

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS**  
**Department of Sociology**  
**SOC 5260/6702: Environmental Sociology**

**Dale E. Yeatts, Ph.D.**  
**Office Hours: MW 1:00-2:00**  
**(best to call or email to be sure I'm**  
**available or to make an appointment)**

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**<http://www.yeatts.us>**

**I. Learning Objectives**

- A. To become familiar with the history and development of environmental policy and theory, including major environmental issues (e.g., biodiversity, climate change, sustainable development, fracking)
- B. To examine how technological development has impacted social, economic and environmental conditions throughout the world (positive and negative).
- C. To develop knowledge of the climate crisis including causes and possible solutions
- D. To become an "expert" in a chosen area of environmental sociology
- E. (Ph.D. students only) To develop grant writing skills related to environmental sociology

**II. Learning Components**

- A. Readings: To help meet the objectives, the following books are required reading for all students:

Hannigan, John (2014). Environmental Sociology. New York, NY: Routledge.

Yang, Otto (2012). Guide to Effective Grant Writing: How to Write a Successful NIH Grant Application (Second Edition), Springer, NY (paperback)

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

Mazmanian, Daniel A. and Kraft, Stephen A. (2009). Toward Sustainable Communities, 2nd Edition. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press. (paperback) Isbn: 978-0-262-51229-9.

Tilt Bryan (2010). The Struggle for Sustainability in Rural China: Environmental Values and Civil Society. New York: Columbia University Press. (paperback)

Malm, Andreas (2021). How to Blow Up a Pipeline. New York: Verso.

- B. Class time: will be focused on the objectives through class discussions and when it can be arranged professionals speaking to the class
- C. Assignments: (1) for each class period (unless otherwise indicated) discussion questions created from the week's readings and turned in as well as other weekly assignments as noted below (e.g., paper/proposal outline), and (2) a research paper (MA students only) or grant proposal (PhD students only) and (3) participation in class discussions.

### III. Course Policies

- A. Class attendance: regular and punctual class attendance is expected. Absences will affect your final grade. Four absences from a three-hour class will reduce the student's grade one letter-grade (no excuses accepted—three absences is one-fifth of the semester, a student should drop the course if missing more than three classes regardless of reason). Each additional three-hour class missed will reduce the grade one additional letter-grade (more than 5 absences will be an F). Two tardies to class (being extremely late) or leaving class early will equal one absence. (Please don't take this class if you would need to be routinely late or leave routinely early)
- 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 (including continued texting during class) 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 UNT Code of Conduct can be found at [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr)
- D. 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 Dr. Yeatts and/or call 817-565-2456 (TDD access 1-800-735-2989).
- E. Cell Phones and texting: please turn off phones before coming to class. They should not be on during class.
- F. Grading: final grades will be based on the following (posted on [www.yeatts.us](http://www.yeatts.us)):
  - 1. Weekly discussion questions, assignments, and class participation  
(and for Ph.D. students presentation of grant proposal) 40%
  - 2. First paper or grant proposal (due Nov 14; see attached) 40%
  - 3. Second paper or grant proposal (due Dec 5; see attached) 20%

PhD students will be responsible for presenting their grant proposal to the class. See below for details (PhD Presentations). MA students will provide a more informal review to the class of their research papers and what was learned.

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

##### Week 1 (August 29)

- A. Introduction of students and professor to one another
  - B. Overview of Course including review of research papers (MA students only) and grant proposals (PhD students only)
  - C. For next week:
    - 1. **Email to Dr. Yeatts** (on Sunday or Monday) three potential research projects focused on some issue related to the environment (you may want to do the reading for next week first and review the Hannigan book to get some ideas). Each project description should be no more than one or maybe two sentences. In other words, don't provide a detailed description of each but simply the overall research goal. I'll put these all together and distribute them to the class. My thought is that these will give students more ideas as they search for library research topics (MA students) and grant proposal topics (PHD students).
    - 2. Read:
      - (a.) Hannigan, Chapters 1 - 3
- Be sure to type up discussion questions you have created to be used during the class discussions. Since we won't meet next week (due to Labor Day), you can email me your questions along with your three potential research projects on Sunday or Monday.

