

SOCIOLOGY 465
ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY
Winter Term 2022

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Virtual Office Hours: 9:00-10:30 Tuesdays, or by appointment.

Sign up at: www.wejoinin.com/sheets/ogixl

Fully Online Course (Note: all course materials are on **D2L**, not Canvas)

This course examines the social roots of current global and national environmental problems, as well as a range of approaches to solving those problems. We will explore a range of theoretical frameworks for understanding the relationship between environment and society. Using a globally focused political-economy perspective, the course examines how social and economic inequality is related to issues of (un)sustainability and environmental (in)justice. A critical backdrop to struggles over sustainability is the historical and current relationship between the rich countries of the global North (or First World) and the “poor” nations of the global South (or Third World). We will also discuss the differing framings of the environment used by environmental movements and in public discourse in the South and the North. We also examine several substantive areas that illustrate these connections between society and environment, including population and consumption, food and agriculture, and struggles over the ownership and control of fresh water.

The latter part of the course focuses on the pressing issue of climate change, asking why our current political and economic system has so far proven incapable of making the dramatic carbon emissions cuts that science shows must occur. We finish with a look at some alternative models and paradigms for addressing the crises of unsustainability. We will wrestle with a series of questions: Are continued ecological degradation, climate change, and extreme inequality inevitable? If not, what will it take to address them? What options are available to solve these problems, and what prevents solutions from being implemented? Who wins and who loses from choices that are made, and who gets to decide?

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, you should have an understanding of:

- A range of theoretical frameworks for understanding the *causes* of environmental problems, how they diverge and overlap, and how they relate to social and economic inequality.
- A range of theoretical approaches to analyzing the social *effects* of environmental problems.
- Debates over the role of individuals, markets, governments, and civil society in creating and/or solving environmental problems, as well as the definition and role of neoliberalism.
- Debates over capital accumulation and its role in ecological crisis, over whether (and how) capitalism can be “greened,” and the phenomenon of greenwashing.
- An understanding of different definitions of and approaches to environmental (in)justice.
- A range of responses to environmental problems in both North and South, including environmental movements and alternative proposals for restructuring society and economy.
- The ability to apply these key course concepts and frameworks to analyze specific current environmental and social policy issues, both domestically and internationally.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- 1) **Class Participation:** This is an upper-level undergraduate course, with a substantial online discussion component. Your active participation in those discussions is critical to making the class worthwhile, both for yourself and your classmates, and it counts for 10 percent of the final course grade. Note: In this online class, **participation requires that you reply to other students' online postings in D2L**, both their weekly reading responses (see #3-A, below) and their documentary film responses (see #3-B, below).
- 2) **Readings:** I expect you to do *all* of the assigned readings (except those listed as “optional”), whether or not they are required (starred) for that week’s reading response, and whether or not you will be writing a response for that week. The readings assigned for each week on this syllabus should be completed by the end of that week. Please make sure you have a way to either permanently mark up the readings with your notes and comments, or to take notes on the readings.

3) ASSIGNMENTS:

A) READING RESPONSE POSTINGS:

On seven (7) weeks during the quarter (starting in Week 1), you should write a short response/ reaction that **incorporates all of the starred (*) readings for that week**. (Note: posting a response in Weeks 1 and 2 is required, and missed responses for those two weeks cannot be made up.) Examples of good responses from past classes are posted on D2L.

These responses should be very short informal papers, between 500-800 words (see specifications below). Response postings should be well organized and clearly written, with correct grammar and spelling. **Note:** The 500-word minimum is a firm minimum.

Important: In these responses, you may: criticize or praise the readings, find points of similarity or divergence, question the key ideas or concepts, point out weaknesses, relate the readings to your own personal experiences, examine their underlying values/assumptions, compare them to other readings, etc.

The key point is this: You should critically and thoughtfully engage with and respond/react to the specific ideas in the required readings; the posting should not be merely a summary or restatement of the author’s points, or a general reaction without details.

