-faqs.html>.

### **Title IX Resources**

For any concerns regarding gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, stalking, or intimate partner violence, the University offers a variety of resources, including advocates on-call 24/7, counseling services, mutual no-contact orders, scheduling adjustments, and disciplinary sanctions against the perpetrator. Please contact the Sexual Misconduct Office at [smo@ou.edu](mailto:smo@ou.edu) or (405) 325-2215 (8-5), or the Sexual Assault Response Team at (405) 615 -0013 (24/7) to report an incident. To learn more about Title IX, please visit the Institutional Equity Office's website at <http://www.ou.edu/content/eoo.html>

### **Course Policies**

Advanced Programs policy is to order books in paperback if available. Courses, dates, and professors are subject to change. Please check with your OU Site Director. Students should retain a copy of any assignments that are mailed to the professor for the course. Advanced Programs does not provide duplicating services or office supplies.

Any and all course materials, syllabus, lessons, lectures, etc. are the property of professor teaching the course and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma and are protected under applicable copyright.

For more information about Advanced Programs, visit our website at: <http://www.goou.ou.edu/>

## INSTRUCTOR VITA

Thomas J. Burns, Ph.D.

### Education

- 1990 Ph.D., University of Maryland, College Park
- (M.A. University of Delaware; B.S. University of Maryland, College Park)

### Current Positions

- Professor of Sociology at the University of Oklahoma, and active in the Religious Studies, Environmental Studies, and International and Area Studies programs.

### Frequently Taught Advanced Programs Courses

- SOC 5970 Religion and Society
- SOC 5790 Environment and Society

### Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest

Dr. Burns's research focuses on the outcomes, evolution and emergence of social institutions from a comparative and historical perspective, particularly as they pertain to issues of religion and the environment.

### Representative Publications and Presentations

- Burns, T.J., and B.S. Caniglia. 2017. *Environmental Sociology: The Ecology of Late Modernity*, 2e. Norman, OK & Breckenridge, CO: Mercury Academic.
- Burns, T.J., and T.K. Rudel. 2015. Metatheorizing Structural Human Ecology at the Dawn of the Third Millennium. *Human Ecology Review*, 22(1):13-33.
- Burns, T.J. (ed.). 2012. *Canonical Texts: Selections from Religious Wisdom Traditions*. San Diego: Cognella;
- Burns, T.J. 2012. What Is Old and What Is New? Considering World-Systems in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and Beyond. In C. Chase-Dunn and S. Babones (eds.), *Handbook of World-Systems Analysis*. London: Routledge;
- Burns, T.J. 2012. Marine Pollution. In G. Ritzer (ed.), *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Globalization*. London: Blackwell;
- Burns, T.J. 2009. Culture and the Natural Environment. In A. Begossi and P.F. Lopes (eds.), *Current Trends in Human Ecology*, Newcastle upon Tyne, U.K.: Cambridge Scholars;
- Burns, T.J., E.L. Kick, and B.L. Davis. 2006. A Quantitative, Cross-National Study of Deforestation in the Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century: A Case of Recursive Exploitation. In A.K. Jorgenson and E.L. Kick (eds.), *Globalization and the Environment*, Leiden: Brill;
- Burns, T.J., and T. LeMoyné. 2001. How Environmental Movements Can Be More Effective: Prioritizing Environmental Themes in Political Discourse. *Human Ecology Review*, 8(1):26-38.

### Representative Honors and Awards Received

- University of Utah, College of Behavioral and Social Science Superior Teaching Award
- University of Oklahoma, Good Teaching Award
- Society for Human Ecology, Gerald L. Young International Book Award
- Society for Human Ecology, Distinguished Leadership Award
- Book Review Editor, *Human Ecology Review*
- Editorial Board, *Journal of World-Systems Research*
- Representative Professional Affiliations: Society for Human Ecology, American Sociological Association, Society for the Study of Social Problems