##### Week 2 (September 5)

- A. Class **will not meet due to Labor Day** but you do have required reading for the week and should prepare discussion questions
- B. For next week have read Hannigan, Chapters 4 – 6
- C. Bring questions for chapters 4 – 6 to class next week (as you will do every week that there is assigned reading)

##### Week 3 (September 12)

- A. Discuss Hannigan, Chapters 1 - 6
- B. For next week complete the Hannigan book, Chapters 7 - 10

##### Week 4 (September 19)

- A. Discuss reading assignment noted in week 3
- B. For next week have read Yang's book, rather than typing up discussion questions for each chapter (too many short chapters), please think of any questions that the book brings to mind regarding grant proposals and type up these questions (at least 9 questions and no more than two pages). After reading this book, you should have a basic understanding of what is expected in a grant proposal and how they are structured.

Week 5 (September 26)

- A. Discuss grant writing/Yang's book.
- B. For next week, MA students need to turn in (1) a library research topic and brief outline (typed, NO MORE than one page) and (2) a reference list of at least 5 scholarly references related to the topic. PhD students need to turn in (1) a grant proposal topic and brief outline including the literature review (typed, NO MORE than one page) and (2) a reference list of at least 5 scholarly publications related to the grant proposal. **When choosing a topic, be sure there are numerous research studies/publications on your topic so that you have literature to review in your research paper (MA students) or grant proposal (PhD students).** It would be beneficial to contact me by email or, even better, meet with me in order to make sure your topic is "on target." Attached is an outline for the MA research paper.
- C. For next week, each student will informally provide a brief overview of their topic and plans for their paper/proposal with the class. Classmates and professor will ask questions and make suggestions to improve the paper/proposal (the idea here is that you want to help each other get focused on a clear topic).
- D. For next week, No reading assignment; focus your time on your outline and make sure there is scientific research on the topic.

Week 6 (October 3)

- A. Students review their research and proposal topics with input from classmates
- B. For next week read Mazmanian book, Chapters 1-3.

Week 7 (October 10)

- A. Discuss Mazmanian book, Chapters 1-3.
- B. For next week: read Mazmanian book, Chapters 4, 5, 8, and 9.

Week 8 (October 17)

- A. Discuss Mazmanian book, Chapters 4, 5, 8, and 9
- B. For next week have read Stuart book, Chapters 1-3

Week 9 (October 24)

- A. Discuss Stuart book, Chapters 1-3
- B. For next week have read rest of Stuart book, Chapters 4-5

Week 10 (October 31)

- A. Discuss reading assignment for week 9
- B. For next week: Read Tilt, Preface, Chapters 1 – 8 (due to large number of chapters please provide roughly 9 questions total for the reading rather than 3 questions per chapter).#

Week 11 (November 7)

- A. Discuss reading assignments for week 10

- B. Discuss helpful hints for writing (provided below).
- C. For next week: Paper or grant proposal due (40% of grade)
- D. no reading assignments (focus on paper or proposal)

#### Week 12 (November 14)

- A. Turn in paper or proposal
- B. During class we may have a guest speaker (Dr. Nathalia Hernandez, Visiting Sociology Professor with a specialty in Environmental Justice), watch a few interesting YouTubes and discuss various topics related to what we have read so far: Potential YouTubes might include:  
     Desert Garden <http://www.geofflawton.com/fe/32461-surviving-the-coming-crises>  
     Sustainable Architecture: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4AYE3w5TWHs>  
     Garbage Warrior: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4AYE3w5TWHs>
- C. For next week: Read Malm book, Chapters 1-3.

#### Week 13 (November 21)

- A. Discuss readings for week 12
- B. Papers will be returned to students with suggested revisions (assuming I can get them all read in one week). This is similar to when a faculty member submits a paper to a journal for publication and gets feedback from the journal reviewers on how to improve the paper (in this case I'll be the reviewer for your paper).
- C. No reading assignment. Spend time revising paper and PhD students also preparing presentations.