- Including quotes from the readings, and/or references to specific sections or passages — with page number references — is necessary to illustrate your engagement with the readings. The year of publication is not required. For example: (Klein, p. 42).
- At the end of your posting, **please include one or more questions about the readings** (in **bold font**) to spark online discussion and help other students analyze the reading material.
- At the bottom please **add the word count** of your response. (E.g.: “Word count: 569”)

Please do two things with your responses:

- 1) **Post your response to our course D2L website** (under the “Discussions” tab, click on the folder for the appropriate date, and then “Compose” to start a new posting), so that everyone in the class can read each other’s postings—and respond. *NOTE: Please DO NOT click “add a file” attach your Word file to the posting; instead, compose your response in a word processing program, then select the text of your response, copy it, and paste it into the window for the thread.* **Warning:** Don’t write your posting online in D2L; you are likely to lose your work! You are responsible for saving a backup copy of all your written work.

POSTING DEADLINE: 11:00pm Sundays (at the end of the week the readings are assigned for). **Late posting policy:** If your posting is late (between 11:01 pm Sunday and 11:00pm Monday), you will receive 65% of what your grade would have been. No credit will be given for postings uploaded after 11:00pm Monday.

2) Reply briefly (a paragraph or two) to at least one other student's posting, by 11:00pm on Monday. This is a required element of the reading response assignment. (Click on the student's posting, then click "reply," and enter your reply in the text window.)

I will evaluate your reading response postings in the following way:

- A strong response—keep it coming! = **5.5 to 6.0 points**
- Good response; meaningful engagement, but some room for improvement = **5.0 to 5.4 points**
- Adequate response; some good engagement, but needs to be strengthened = **4.5 to 4.9 points**
- Inadequate response; low engagement, needs much improvement = **3.6 to 4.4 points**
- Unsatisfactory; you didn't engage substantially with the readings. = **0 to 3.5 points**

NOTE: Regardless of whether you write a response posting on a given week, you are expected to complete all of the readings.

B) FILM RESPONSES: On eight (8) weeks during the term, there are required documentary films or short videos assigned (see calendar schedule below). Please watch all of these films. **For five (5) of those films, you should write a short response to the film (at least 250 words),** on the separate discussion forums on D2L. Also, please be sure to reply to at least one other student's film response, which counts toward the participation portion of your grade. You will receive up to 3 points for each posting, depending on your level of engagement with the film content and the course themes. **The deadline for posting film responses is 10:00am on the Friday of the week the film is assigned. Replies to another student must be posted by 10:00am Saturdays (24 hours after the deadline).** Note: The late posting policy is the same as for reading responses (65% credit up to 24 hours late; no credit after that).

C) RESEARCH ESSAY: GREENING OR GREENWASH?: This will be a roughly 6-8 page essay involving research on environmental or sustainability claims by industry. I will ask you to select one corporation or one industry that is currently making public claims (in advertising, on its website, social media, news media coverage, or other venues) about "greening" its practices in some way: e.g., a low or zero carbon footprint, renewable energy usage, pollution reduction, efficiency, or other claims. Your essay will critically assess these claims, using outside sources as well as readings from the course (particularly the theories covered in Week 2 and the material on greening capitalism in Week 3). I will provide more details, guidelines, and ideas for this assignment in the early weeks of the term. **Note: you must get my approval for your choice of company/industry and example(s) of its "greening" claims before starting. Please run your ideas by me via email.**

There will be two sub-deadlines for this essay:

- **Monday, Jan. 24, by 10am** (after getting my email approval for your topic): **Submit a brief (2-3 page) proposal**, describing your chosen company/industry and the example of its greening claims that you will be analyzing. This proposal (if submitted on time) is worth 3 points.
- **Monday, March 7, by 10:00 am:** **Final essay due** (in assignment folder on D2L). The essay will be worth 30 possible points.

D) EXTRA CREDIT: There will be opportunities to earn extra credit, up to 4 points total. Some of these involve attending (in person or online) lectures, webinars, etc. related to the environment and sustainability, and writing a short response. I will let you know of options I am aware of, but please also let me know about events you hear of. Another option will be writing extra reading or film responses. Extra credit assignment guidelines are posted on D2L.

