

**SPRING 2017**  
**THEORIES & REASONING**  
**11:374:110**  
**Monday & Wednesday; 2:15-3:35**  
**Hickman 202**



**Sandy Hook, New Jersey**

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The term “Anthropocene” is thrown around a lot these days, by journalists, activists, scholars and others. The term suggests we are living in a recently distinguished geological period in which the Earth’s geologic, atmospheric, and biologic features are no longer governed by “natural” processes, but are shaped by humans. From Ebola and melting ice caps to deforestation and genetically modified organisms in our food systems, human-environment issues are becoming increasingly complex. But how can we conceptualize these issues? How do we identify the relationships and processes that shape such challenges and processes? And if human activities are at the center of environmental change, how can we envision ways for producing healthier environments and living conditions? This course offers a response to these questions by exploring various theories of nature-society relations and environmental change.

### **Learning Goals:**

1. Understand and articulate the ways environment and society are intertwined through different theoretical lenses.
2. Critically analyze environmental issues using different conceptual approaches.
3. Be able to assess the causal factors contributing to different environmental issues.
4. Improvement of communication abilities, including constructive debates, writing, and presentation skills.

### **How will we meet these learning goals?**

**1. Careful READING is vital to your success in this course.** You are asked to find the following textbook on your own. It is available for rent or purchase on amazon.com. All other documents are posted on Sakai: Robbins, P, Hintz, J, and S. Moore. (2014). *Environment and Society: A Critical Introduction*. Wiley Blackwell. **\*\*Please obtain the 2nd edition of this text, published in 2014. Failure to do so will not excuse you from quizzes, discussion and other activities.\*\***

**2. Thoughtful WRITING gives you the opportunity to reflect upon and synthesize what we read, watch and discuss in this class. Putting theories in your own words and applying them to the world around you will help you learn.**

You will be asked to write one film analysis paper and one paper applying a theoretical perspective to “The coupled human-natural system” of Sandy Hook. At the end of this syllabus is a list of documentary films on environmental issues. For that paper select at least one film to watch. Then write a critical analysis of the film(s) using theories and concepts reviewed and discussed in class. Papers are expected to be 2-3 pages for

the film analysis in length (single spaced with **one-inch margins**) and 5-7 pages for the Sandy Hook paper in length (single spaced with one-inch margins). More details on these papers will be given soon.

**3. Reflective discussion with** fellow students and professors allows you to form and communicate your assessment of what you’ve read and listen and assess others perspectives and understandings. Class discussions and debates will help you clarify theories and think about the strengths and weaknesses that you and your classmates can identify.

### 1. GRADING

Your performance in the course will be assessed on a variety of activities, ranging from weekly quizzes to film papers and discussion. The final grade is based on the total cumulative points you earn during the semester. There are 100 points available, divided as shown:

<b>Component</b>	<b>Total points</b>
Reading quiz or alternative assignment (10 @ 4 points)	40
Leading discussion, including preparation of overview and questions (1 @ 10 points)	10
Film analysis papers (1 @ 15 points)	15
Sandy Hook National Gateway Park Theory Paper (Field Trip@ 5 points; Paper @ 20 points)	20
Debate (1 @ 5 points)	5
Overall participation (10 points)	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

**Reading quizzes:** Reading carefully for each class is vital to your success in this course. The quizzes are designed to assess your comprehension of the main arguments/ideas of readings. Occasionally, alternative assignments will be given in place of a quiz.

There will be 12 quizzes during the semester but only 10 will count toward your final grade – your two lowest score will be dropped.

**Student-led discussions:** This is a discussion-based class. For many class meetings we have readings in place of, or addition to, the Robbins et al. textbook. For those readings, students will lead discussion.

With a partner, you will lead one class discussion during the semester. Discussions will center on the topic and readings covered that week. It is your job to work with your partner to lead discussion for the readings indicated on the class you sign up for.

Discussion leaders will provide a **brief synopsis of the readings** – including perhaps the genre of the piece, disciplinary background of the authors, main thrust of the arguments, key points, etc. The weekly leaders will then lead the class in a group discussion.

Together **with your partner you should develop 7 questions and send them to me two days before your leader day and I will OK and post on sakai for class.** Questions should be designed to prompt discussion and/or clarify or compare arguments. Good discussion questions cannot be answered with “yes,” “no” or other simple replies. There are ideas for leading discussion successfully at the end of this syllabus.

Leading class discussion will be worth 10% of your overall grade. The quality and thoughtfulness of your overview, discussion questions, timeliness, teamwork, and ability to facilitate dialogue will be taken into consideration when evaluating your grade.

