

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS
Department of Sociology
SOC 4170: Environmental Sociology
Spring, 2026, M/W 3:30-4:50, GAB 112

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Office Hours: M/W 11:30-1:30
And by appointment
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I. Learning Objectives

- A. to gain knowledge of the current environmental issues facing the U.S. and world
- B. to identify factors that have contributed to current global environmental problems
- C. to understand social perspectives on causes and solutions
- D. to understand the influences that shape people's viewpoints regarding the environment
- E. to identify potential solutions to the global environmental problems

II. Learning Components

- A. Readings: To help meet the objectives, the following books are required reading (available on Amazon.com and at UNT bookstore):

Stuart, Diana (2021). What is Environmental Sociology? Medford MA: Polity Press.

Hannigan, John (2023). Environmental Sociology (4th or 3rd edition). New York: Routledge.

- B. Class time: will be focused on the objectives through class lectures, discussions, videos, and when it can be arranged professionals speaking to the class

III. Course Policies

- A. Class Attendance: regular and punctual class attendance is expected. It will be difficult to master all the material if class is missed. While students will not usually be penalized for missing class they will be penalized for coming to class late or leaving class early since these disrupt the class. If you will need to come late or leave early, please let me know. Students can gain extra credit points by attending and paying attention in class (i.e., not using phone or laptop for other things). Students who miss a lot of class (i.e., 75% of classes) will be given NO leeway in grading and will lose points from their final grade while students who miss no or only a few classes will be given MUCH leeway in grading and may gain points. For example, a recent student missed more than 75% of the classes, had a test grade average of 69, and wanted one point added to their final grade in order to receive a "C". The student got a "D". Another student missed only a few classes had an average grade of 88 and was given two extra points to receive an "A".

- B. Academic integrity: as the student guidebook points out, academic integrity is required. Plagiarism and cheating will result in failure and a report to the Dean.
- C. Acceptable Student Behavior: Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at: <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012>
- D. Mental Health and Special Needs: UNT's counseling center provides free career and personal counseling to UNT students (up to 8 sessions per year). Appointments can be made by calling 940-565-2741. For our class, appropriate adjustments and auxiliary aid are available for persons with disabilities. See me and/or call 817-565-2456 (TDD access 1-800-735-2989).
- E. Cell Phones and texting: you should know that many professors and instructors find it insulting when a student is constantly texting or otherwise using their phones during class. Consequently, if the time comes that the student could use some "leeway" in their grade, and my assessment is that the student has excessively used their phone during multiple classes, no leeway will be given and points will be removed from the student's final grade.
- F. Laptops: if you use a laptop in class, please refrain from using it for anything other than our class.
- G. Office Hours: I enjoy greatly getting to know students. I learn a lot and I hope they do as well. Please email me (yeatts@unt.edu) so we can find a day/time that works for both of us. I will be happy to discuss the course material, your progress in the class, your plans for the future, personal issues, need for a letter of recommendation, or anything else of interest/importance to you. Some students will meet with me just to introduce themselves and share a bit about their activities and progress at UNT and I enjoy these meetings as well. I will try to be available during my office hours but emailing me and setting up a meeting will ensure that I am available when you come.
- H. IMPORTANT: If unexpected problems develop for you during the semester (e.g., health issues, break ups, emotional issues, family disruptions, death or illness in family), please contact me as soon as these become apparent. I can then work with you to develop a plan that will assist you. Students, who approach their instructors/professors when problems develop, are much more likely to receive help and consideration. Don't wait until the end of the semester to inform the professor of problems because it will be too late to find a solution. This is a good rule-of-thumb for any class you take.

I. Grading: final grades will be based on the following:

1. Four (4) tests will be given worth 25% each—your four test grades will be averaged together to obtain your final grade. The fourth test will be given on the UNT assigned exam day and time but it will not be cumulative. The format is expected to be four or five essay questions. Grades will be posted on Dr. Yeatts' web page under the code number you provide on the student information sheet that you turn in the first day of class. (to get to our class webpage, go to: www.yeatts.us, click on 4170, then click on Grades).

You are responsible for using the restroom prior to the beginning of a test so do not ask to use the restroom in the middle of a test (unfortunately a few of us would use this as an opportunity to review our notes in the middle of taking the test).

