SOC 5970-221: Special Topics/Seminar: Overview of Environmental Issues from a Global/Strategic Perspective

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 15 – 20, 2019
- Location: Mildenhall, England. See Site Director for classroom location.
- Hours: Tuesday - Friday 6:00-9:30 pm; Saturday and Sunday 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
- Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: September 16, 2019

Site Director:
Email: apmildenhall@ou.edu. Phone: DSN 238-4172; CIV 44-1638-54-4172.

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
- E-mail Address: 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. Text prices are available online.

2. Materials posted on the OU Canvas learning management system: Access Canvas at [https://canvas.ou.edu](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.

**The Topics We Will Cover, along with the Required Readings, Are Listed Here:**

In addition to the course text, there are a number of articles uploaded on the course website that are freely available for you to read and to download. I expect you to read the material ahead of time and to come prepared with questions and ready to discuss it. This will enhance your own and your classmates’ experience.

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 as well. These are not listed on the syllabus (which has only the required readings) but they are there 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 this class website most useful.

**Course Overview and Introduction of Some Key Ideas**

- 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*
- 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**

- McNeill, J.R. From Something New Under the Sun

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

- Burns, Thomas J., and Beth Schaefer Caniglia, Chapter 3 (on the natural environment and the culture of late modernity) from *Environmental Sociology*

**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*
• 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.
• 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 and Boyd, 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

• 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
• 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
• Sirinskienė vs. Cussen. Should the Precautionary Principle become Part of National and International Law?
As the Earth and Its Inhabitants Move into the Future

- 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

Assignments, Grading and Due Dates:

Pre-class Preparation:

The course is designed so that students who pay close attention to the lectures and who grasp the reading can have a reasonable expectation of doing well in the course.

While doing well on the Exam is certainly a large component of a person’s grade, that alone is insufficient in terms of the overall expectations. The course is designed to encourage class participation. 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.

Class Participation:

Class participation, quizzes and discussion are integral aspects of the course. It is important to be here, to do the reading in advance, and to be engaged in the lecture and discussion. This will help you and will also, by extension, help to foster a highly positive learning environment, from which we all benefit.

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 as well. Students who follow the lectures and do the reading, and participate in class and do well on the quizzes typically do well on the exam.

Course Paper:

The class paper accounts for 30% of the grade. You will write a paper (in standard American Sociological Association format, a handbook for which is posted on our class site) 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 12-15 pages, typed, double-spaced. There are numerous references generally available for virtually all of the areas we cover. As a target, you should plan on having about 15-20 references for your paper’s bibliography. It is permissible and expected that some of the references will include the material from the class, from the 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.

Grading:

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percent of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take-Home Exam</td>
<td>November 3, 2019</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation, In-class Quizzes and Small Group Discussions &amp; Presentations</td>
<td>During class sessions</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>November 17, 2019</td>
<td>30%</td>
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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 make 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

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 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/eeo.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

Current Positions

Professor of Sociology at the University of Oklahoma, and active in the Religious Studies and Environmental 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


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 Book Award
- Society for Human Ecology, Distinguished Leadership Award
- Book Review Editor, *Human Ecology Review*
- Editorial Board, *Journal of World-Systems Research*