**Film analysis:** You are responsible for turning in one film analysis paper. Please see the above section on writing for more details. Critical thinking, as well as grammar, spelling, punctuation and syntax, will be taken into account when grading papers. All response papers will be reviewed by Turnitin.com, an anti-plagiarism service, upon submission to Sakai.

**Sandy Hook Gateway Recreation Area field trip and paper:** You are responsible for attending a field trip to learn about Sandy Hook Gateway Recreation Area. This field trip will be scheduled for a Friday or Saturday in March or April and you will be told the date as soon as possible. Attendance is expected as you are expected to plan ahead and make arrangements to be able to attend and view this as part of your work for the class and not an extra-curricular activity (5 points). You will then be asked to write a paper analyzing a dimension of the coupled human natural dimensions of Sandy Hook using a theoretical lens we study.

**Debate:** Toward the end of the term, students will be divided into groups to debate an “object of concern.” You will be assigned a position on the topic, which you will prepare for and defend. Your participation in debate will be worth 10% of your grade. Details will be forthcoming.

**Participation:** Your overall participation in this course is worth 10% of your final grade and will be evaluated according to the quality of your contributions to class discussions. Weekly demonstration of engagement with all readings, as well as provision of thoughtful comments, interpretations and/or questions, will benefit your participation grade.

After every class I assign each student a grade, based on a 10-point scale, for your participation that day. For instance, if you came to class with thoughtful things to say that clearly demonstrated you did all of the readings, you receive a "10." If you spent a lot of time looking at your phone in your lap and did not contribute to discussion, you receive a generous "4." If you had an unexcused absence that day, you receive a "0." At the end of the semester I average your participation grades from every class and scale it up to 13 points.

Your final grade will be specified using the following distribution in accordance with Rutgers’ policy on standard semester grades:

100%-90%	A	Outstanding
87%-89%	B+	
80%-86%	B	Good
77%-79%	C+	
70%-76%	C	Satisfactory/average
60%-69%	D	Poor
0%-59%	F	Failing

Grades on papers, participation, etc. are also allocated using this distribution. For instance, I will gauge whether your film analysis paper was outstanding, fair, etc., in part, vis-à-vis assignment criteria *and* the work of your peers.

## 7. RULES

### ***Classroom Behavior***

Above all, students are expected to conduct themselves as adults in the classroom. Classroom discussion should be respectful and relevant to the topic we are discussing.

Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices (excluding laptops used for note taking) before you enter the classroom. Non-course related reading materials should not be read during class. You are expected to be on time.

### ***Students with Disabilities***

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me. Please bring a notification letter from Disability Services outlining your approved accommodations. For more information on how to request accommodations, see:

<http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/>

### **The Rules**

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>

No plagiarism. This means using ideas directly (cut and paste) or indirectly (summarizing) without citing where they came from is not allowed.

No cheating.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL LOSE HALF A GRADE FOR EACH CALENDAR DAY LATE.** If your paper is a 3.0 then it will be marked as a 2.5 for a day late, a 2.0 for 2 days late. If you must miss a deadline due to illness or emergency, notify all of us via email on or before the due date. If you foresee needing some extra time on an assignment, please contact Dr. Shwom ***ahead of time.***

There will be extra credit announcements to encourage further exploration of the topics covered in this class. There will NOT be options for additional assignments or revised work for re-grading provided at the end of the semester. Instead, be prepared for tests and quizzes and do the work throughout the semester.

If you are having challenges meeting work deadlines email or speak to me right away. Do not wait to talk to me at the end of the semester or for me to come find you.