EVALUATION/GRADING:

The final course grade will weigh the assignments and requirements in the following way:

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| ➤ Reading Response Postings (7 total): | 42 points (6 points possible per response) |
| ➤ Film Responses (5 total): | 15 points (3 points possible per response) |
| ➤ Greening/Greenwash Research Essay | 33 points |
| ○ Paper proposal (3 points) | |
| ○ Final essay (30 points) | |
| ➤ Participation | 10 points |
| ➤ Extra Credit | 4 points maximum |
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| TOTAL: | 104 possible points |

Final grades will be calculated based on the following table:

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|----|------------|----|-----------|----|--------------|
| A | 94.0-104.0 | B- | 80.0-82.9 | D+ | 67.0-69.9 |
| A- | 90.0-93.9 | C+ | 77.0-79.9 | D | 63.0-66.9 |
| B+ | 87.0-89.9 | C | 73.0-76.9 | D- | 60.0-62.9 |
| B | 83.0-86.9 | C- | 70.0-72.9 | F | 59.9 or less |



CLASS READINGS:

1) There is one required textbook for the class:

Kenneth Gould and Tammy Lewis. 2020. *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology (Third Edition)*. Oxford University Press. [Note: you must have the 3rd edition.]

Options for accessing this book:

--Easiest: A 180-day E-Book rental is available for approximately \$28 at:

<https://redshelf.com/book/1585547/twenty-lessons-in-environmental-sociology-1585547-9780190088521-kenneth-a-gould-tammy-l-lewis>

--One hard copy of the book has been placed on 2-hour reserve at the PSU Library.

--There are also paperback copies for sale online

2) Readings on D2L: All remaining required readings for the course are posted on the class D2L website, under the “Course Content” link, and then in the folders for the relevant weeks (e.g. “Week 2 Readings”). Please contact me with any questions you have about using the site.

COURSE GUIDELINES:

Syllabus: This is your principal guide to the class. Before emailing me with a question, *please reread the syllabus thoroughly first* to see if it answers your question. If it does not, contact me.

Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism: I expect that your writing and your work on all assignments in this course will reflect original thought. Using the work or ideas of others without proper citation and attribution—whether from the internet, publications, or any other source—is plagiarism, and is a violation of the Student Conduct Code. To avoid plagiarizing, please adhere to at least these basic principles:

- 1) If you use another person's ideas in your work, you must cite the source in the text (author last name(s) and year*);
- 2) If you use another person's exact words in your work, you must put those words in quotation marks, as well as cite the source in the text, with a page reference (author last name, year*, and page number).
- 3) All sources cited in the text must also appear in the reference list/bibliography*

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of the university, and I take violations of this policy very seriously. Therefore, **any student whom I find to be in violation of these standards will receive either a grade of zero for the assignment in question, or a failing grade for the entire course.** I will also report all violations of this policy to the Dean of Student Life. If you have questions or concerns about these policies or guidelines, I strongly encourage you to discuss them with me. Please refer to the Student Code of Conduct for more information: <http://www.pdx.edu/dos/psu-student-code-conduct>

*In reading and film response postings, you do not need to list publication year or add a reference list.

Access and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities: PSU values diversity and inclusion. We are committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, inclusive, and welcoming. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment. If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith; 503-725-4150, drc@pdx.edu, <https://www.pdx.edu/drc>. If you already have accommodations, please contact me to be sure that I have received a faculty notification email and discuss your accommodations.

Email Communication: I will regularly communicate with students individually and as a class via regular email. My emails will be sent to your PSU email, unless you gave me a different preferred address. Please check your email daily during the school week, and respond in a timely manner. In emails *to me*, please put the course number and a descriptive topic in the subject line. Please do not email me from within D2L. I generally check email on weekdays during business hours (M-F 9am-5pm); please do not expect a response outside of those times. I will strive to respond to your email as soon as possible.

