

THEORIES & REASONING

11:374:110



Sandy Hook, New Jersey

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

How do you “know” climate change is real? Or that the ocean is getting more polluted and acidifying and how and why that is happening? And what are effective ways to address these problems? In this class we will arm you with two major skills for assessing the world around you and claims being made: 1) theory and 2) reasoning. A theory, or theoretical model, is a series of propositions of about the possible nature of an object or phenomena to be tested. Reasoning is the process of consciously making sense of things, establishing and verifying facts, applying logic, and adapting or justifying practices, institutions, and beliefs based on new or existing information. In this class, we will practice these skills and learn how to evaluate a theory or hypothesis and come to our own conclusions. This will empower you to persuade and communicate your understanding of environmental problems and solutions with others. This class is a required skills class for Environmental Policy Institutions and Behavior major.

Learning Goals:

1. Understand and articulate the ways environment and society are intertwined through different theoretical lenses (Human Ecology Goal: 1.7 Explain how social forces, cultural values, and behavior affect human-environmental interactions, including issues such as political and economic relations, inequality, access to resources, and interactions between human diversity and biological diversity).
2. Critically analyze environmental issues using different conceptual approaches.
3. Be able to assess the causal factors contributing to different environmental issues (Human Ecology Goal: 1.7 Explain how social forces, cultural values, and behavior affect human-environmental interactions, including issues such as political and economic relations, inequality, access to resources, and interactions between human diversity and biological diversity).
4. Improvement of communication abilities, including constructive debates, writing, and presentation skills (Human Ecology Goal 2.11 – Work effectively in team settings.)

How will we meet these learning goals?

1. Careful READING and studying and reflecting is vital to your success in this course.

You will be tested on basic understanding of main concepts of in-class lectures and reading.

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 writing frequently for this class. There will be quick checks of your understanding of the reading for the day. There will also be opportunities to engage with documentaries critically. You will read theories and write and discuss evidence and apply it to different issues we learn about.

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 evidence 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:

Component	Total points
Online reading question before class (10@1point each)	10
In-class activities and exercises (1-2 points each)	20
One debate (10 points)	10
Documentary Analysis (2 for 15 points each, Analyzing claims)	30
Mid-term Exam	15
Final Exam (non-cumulative)	15
Total	100

Online reading theory question (10 @ 1 point each): Reading carefully for each class is vital to your success in this course. The questions I pose are developed to help you understand what you should know about your reading. You are required to hand in 10 on the assigned dates.

In-class activities and exercises (1-2 points each for a total of 20 points): There will be group and independent activities in class that help you engage with the reading and lecture materials. They will be 1-2 points each.

Debate (10 points): Students will be debating questions like 1) what drives environmental degradation? 2) what approaches can best solve environmental problems? 3) can capitalism be sustainable? You will prepare a page arguing yes and a page arguing no. You will use theory and empirical evidence you can find. Your participation in debate will be required for grade.

Documentary Analysis (2, 15 points each): For this assignment we will watch three documentaries together as a class. Relevant theories and evidence will be discussed. You will provide an analysis of three claims from the documentaries and theory and evidence of their accuracy or inaccuracy.

Mid-Term and Final Exam (mid term exam @ 15 points; final exam @ 15 points). You will have a mid-term and final exam on the course material which will include the readings and lectures. It will be made up of short answer questions that test your knowledge of theories and ability to analyze them.

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

2. RULES

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The university's policy on Academic Integrity is available at

<https://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/current.pdf>. The principles of academic integrity require that a student:

- properly acknowledge and cite all use of the ideas, results, or words of others.
- properly acknowledge all contributors to a given piece of work.
- make sure that all work submitted as his or her own in a course or other academic activity is produced without the aid of impermissible materials or impermissible collaboration.
- obtain all data or results by ethical means and report them accurately without suppressing any results inconsistent with his or her interpretation or conclusions.
- treat all other students in an ethical manner, respecting their integrity and right to pursue their educational goals without interference. This requires that a student neither facilitate academic dishonesty by others nor obstruct their academic progress.
- uphold the canons of the ethical or professional code of the profession for which he or she is preparing.