2. Test Dates:

Feb. 11 (Wednesday)	Test 1	25%
March 4 (Wednesday)	Test 2	25%
April 6 (Monday)	Test 3	25%
May 6, 12:30 (Weds.)	Test 4	25%

(Test 4 is the UNT assigned day/time; note time difference from regular class)

3. Make-up Tests: may be allowed within one week from the original exam day. The test score will be reduced by one letter grade unless there is documentation or other means of verifying an illness, personal issue, or other serious situation. On the other hand, if you have **not missed any or very few classes** and you oversleep and miss the test (or some other less serious situation), this may be excused or very few points deducted.
4. Class Participation: Those who contribute meaningful comments/ideas and/or are attentive during classes may receive extra points added to their final grade if their final grade is close to the next higher grade and they **have not missed a lot** of classes. For example, an 88 could be raised to a 90. Similarly, those who attend and pay attention in all (or almost all) classes will likely receive extra points.
5. Extra Credit Opportunity: Please see “**Opportunity for Extra Credit**” below for details.

IV. **Schedule of Class Topics and Reading Assignments**

Week 1 (January 12 and 14):

- A. Overview of class
- B. Introduction: What is Environmental Sociology

Week 2 (January 21):

- A. MLK Jan 19, Monday
- B. Stuart C1: the problem: an overview

Week 3 (January 26 and January 28):

- A. Stuart C1: continued
- B. Stuart C2: social factors influencing attitudes toward the environment

Week 4 (Feb 2 and 4)

- A. Stuart C2: continued
- B. Stuart C3: human causes of environmental impacts

Week 5 (Feb 9 and 11)

- A. Stuart C3: continued

Test 1, February 11 (Wednesday), covers: Introduction, Stuart Chapters 1 – 3; PowerPoint slides

Week 6 (February 16 and 18)

- A. Hannigan C1: constructing catastrophe and consumerism
- B. Hannigan C3: Social Construction of Environmental Issues

Week 7 (February 23 and 25):

- A. Stuart C4, C5: solutions

Week 8 (March 2):

- A. Stuart, C4, C5: solutions continued
- B. Possible presentation by Paul Dufresne and/or Dr. Ingman

Test 2, March 4 (Wednesday), covers Stuart Chapters 4 and 5; Hannigan Chapters 1 and 3 along with the powerpoint slides

Week 9: SPRING BREAK (March 10 – 14)

Week 10 (March 16 and 18)

- A. Hannigan, C5: Media and environmental communication
- HONORS students only: outline of research paper due March 18

Week 11 (March 23 and 25)

- A. Hannigan, C5: continued
- B. Hannigan, C7: Risk Construction

Week 12 (March 30 and April 1):

A. Hannigan, C8: Biodiversity

B. **Paul presentation on inventions March 30**

C. Possible presentation by Dr. Ingman

Test 3, April 6, Monday, covers Hannigan, Chapters 5, 7, and 8 and PPTs

Week 13 (April 8)

A. Yeatts handout: Environmental concerns at the local level

Week 14 (April 13 and 15)

A. Yeatts handout: Environmental concerns at the local level

Week 15 (April 20 and 22)

A. Los Angeles one of the most polluted cities in the world, case study

Week 16 (April 27 and 29)

A. Great Lakes as a case study

B. HONORs students only: 5 page library research paper due April 29

Test 4 on exam day assigned by UNT, May 6, 12:30 – 1:45 (Wednesday), covers Yeatts chapter and two case studies, Los Angeles and the Great Lakes

Opportunity for Extra Credit

Students will obtain one extra credit point for each class period that they attend and participate and/or clearly pay attention in class (**assuming they do not come to class late or leave early**). Participation might include watching a film in class, a small group activity, or contributing to the class discussion. The extra points accumulated from class attendance will be added to the student's next test grade. Students who come to class late will not get an extra point unless they have notified me that they would be late. Similarly, students who leave class early will not be eligible for these extra points unless notifying me prior to class. A student who does not miss class will typically accumulate 6 points to be added to their next test grade. So, if you get an 85 on the test but have six points accumulated, you would receive a 91 for that test.

*****If our class is moved on line (as what happened at the beginning of the pandemic), we will keep everything as it is currently planned but have our classes through zoom. I will email the class with further instructions at that time.**