Technology and Access: All of the course materials, including readings, assignment descriptions, discussion forums, and assignment submission folders, are located on the course D2L site, except for the required e-book, *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*. You will need a computer, tablet, or similar device with an internet connection to access D2L. Please contact me if you have any difficulty accessing the course materials or assignments; I will be happy to help.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

(Please note that I reserve the right to make changes to these readings and films during the quarter. I will let you know about any changes in advance by email.)

***All starred readings must be included in your reading response posting;** others *may* be included. Please do not rely on D2L to determine which articles are starred; use this syllabus.

| DATE | TOPICS | READINGS |
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| WEEK 1 January 3-9 | Introduction to Environmental Sociology <i>*Post a response to Week 1 readings on D2L by Sunday, Jan. 9, 11:00pm; reply to another student's posting by Monday 11pm (Note: This deadline is not shown on the syllabus for future weeks)</i> | *Gould & Lewis, <i>Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology</i> (required textbook): Introduction (Gould & Lewis) and Chapter 1 (Capek) *Johanna Bockman. 2013. "Neoliberalism." <i>Contexts</i> 12(3):14-15. |
| | <i>Required Video for Week 2:</i> <i>(post film response by Friday Jan. 14, 10am; reply to another post by Sat., 10am)</i> | <p style="text-align: center;">"The Story of Stuff"</p> Watch at: http://wp2020.storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of-stuff (In your response, in addition to personal reactions, please address how the film connects to the content of this week's readings.) |
| WEEK 2 January 10-16 | Theoretical Perspectives in Environmental Sociology | *(Required textbook) <i>Twenty Lessons</i>: Chapter 2 (Myers) *Michael Bell. 2004. <i>An Introduction to Environmental Sociology</i> (2 nd ed.). Excerpts: "The Treadmill of Consumption," "The Treadmill of Production," "Social Creation of Treadmills." *Well Sharp Blog. 2009. "The Economy as an Environmentally and Socially Destructive Treadmill" and "Ecological Modernization and the Challenge to Radical Green Politics." Scott Sernau. 2012. <i>Global Problems</i> . 30-33, "Economic Development: Modernization and Dependency Theories." |
| | <i>Video for Week 3:</i> <i>(post film response by Friday Jan. 21 by 10:00am)</i> | <p style="text-align: center;">"Forget Shorter Showers" Watch online:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2TbriCGbhQ</p> |

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| <p>WEEK 3</p> <p>January 17-23</p> | <p>Individuals, States, Markets, and Corporations</p> <p>Greening Capitalism? Or Greenwashing?</p> <p>January 24, 10am: Proposal due for Greening/Greenwash Essay (on D2L).</p> | <p>*Michael Maniates. 2001. "Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World?" <i>Global Environmental Politics</i> 1(3):31-52.</p> <p>*Twenty Lessons: Chapter 3 (Pellow)</p> <p>*Paul Hawken. 2010. <i>The Ecology of Commerce</i>. 1-17, "A Teasing Irony."</p> <p>*Fred Magdoff and John Bellamy Foster. 2011. <i>What Every Environmentalist Needs to Know About Capitalism</i>. 95-122, "Can Capitalism Go Green?"</p> <p>*Bruce Watson. 2016. "The Troubling Evolution of Corporate Greenwashing." <i>The Guardian</i>, August 20.</p> <p>(Optional): James O'Connor. 1994. "Is Sustainable Capitalism Possible?" 152-175 in O'Connor (ed), <i>Is Capitalism Sustainable?</i></p> |
| | <p>Film for Week 4: (post film response by Friday Jan. 28 by 10:00am)</p> | <p>"A Fierce Green Fire" (PSU Library, online access): https://search.library.pdx.edu/permalink/f/p82vj0/CP71198653050001451</p> |
| <p>WEEK 4</p> <p>January 24-30</p> | <p>Environmental Movements in the US and the Global South;</p> <p>Theories of Environmental Concern;</p> <p>Gender and Environmental Sociology</p> | <p>*Twenty Lessons: Chapter 18 (Harrison); Chapter 19 (Lewis)</p> <p>*Michael M. Bell. 2016. "Social Status and Environmental Concern" and "Three Theories of Environmental Concern." <i>An Invitation to Environmental Sociology</i> (5th ed.), 237-250.</p> <p>*Emily Huddart Kennedy and Liz Dzialo. 2015. "Locating Gender in Environmental Sociology." <i>Sociology Compass</i> 9(10): 920-929.</p> <p>(Optional): Ramachandra Guha and Joan Martinez-Alier. 1997. "The Environmentalism of the Poor." 1-21 in <i>Varieties of Environmentalism: Essays North and South</i>. London: Earthscan.</p> |
| <p>WEEK 5</p> <p>Jan. 31-Feb. 6</p> | <p>Environmental (In)Justice and Environmental Racism</p> | <p>*Twenty Lessons: Chapter 10 (Mascarenhas)</p> <p>*Michael M. Bell. 2016. <i>An Introduction to Environmental Sociology</i> (5th ed.). 30-40, "Environmental Justice."</p> <p>*Laura Pulido. 2016. "Flint, Environmental Racism, and Racial Capitalism." <i>Capitalism, Nature, Socialism</i> 27(3): 1-16.</p> <p>*David N. Pellow. 2016. "Toward a Critical Environmental Justice Studies: Black Lives Matter as an Environmental Justice Challenge." <i>Du Bois Review</i> 13(2): 221-236. [CONT. →]</p> |