## SCHEDULE

<b>01/18</b>	Syllabus
<i>Thinking about Theories and Reasoning</i>	
<b>01/23</b>	What is Theory? 1. Cross, S., 2008: Sociological theory and analysis. Chapter 2: What is 'sociological theory'? University of London Press. 2. <i>Environment and Society Reader - Introduction, pp.4-9</i>
<b>01/25</b>	Where do Theories Come From? 1. Babbie, Earl 2007 "Chapter Two: Paradigms, Theory & Social Research" in <i>The Practice of Social Research- Eleventh Edition</i> . Thomson: Wadsworth 2. Eisenhardt, K. M., 1989: Building theories from case study research. <i>Academy of management review</i> , 14, 532-550.
<i>Critical Perspectives on Humans and Non-Humans</i>	
<b>01/30</b>	What is the Anthropocene? <i>The Economist</i> , May 26 <sup>th</sup> 2011, "The geology of the planet: Welcome to the Anthropocene" McCay, Bonnie J., Sylvia Brandt, and Carolyn F. Creed. "Human dimensions of climate change and fisheries in a coupled system: the Atlantic surfclam case." <i>ICES Journal of Marine Science: Journal du Conseil</i> 68.6 (2011): 1354-1367.
<b>02/01</b>	<i>Environment and Society Reader – Chapter 8 Social Construction of Nature</i>
<b>02/06</b>	How do our social constructions of nature and humans influence our politics? Excerpt from: Dizard, Jan E. 1999 <i>Going Wild: Hunting, Animal Rights, and the Contested Meaning of Nature</i> , revised and expanded edition, University of Massachusetts Press
<b>02/08</b>	How can we think about human and nature in our theories and research? Freudenburg, W. R., Frickel, S., & Gramling, R. (1995). Beyond the Nature/Society Divide: Learning to Think About a Mountain. In <i>Sociological Forum</i> (Vol. 10, No. 3). Helmreich, S. (2011). Nature/culture/seawater. <i>American Anthropologist</i> , 113(1), 132-144.
<i>What Explains Environmental Risks Perceptions?</i>	
<b>02/13</b>	Overview of perceptions on risk <i>Environment and Society Reader - Risks and Hazards</i>
<b>02/15</b>	Why would demographics predict risk perception? Kahan, D. M., Braman, D., Gastil, J., Slovic, P., & Mertz, C. (2007). Culture and identity-protective cognition: Explaining the white-male effect in risk perception. <i>Journal of Empirical Legal Studies</i> , 4(3), 465-505.
<b>02/20</b>	Jasanoff, S. (1998). The political science of risk perception. <i>Reliability Engineering &amp; System Safety</i> , 59(1), 91-99. doi: <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0951-8320(97)00129-4">http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0951-8320(97)00129-4</a>
<b>02/22</b>	Wimmer, J., & Quandt, T. (2006). Living in the risk society: an interview with Ulrich Beck. <i>Journalism Studies</i> , 7(2), 336-347.
<b>02/27</b>	Wong-Parodi, G., Fischhoff, B., & Strauss, B. (2016). Plans and prospects for coastal flooding in four communities affected by Sandy. <i>Weather, Climate, and Society</i> (2016).
<i>What Drives Ecological Degradation and Improvement?</i>	
<b>03/01</b>	<i>Environment and Society Reader – Chapter 2 Population and Scarcity</i>

03/06	Questioning Population, Affluence and Scarcity? 1) Bassett, T.J. and Zuéli, K.B. 2003. The Ivorian Savanna: Global Narratives and Local Knowledge of Environmental Change. In <i>Political Ecology: An Integrative Approach to Geography and Environment-Development Studies</i> . K. Zimmerer and T. J. Bassett (eds.) pp. 115-136. New York: The Guilford Press
03/08	Affluence in IPAT – Why we Consume? Shwom, R., & Lorenzen, J. A. (2012). Changing household consumption to address climate change: Social scientific insights and challenges. <i>Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change</i> , 3(5), 379-395.
03/13	<b>Spring Break</b>
03/15	<b>Spring Break</b>
03/20	What determines the path of technology development? Twomey, P., & Gaziulusoy, A. I. Review of System Innovation and Transitions Theories.
03/22	<i>Chapter 7 Political Economy in Environment and Society</i>
03/27	“Chapter 1: Popular Explanations of the Environmental Crisis” and “Inequality, Democracy, and Macro-Structural Environmental Sociology” in <i>Inequality, Democracy, and the Environment</i> by Liam Downey.
03/29	Buttel, F. H. (2000). Ecological modernization as social theory. <i>Geoforum</i> , 31(1), 57-65. York, R., & Rosa, E. A. (2003). Key challenges to ecological modernization theory institutional efficacy, case study evidence, units of analysis, and the pace of eco-efficiency. <i>Organization &amp; Environment</i> , 16(3), 273-288.
04/03	Write 2 page proposals of your final Sandy Hook paper and submit via sakai (Dr. Shwom traveling)
04/05	Use this time to watch environmental film and write paper (Dr. Shwom traveling)
04/10	Molotch, H. (1976). The city as a growth machine: Toward a political economy of place. <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> , 309-332. “Quahog of the Commons How clams, climate change and small-town politics shape seafood’s fate in Jersey’s Highlands by Thomas Fox Parry August 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2016” <b>FILM ANALYSIS DUE</b>
04/12	<i>Testing Political Economic Theories</i> 1) Shwom, R. L. (2011). A middle range theorization of energy politics: the struggle for energy efficient appliances. <i>Environmental Politics</i> , 20(5), 705-726. 2) York, R., Rosa, E. A., & Dietz, T. (2003). Footprints on the earth: The environmental consequences of modernity. <i>American sociological review</i> , 279-300. <b>DEBATE DAY</b>
04/17	<i>Chapter 4 –Institutions and the Commons</i>
04/19	McCay, B., & Jentoft, S. (1998). Market or community failure? Critical perspectives on common property research. <i>Human Organization</i> , 57(1), 21-29. Workshop our papers – peer editing
04/24	McCay, Bonnie. Forthcoming “Ethnographic Overview and Assessment: The Sandy Hook Unit of Gateway National Recreation Area” Chapters 1 and 10
04/26	<b>Present your final Sandy Hook Paper</b>
05/01	<b>Present your final Sandy Hook Paper</b>
<b>5/05/2017 Final Paper on Sandy Hook Due</b>	