Adherence to these principles is necessary in order to ensure that

- everyone is given proper credit for his or her ideas, words, results, and other scholarly accomplishments.
- all student work is fairly evaluated, and no student has an inappropriate advantage over others.
- the academic and ethical development of all students is fostered.
- the reputation of the University for integrity in its teaching, research, and scholarship is maintained and enhanced.

Failure to uphold these principles of academic integrity threatens both the reputation of the University and the value of the degrees awarded to its students. Every member of the University community therefore bears a responsibility for ensuring that the highest standards of academic integrity are upheld.

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.

SEBS DEI STATEMENT

This class values diversity equity and inclusion and will insist upon:

- Respect for classmates and their identities
 - Diversity of students' experiences and ideas
 - The historical context and possible biases of the subject area

If you encounter issues where DEI has not been attained please contact the Office of Academic Programs and/or <http://inclusion.rutgers.edu/report-bias-incident/>

STUDENT WELLNESS SERVICES

Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

(848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901/ www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu/

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)

(848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / www.vpva.rutgers.edu/

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

Disability Services

(848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 / <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://webapps.rutgers.edu/student-ods/forms/registration>.

DoSomething button through Rutgers Dean of Students office:

<http://health.rutgers.edu/do-something-to-help/>

Wellness Coaching through Rutgers HOPE:

<http://health.rutgers.edu/education/hope/wellness-coaching/>

Self-Help Apps found on the Rutgers Student Health website:

<http://health.rutgers.edu/education/self-help/self-help-apps/>

NJ Hopeline - (1-855-654-6735) | **National Suicide Hotline** - (1-800-273-8255)

BASIC NEEDS RESOURCES

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, is urged to contact the Rutgers Student Food Pantry and/or the Dean of Students (details below). Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable doing so, as they may be able to provide additional support.

Rutgers Student Food Pantry

848-932-5500 / College Ave Student Center, Room 115 (126 College Ave) /

<http://ruoffcampus.rutgers.edu/food/>

Check their website for hours and additional locations. The Rutgers Student Food Pantry is dedicated to helping

all Rutgers students in need of food, no questions asked. Students will be provided with groceries that typically last about one week.

Dean of Students Office

848-932-2300 / 88 College Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / <https://deanofstudents.rutgers.edu/>

Mon-Fri, 8:30am-5:00pm

The Dean of Students Office at Rutgers University-New Brunswick provides solutions, services, and support to help students navigate Rutgers University. The Office serves as a student support network by providing advocacy, problem resolution, and critical incident intervention for those times when additional assistance is needed. Please call to schedule an appointment to meet with a representative from the Dean's office.

DATE	READING OR ACTIVITY DUE THAT CLASS	OBJECTIVE/ACTIVITY PURPOSE FOR CLASS THAT DAY
	Syllabus Review	<u>Who are we, what are we doing and where are we going?</u>
	1. Cross, S., 2008: Sociological theory and analysis. Chapter 2: What is 'sociological theory'? University of London Press.	<u>What is theory?</u>
	Babbie, Earl 2007 "Chapter Two: Paradigms, Theory & Social Research" in <i>The Practice of Social Research- Eleventh Edition</i> . Thomson: Wadsworth	<u>What is the author's paradigm?</u> <u>What is their disciplinary training?</u>
Theory: Thinking about Humans and Nature		
	Freudenburg, W.R., Frickel, S. & Gramling, R. (1995) "Beyond the Nature/Society Divide: Learning to Think About a Mountain" <i>Environment and Society Reader – Chapter 8 Social Construction of Nature</i>	<u>How can we think about humans and nature in our theories and research?</u> Campus Scavenger Hunt – social/natural binaries/non-binaries
	Fitzgerald AJ, Kalof L, Dietz T. Slaughterhouses and Increased Crime Rates. <i>Organization & Environment</i> 2009, 22:158-184. Kalof L, Fitzgerald A. Reading the trophy: exploring the display of dead animals in hunting magazines. <i>Visual Studies</i> 2003, 18:112-122	<u>Thinking about Human-Nature Divide: Are Animal Society or Nature?</u>
Reasoning: Identifying and Reckoning with Bias in Knowledge		
	"What's the Difference between Bias and Perspective?"	<u>What is bias? What is perspective?</u> <u>Why do we care?</u>
	Hardin, Garrett. "The tragedy of the commons." <i>science</i> 162.3859 (1968): 1243-1248. Mildenberger, Matto. 2019. "The tragedy of the Tragedy of the Commons" Homework: Hypothes.is annotation of "Tragedy of the Commons"	<u>What is the author's bias? How does it show up in their analysis?</u>
	Sunstein, Cass R. 2018. "The Problem With All Those Liberal Professors: The paucity of Republicans at many top schools hurts everyone." Bloomberg, Opinion. Duarte, José L., et al. "Political diversity will improve social psychological science." <i>Behavioral and Brain Sciences</i> 38 (2015).	<u>Is academia biased?</u>
	Ribeiro, Filipe N., et al. "Media bias monitor: Quantifying biases of social media news outlets at large-scale." <i>Twelfth International AAAI</i>	<u>How do we know what sources are biased?</u> (identifying media bias worksheet in class)