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| <i>(Week 5, continued)</i> | | <p>Bryce Covert. 2016. "Race Best Predicts Whether You Live Near Pollution." <i>The Nation</i>, February 18.</p> <p>(Optional): Gregory Hooks and Chad L. Smith. 2004. The Treadmill of Destruction: National Sacrifice Areas and Native Americans." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 69(4): 558-575.</p> |
| | <p>Film for Week 6: <i>(post film response by Friday Feb. 11 by 10:00am)</i></p> | <p>"Drowned Out" (PSU Library, online): https://search.library.pdx.edu/permalink/f/p82vj0/CP71253759580001451</p> |
| <p>WEEK 6 February 7-13</p> | <p>Population, Consumption, Poverty/Wealth, and the Environment (Neo-Malthusian and Anti-Malthusian Perspectives);</p> <p>Sustainable Development</p> | <p>*Garrett Hardin. 1968. "The Tragedy of the Commons." <i>Science</i> 162 (December 13): 1243-1248.</p> <p>*Vandana Shiva. 2005. <i>Earth Democracy</i>. Boston: South End Press. 53-61, "The False Tragedy of the Commons" and "Myths About and Reasons for Overpopulation."</p> <p>*Robin Broad. 1994. "The Poor and the Environment: Friends or Foes?" <i>World Development</i> 22(6): 811-822.</p> <p>*Maggie Black. 2007. <i>The No-Nonsense Guide to International Development</i>. "Enter Sustainability" (excerpt), 94-103.</p> <p>Worldwide Fund for Nature. 2020. <i>Living Planet Report</i> (Summary). Skim this report; <u>Examine map on p. 20-21</u> closely.</p> <p>➤ Activity: Calculate your Ecological Footprint Go to: https://www.footprintcalculator.org *Please follow detailed guidelines for this assignment on D2L.</p> |
| | <p>Film for Week 7: <i>(post film response by Friday Feb. 18 by 10:00am)</i></p> | <p>"Merchants of Doubt" (PSU Library, online): https://search.library.pdx.edu/permalink/f/p82vj0/CP71325561410001451</p> |
| <p>WEEK 7 February 14-20</p> | <p>Climate Change (I)</p> <p>Climate Denial</p> | <p>*Twenty Lessons: Chapter 16 (Norgaard)</p> <p>*Naomi Klein. 2014. <i>This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate</i>. New York: Simon & Schuster. Chapters 1 and 2.</p> <p>*Aaron M. McCright and Riley E. Dunlap. 2011. "Cool Dudes: Denial of Climate Change among Conservative White Males in the U.S." <i>Global Environmental Change</i> 21: 1163-72.</p> |