## FILM LIST

**Burning the Future: Coal in America (2008)** Burning the Future: Coal in America dramatically documents the devastating environmental, health and social impact our addiction to coal has on West Virginia, where mountaintop removal mining has obliterated 1.4 million acres of mountains and polluted the groundwater. The film profiles the courageous West Virginians who challenged the powerful coal industry, and launched a valiant fight to arouse the nation's help in protecting their mountains, saving their families, and preserving their way of life. - See more at: [www.burningthefuture.org/](http://www.burningthefuture.org/)

**The Cove (2009)** Academy Award® Winner for Best Documentary of 2009, **THE COVE** follows an elite team of activists, filmmakers and freedivers as they embark on a covert mission to penetrate a remote and hidden cove in Taiji, Japan, shining a light on a dark and deadly secret. Utilizing state-of-the-art techniques, including hidden microphones and cameras in fake rocks, the team uncovers how this small seaside village serves as a horrifying microcosm of massive ecological crimes happening worldwide. The result is a provocative mix of investigative journalism, eco-adventure and arresting imagery, adding up to an unforgettable story that has inspired audiences worldwide to action.

<http://www.thecovemovie.com/>

**Cowspiracy: the sustainability secret (2014)** *Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret* uncovers the most destructive industry facing the planet today – and investigates why the world’s leading environmental organizations are too afraid to talk about it. Animal agriculture is the leading cause of deforestation, water consumption and pollution, is responsible for more greenhouse gases than the transportation industry, and is a primary driver of rainforest destruction, species extinction, habitat loss, topsoil erosion, ocean “dead zones,” and virtually every other environmental ill. Yet it goes on, almost entirely unchallenged. As Andersen approaches leaders in the environmental movement, he increasingly uncovers what appears to be an intentional refusal to discuss the issue of animal agriculture, while industry whistleblowers and watchdogs warn him of the risks to his freedom and even his life if he dares to persist.

**Crude (2009)** Three years in the making, this cinéma-vérité feature from acclaimed filmmaker Joe Berlinger (Brother’s Keeper, Paradise Lost, Metallica: Some Kind of Monster) is the epic story of one of the largest and most controversial legal cases on the planet. An inside look at the infamous \$27 billion “Amazon Chernobyl” case, Crude is a real-life high stakes legal drama set against a backdrop of the environmental movement, global politics, celebrity activism, human rights advocacy, the media, multinational corporate power, and rapidly-disappearing indigenous cultures. Presenting a complex situation from multiple viewpoints, the film subverts the conventions of advocacy filmmaking as it examines a complicated situation from all angles while bringing an important story of environmental peril and human suffering into focus.

<http://www.crudethemovie.com/>

**Darwin’s Nightmare (2002)** Some time in the 1960's, in the heart of Africa, a new animal was introduced into Lake Victoria as a little scientific experiment. The Nile Perch, a voracious predator, extinguished almost the entire stock of the native fish species. However, the new fish multiplied so fast, that its white fillets are today exported all around the world. Huge hulking ex-Soviet cargo planes come daily to collect the latest catch in exchange for their southbound cargo... Kalashnikovs and ammunitions for the uncounted wars in the dark center of the continent. This booming multinational industry of fish and weapons has created an ungodly globalized alliance on the shores of the world’s biggest tropical lake: an army of local fishermen, World bank agents, homeless children, African ministers, EU-commissioners, Tanzanian prostitutes and Russian pilots. <http://www.darwinsnightmare.com/>



**The End of the Line (2009)** Documentary filmmaker Rupert Murray examines the devastating effect that overfishing has had on the world's fish populations and argues that drastic action must be taken to reverse these trends.

