This course examines the causes and effects of current global and national environmental problems, and 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 the crises of unsustainability and environmental injustice. 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 discuss the differing framings of the environment that inform environmental movements and 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 ownership and control of commons resources, including 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 these 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, where 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.
- Current debates over the role of markets, economic globalization, and neoliberalism, as well as states and civil society, in generating and/or solving environmental problems.
- Debates over capital accumulation and its role in ecological crisis, and over whether and how capitalism can be “greened.”
- 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/frameworks to analyze specific current environmental and social policy debates, both internationally and domestically.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1) Attendance: This is an upper-level, discussion-based course. Your presence and active participation are essential for the learning experience of everyone in the course. Regular attendance is especially important in a small seminar course. Attendance will count for 15 percent of your final grade. NOTE regarding attendance policy: Each student will begin the quarter with 15 points for attendance. Your first absence will not reduce the total. Your second absence will reduce the total by one (1) point. Each additional absence after the second will reduce the total by two (2) points. In short: multiple absences will hurt your grade.

Comment Cards: During each class session, you should write a short (2-3 sentence) comment, question, or reaction pertaining to the content of the reading and/or discussion, or feedback on how the course is going for you. Write this question/comment on a 3x5 card. Please purchase (or share with another student) a pack of these cards (3x5 only, please) for use in class. Write your full name and the date at the top of the card. At the end of class, leave your card at the front of the room. I will use these cards to register attendance.

2) Readings: Everyone should arrive in class having completed all of the readings for that session. Incomplete preparation deprives everyone of the benefit of your insights and analysis, and in a small, upper-level course such as this one, that is especially detrimental.

3) Discussion Participation: This is a small, upper-level course, and we will dedicate a substantial amount of time to discussion and debate. Your active participation in discussion is critical to making the class worthwhile, both for yourself and your classmates, and it counts for 14 percent of the final course grade. Participation includes serving as a question gatherer for one class session.

4) ASSIGNMENTS:

A) READING RESPONSE POSTINGS:
On seven (7) weeks during the quarter (beginning in Week 2), you should write a short response/reaction that incorporates all of the starred (*) readings for the upcoming week.

These postings should be very short papers, between 600-800 words (see specifications below). Response postings should be well organized, with correct grammar and spelling. Note: The 600-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 and assumptions, compare them to other readings, etc.

The key point is this: You should critically and thoughtfully engage with and respond/react to the ideas in the required readings; the posting should not be merely a summary or restatement of the author’s points.

Quotes from the readings, and/or references to specific sections or passages (with page numbers) will be necessary evidence of your engagement.
At the end of your posting, please include one or more questions about the readings (in bold type) that will help frame our discussion in class.

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 others’ comment—and respond—before we meet. 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: 8:00 am on Mondays (except for Week 2, which is Weds.)

**Late posting policy:** If your posting is late (between 8:01 am and 11:00 am), you will receive 50% of what your grade would have been. No credit will be given for postings after 11:00 am. This is a firm policy.

I (or the TA) will evaluate your response paper postings in the following way:

- Strong response—keep it coming! = 4.5 to 5.0 points
- Good response; meaningful engagement, but room for improvement = 4.0 to 4.4 points
- Adequate response; some good engagement, but needs to be strengthened = 3.5 to 3.9 points
- Inadequate response; low engagement, needs much improvement = 3.0 to 3.4 points
- Unsatisfactory; you didn’t engage substantially with the readings. = 0 to 2.9 points

If you wish to write more than 7 postings during the term, I will count your seven highest scores.

NOTE: Regardless of whether you write a response posting on a given day, you are expected to come to every class session prepared to discuss all of the readings, with the readings in hand.

B) RESEARCH PAPER (37 points total): This will be a substantial individual research paper on a topic of your choosing (in consultation with the instructor), which will be developed over the entire quarter. This paper should focus in depth on a social-environmental topic or question relevant to your interests and goals. It should incorporate both readings from the course and additional bibliographic resources (including peer-reviewed scholarly literature). The research paper must demonstrate meaningful engagement with sociological theories and conceptual frameworks from the course. We will discuss potential topics and approaches for the paper early in the quarter. The paper will be approx. 12-15 pages in length, not including references. I will provide more detail and specifications for the paper assignment during the term.

There will be several sub-deadlines to keep you from falling behind on the paper:

**Research Paper Sub-Deadlines:**
- A 2-3 page proposal is due on Monday, January 29 at 8:00pm.
- A complete draft of the paper is due by Thursday, March 8 at 4:00pm.
- The final paper will be due (on D2L) on Tuesday, March 20 at 10:00 am.
- Students will give a brief oral presentation on their research in the final week of classes.
C) **EXTRA CREDIT:** There will be opportunities to earn extra credit, up to 3 points total. Most of these involve attending lectures, events, or documentary films related to the environment and sustainability, and writing a short response. I will alert you to these opportunities as they arise, and we will discuss this option further in class.