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| | <p>Film for Week 8: (post film response by Friday Feb. 25 by 10:00am)</p> | <p>“This Changes Everything” (PSU Library, online): https://search.library.pdx.edu/permalink/f/p82vj0/CP71325685730001451</p> |
| <p>WEEK 8</p> <p>February 21-27</p> | <p>Climate Change (II); Climate Justice</p> <p>Ecologically Unequal Exchange</p> <p>Case Study: The Future of “Natural” Gas</p> | <p>*Naomi Klein, <i>This Changes Everything</i>. Chapters 9, 11, & 12. (Chapter 10 and Conclusion are optional).</p> <p>*Andrew Jorgensen. 2012. “The Sociology of Ecologically Unequal Exchange and Carbon Dioxide Emissions, 1965-2005.” <i>Social Science Research</i> 41(2): 242-252. [NOTE: Read p. 242-244 closely; skim the rest.]</p> <p>Jocelyn Timperley. 2021. “The Truth Behind Corporate Climate Pledges.” <i>The Guardian</i>, July 26.</p> <p>(Numerous organizations). 2020. “Not Zero: How Net-Zero Targets Disguise Climate Action.” (OK to skim)</p> <p>*Ysabelle Kemp. 2021. “Even in the Greenest Places, Phasing Out Natural Gas Isn’t Easy.” <i>Crosscut</i>, September 24.</p> <p>(Optional): Power Past Fracked Gas. 2021. “Methane Gas: Health, Safety, & Decarbonization: Setting the Record Straight.”</p> <p>(Optional): “Getting to Zero: Decarbonizing Cascadia” https://www.invw.org/getting-to-zero/</p> |
| | <p>Film for Week 9: (post film response by Friday Mar. 4 by 10:00am)</p> | <p>“Flow: For Love of Water” [Option 1: Multnomah Library: https://multcolib.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S152C105755 Option 2: YouTube (has Greek subtitles): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RkdIIIfArWqo]</p> |
| <p>WEEK 9</p> <p>Feb. 28- Mar. 6</p> | <p>Commodification, Contestation, and The Commons</p> <p>Case Study: <i>Water Commodification</i></p> <p>Monday, March 7, 10am: Final Greening/Greenwash Research Essay Due</p> | <p>*Karl Polanyi. 1944 [2001]. “The Self-Regulating Market and the Fictitious Commodities: Land, Labor, and Money.” 71-80 in <i>The Great Transformation</i>. Boston: Beacon Press.</p> <p>*Daniel Jaffee and Soren Newman. 2013. “A Bottle Half Empty: Bottled Water, Commodification, and Contestation.” <i>Organization and Environment</i> 26(3): 318-335.</p> <p>*Maude Barlow. 2019. <i>Whose Water Is It Anyway?</i> Chapters 1 and 2. Toronto: ECW Press.</p> |

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| | <p><i>Films for Week 10:</i> <i>(post film response by Friday Mar. 11 by 10:00am)</i></p> | <p>“The Story of Solutions” Online: https://www.storyofstuff.org/movies/the-story-of-solutions/ and “The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil”: Online: https://vimeo.com/157346186</p> |
| <p>WEEK 10</p> <p>March 7-13</p> | <p>Food, Agriculture, and Environment</p> <p>Alternative Models</p> <p>Wrapping Up</p> | <p>*<i>Twenty Lessons: Chapter 12 (Konefal & Hatanaka), and “Conclusion: Unanswered Questions...” (Gould & Lewis).</i></p> <p>*Eric Holt-Gimenez. 2019. <i>Can We Feed the World Without Destroying It?</i> New York: Polity Press. 1-4 (Introduction).</p> <p>*Rebecca Solnit. 2021. “Ten Ways to Confront the Climate Crisis Without Losing Hope.” <i>The Guardian</i>, November 18.</p> <p>*Michael Pollan. 2008. “Why Bother?”</p> <p>Serge Latouche. “The Economics of Degrowth.” <i>Le Monde Diplomatique</i>.</p> <p>(Plus optional articles on food/agriculture and climate change)</p> |