<http://endoftheline.com/>

**Fish Meat** The age of fish meat is here. Our hunger for seafood grows and grows...but the seas are running out of fish. More than half of the fish the world eats comes from fish farms. But what exactly is farmed fish? Where does it come from, and how is it made? Two friends, a fish scientist and engineer, take a sailing voyage through the cradle of western civilization to pull back the cover on modern fish farming. Along the way they discover the tragedy of Bluefin Tuna and the joy of carp. - See more at:

<http://www.fishnavy.com/film/fish-meat/>

**Flow (2008)** Irena Salina's award-winning documentary investigation into what experts label the most important political and environmental issue of the 21st Century - The World Water Crisis. Salina builds a case against the growing privatization of the world's dwindling fresh water supply with an unflinching focus on politics, pollution, human rights, and the emergence of a domineering world water cartel.

<http://flowthefilm.com/>

**Gasland (2012)** "The largest domestic natural gas drilling boom in history has swept across the United States. The Halliburton-developed drilling technology of "fracking" or hydraulic fracturing has unlocked a "Saudi Arabia of natural gas" just beneath us. But is fracking safe? When filmmaker Josh Fox is asked to lease his land for drilling, he embarks on a cross-country odyssey uncovering a trail of secrets, lies and contamination. A recently drilled nearby Pennsylvania town reports that residents are able to light their drinking water on fire. This is just one of the many absurd and astonishing revelations of a new country called GASLAND. Part verite travelogue, part expose, part mystery, part bluegrass banjo meltdown, part showdown." <http://www.gaslandthemovie.com/>

**King Corn (2007)** *King Corn* is a feature documentary about two friends, one acre of corn, and the subsidized crop that drives our fast-food nation. In the film, Ian Cheney and Curt Ellis, best friends from college on the east coast, move to the heartland to learn where their food comes from. With the help of friendly neighbors, genetically modified seeds, and powerful herbicides, they plant and grow a bumper crop of America's most-productive, most-subsidized grain on one acre of Iowa soil. But when they try to follow their pile of corn into the food system, what they find raises troubling questions about how we eat—and how we farm. <http://www.kingcorn.net/>

**Sourlands (2012)** The largest city in the United States is, by far, New York. Philadelphia is the fifth largest. Separating them is New Jersey, the most densely populated state. Directly between New York and Philly — and all those people — there is a forest that has survived the bulldozers of development. The locals call this place the Sourland Mountain, or sometimes simply “the Sourlands.” SOURLANDS, the documentary, tells the story of this green oasis from the perspective of its remarkable citizens. <http://www.sourlands.com/>

**Wisdom to Survive (2013)** THE WISDOM TO SURVIVE accepts the consensus of scientists that climate change has already arrived, and asks, what is keeping us from action? The film explores how unlimited growth and greed are destroying the life support system of the planet, the social fabric of the society, and the lives of billions of people. Will we have the wisdom to survive? The film features thought leaders and activists in the realms of science, economics and spirituality discussing how we can evolve and take action in the face of climate disruption. They urge us to open ourselves to the beauty that surrounds us and get to work on ensuring it thrives.

## TIPS FOR LEADING DISCUSSION

1. First, read the readings for that day very carefully.
2. Think about what you want to get across to your classmates. What is the most important point in each of the readings? What insights do you have about how the readings relate to each other? Does one reading shed new light on the other? What questions do they raise about each other? **How do the readings relate to other concepts or readings from this class? These are questions you might want to address in your brief synopsis or use to drive the development of discussion questions.**
3. Try not ask "yes" or "no" questions; you want to ask open-ended questions that will get people to share their own ideas about the readings. Questions that begin with "Do you think" can easily be answered "yes" or "no." Questions that begin with "what, why, and how," generally will spark discussion nicely.
4. You don't need to stick to your script! If something interesting comes up in discussion, and a follow-up question pops into your head, feel free to ask it!
5. Lead! It's your job to ask questions and manage the discussion, not supply answers. And awkward silence is not always awkward...sometimes people are just thinking.
6. Be organized. It's a good idea to work from notes when leading discussion so you don't have to flip through the readings to find examples or ideas.
7. Finally, think about your "presentation of self." Try to be confident and focused. Make eye contact, speak clearly, and don't rush. Regarding rushing: if you find that you cannot fit all of the points you want to make into the discussion, it will not end the world if you omit some of them. More is gained by everyone if you cover the interesting points thoroughly than if you rush through your list of discussion questions.