**EVALUATION/GRADING:**

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

- **Class Attendance** 15 points *(see note above)*
- **In-class Participation** 13 points
- **Reading Response Postings (7 total):** 35 points (5 points possible per posting)
- **Research Paper** 37 points
  - Proposal in by deadline (1 point)
  - First draft in by deadline (2 points)
  - Oral research presentation (2 points)
  - Final paper (32 points)
- **Extra Credit** 3 points maximum

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TOTAL: 103 possible points
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Final grades will be calculated based on the following table:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<td>A</td>
<td>93.0-103.0</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80.0-82.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90.0-93.9</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77.0-79.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87.0-89.9</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>73.0-76.9</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>59.9 or less</td>
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**COURSE GUIDELINES:**

**Starting Time:** Class will start promptly at 12:45 pm. I expect you to show me and your fellow students the courtesy of arriving in class on time. If you repeatedly arrive late, the participation portion of your course grade will be reduced.

**Distractions:** Please turn off laptops, tablets, cell phones, smartphones, and any other electronic devices, and keep them out of sight during the entire class. Because it detracts from classroom focus and from the quality of discussion, I have a firm policy against using these devices during class, with one exception I will discuss in class.

**Syllabus:** This is your principal guide to the class. Please bring it with you to each class in case we need to make adjustments. Before emailing me with a question, *reread the syllabus first* to make sure that it doesn’t answer your question.

**Academic Integrity:** 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. We will discuss this issue during the quarter, but you are responsible for understanding plagiarism and the correct practice for quoting and attributing sources. Any language or ideas that you draw from course readings or other sources must be properly attributed and cited, and verbatim text must be placed in quotation marks. 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 about proper attribution/citation practice, 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

**PSU Sexual Harassment Policy:** As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment for my students and for the campus as a whole. I also have the responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination. If you would rather share information about sexual harassment, sexual violence or discrimination to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of those individuals at: https://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/get-help. For more information about Title IX, please complete the required student module “Creating a Safe Campus” in your D2L.

**CLASS READINGS**

1) There are **two required books** for the class (Available at PSU Bookstore, or online):

   Kenneth Gould and Tammy Lewis. 2014. *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology (Second Edition).* Oxford University Press. [Note: you must have the 2nd edition.]


2) **Readings on D2L:** The 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 dates. *Please see me with any questions you have about using the site.*
COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

(Please note that this is a tentative calendar. Some readings may be shifted, added or dropped during the quarter. I will let you know about these changes in advance.)

*Starred readings must be included in your reading response posting; other readings may be included.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPICS</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
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</table>
| Weds. Jan. 10 | Introduction to Environmental Sociology; Theoretical Perspectives in Environmental Sociology | Gould & Lewis [G&L], 20 Lessons in Environmental Sociology, Introduction; Chapter 1 (Capek)  
In-class video: “The Story of Stuff” |
| WEEK 2     | Theoretical Perspectives in Environmental Sociology (continued) | *G&L: Chapter 2 (Barbosa) |
*G&L: Chapter 3 (Pellow)  
In-class video: “Forget Shorter Showers” |
| Mon. Jan. 22 | | |
| Weds. Jan. 24 | | |
| Required film (watch out of class): | “A Fierce Green Fire” (PSU Library, online access) |
| WEEK 7 | Climate Change (II) | *Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything*. Chapters 1, 2, and 5.  
*G&L: Chapter 15 (Norgaard)*  
*Short readings on climate/energy policy and the Trump administration, TBA.*  
*In-class film: “Merchants of Doubt”* |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon. Feb. 19</td>
<td>Climate Denial</td>
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</table>
Plus short reading(s) on Northwest fossil fuel exports, TBA.  
*In-class video: Coverage of international climate negotiations* |
| WEEK 8 | Climate Change (III) | *Klein, This Changes Everything*. Chapters 9, 10, 11, 12, and Conclusion. (chap. 13 optional)  
| Mon. Feb. 26 | Ecologically Unequal Exchange |  |
Plus short reading(s) on Northwest fossil fuel exports, TBA.  
*In-class video: Coverage of international climate negotiations* |
| Mon. Mar. 5 | *Case Study: Water Commodification* |  |
| Weds. Mar. 7 | COMPLETE PAPER DRAFT DUE: Thurs., March 8 by 4:00pm |  
Plus: Short article(s) on Cascade Locks/Nestlé conflict. |
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 Memorial Student Union: 503-725-4150, drc@pdx.edu, https://www.pdx.edu/drc. If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received a faculty notification letter and to discuss your accommodations.