	Conference on Web and Social Media. 2018. https://www.adfontesmedia.com/interactive-media-bias-chart/	
Theory: Drivers of Environmental Degradation		
	"Chapter 1: Popular Explanations of the Environmental Crisis" in Inequality, Democracy, and the Environment by Liam Downey.	What drives environmental degradation?
	<i>Environment and Society Reader – Chapter 2 Population and Scarcity</i>	Is it population growth?
	No in person class today – Dr. Shwom in DC for USGCRP	Study review sheet and complete practice quiz during class time online
	<i>Institutions and the Commons –Chapter 4</i> McCay, B., & Jentoft, S. (1998). Market or community failure? Critical perspectives on common property research. Human Organization, 57(1), 21-29.	Is it public ownership?
	Environment and Society Reader – <i>Chapter 7 Political Economy</i> Buttel, F. H. (2000). Ecological modernization as social theory. Geoforum, 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	Is it capitalism?
	Mid-Term Exam (In-Class)	
	York, Richard, and Shannon Elizabeth Bell. "Energy transitions or additions?: Why a transition from fossil fuels requires more than the growth of renewable energy." <i>Energy Research & Social Science</i> 51 (2019): 40-43.	Watch Planet of the Humans (60 minutes, 20 discussion)
	York, Richard, Eugene A. Rosa, and Thomas Dietz. "Footprints on the earth: The environmental consequences of modernity." <i>American sociological review</i> 68.2 (2003): 279-300.	Spooky Halloween movie watching and discussion (40 minutes finish watching, 40 discussion)
	Debate Day! Is Capitalism Sustainable?	Class Debate on Sustainability of Capitalism
Reasoning: Understanding Risk, Uncertainty and Controversy in Knowledge		
	Paper on Planet of the Humans Due	
	Jasanoff, Sheila. "The political science of risk perception." <i>Reliability Engineering & System Safety</i> 59.1 (1998): 91-99. Ensia – science imperialism article	How is risk assessment a political process? Role playing risk defining

	Oreskes, N. (2018). The scientific consensus on climate change: How do we know we're not wrong? (pp. 31-64). Springer International Publishing.	How do we know we're not wrong about climate change?
	Reading Scientific Assessments Read and Annotate National Climate Assessment Chapter	How do scientists represent and discuss consensus and disagreement?
Tuesday, November 21, 2023	Reading MetaSystematic Literature Reviews Find a literature review on a topic of interest to you and read it and fill out online questionnaire on it	There's so many different studies on my topic with different answers
Theory: What Drives Environmental Injustice		
	Read Klein, Naomi. "Disaster capitalism." <i>Harper's Magazine</i> 315 (2007): 47-58.	How do disasters increase inequality?
	Pulido, Laura. "Flint, environmental racism, and racial capitalism." <i>Capitalism Nature Socialism</i> 27.3 (2016): 1-16.	How do environmental goods and bads end up being distributed unequally by race?
	Downey, Liam, and Susan Strife. "Inequality, democracy, and the environment." <i>Organization & Environment</i> 23.2 (2010): 155-188.	How does the lack of democratic institutions drive environmental inequality?
	Givens, Jennifer E., Xiaorui Huang, and Andrew K. Jorgenson. "Ecologically unequal exchange: A theory of global environmental injustice." <i>Sociology Compass</i> 13.5 (2019): e12693.	How does global capitalism drive global environmental injustice?
	Watch in class : Sandy the Business of Disaster in Class	Discussion of risk and environmental inequality as it applies to Sandy Recovery
	Final Exam	