#### Week 14 (November 28)

- A. PhD students present their grant proposals and lead discussions on their topics. Use of powerpoint would be good; perhaps a slide providing an introduction and hypotheses or research questions to be addressed, several slides reviewing the literature, a slide providing an overview of possible methods, and a slide for possible findings. MA students will provide an informal review for the class of their research papers and what was learned.
- B. No reading assignment but for next week MA students who have not yet presented their work will do so
- C. Continue revising papers/proposals to be turned in next week

#### Week 15 (December 5)

- A. Turn in revised paper
- B. Remaining MA students provide informal presentation of their research papers
- C. Discuss topics we have covered over the course of the semester

## WEEKLY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (40% of grade)

At least three discussion questions should be provided for each chapter assignment for a given week (ideally more than three but no more than a total of two typed, single-spaced pages). This will result in multiple discussion questions developed each week. So, for example, three assigned chapters would result in at least 9 discussion questions and preferably more but no more than two typed pages of questions. The discussion questions should be designed to bring out varying opinions/ideas on a particular issue(s) reviewed in the readings so that a discussion of ideas is facilitated. The discussion questions should also help demonstrate that you have read the assignments. We will rotate around the room with students presenting discussion questions to be considered.

**IMPORTANT DETAILS:** The discussion questions should be typed using size 12 font with 1” margins except the left margin should be 1 ½”. There should be no more than two single-spaced pages. There should be a separate heading for each chapter/article along with the book author (so I can tell from which chapter the question comes). Under each heading should be the discussion questions related to the heading. Examples are provided on Yeatts’ webpage at <https://yeatts.us> (select Environmental Sociology and then select Examples. An example is also provided below:

Mazmanian, Chapter 1, pages 1 – 29

- Why are there so many different terms used for the same basic concept of sustainable communities?
- What is the basic tension surrounding the creation of sustainable communities? Why does it exist?

## PHD STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Only PhD students will be responsible for (1) presenting their grant proposals and (2) leading a class discussion on their grant proposal topic. The PhD student should also develop at least four thoughtful discussion questions related to her/his own grant proposal to assist with facilitating discussion. Use of powerpoint would be good; perhaps a slide providing an introduction and hypotheses or research questions to be addressed, several slides reviewing the literature, a slide providing an overview of possible methods, and a slide for possible findings.

## MA STUDENT INFORMAL PRESENTATIONS

This will be an opportunity for the presenter to share what s/he has learned with regard to the research paper and for students in the class to learn from each other.

## RESEARCH PAPERS (MA STUDENTS ONLY)

**First Research Paper** (40% of total grade): Each MA student will write a library research paper focused on some aspect of Environmental Sociology. The **grading of each paper** will be based primarily on: (a) how much effort has been put into the paper and (b) writing style/readability of paper. Indications of effort will be the number of references/citations referred to within the paper, thoughtful organization of the paper (see next paragraph), use of sub-headings, thought put into the implications, etc. The references used should be PRIMARILY (at least 80%) from professional peer-reviewed research journals/books (e.g., Sustainability Science, Ecology and Society, Society and Natural Resources). No more than 10% of reference citations should be web based and no more than 10% should come from non-professional publications (e.g., the newspaper, Time Magazine). The paper should be roughly 10-12 pages (not including citations). It should use size 12 font with 1" margins on top, bottom, and right side and 1½ inch margin on the left (you will lose ½ letter grade if the paper does not follow these specifications).

Each paper should begin with an **Introduction** that informs the reader of the importance of the topic (why the reader should be interested in reading the paper) and what is going to be covered in the paper (usually between 1 and 2 pages). The **Review of the Literature (body of the paper)** should be organized into sub-sections with each having its own sub-heading. For example, if you were going to review five major groups of factors that enable a community to be vibrant and sustainable, you would want to review the existing research on each group of factors (i.e., what research has shown/what experts believe) and, in the process of doing this, have a **separate sub-heading within your paper for each major group** and perhaps sub-headings under the separate headings for the most important factors within a group. Your paper should also have an **Implications and Conclusions** section. This section should discuss the implications that your topic suggests. **(Please see helpful hints, below)**

**Second Paper** (i.e., re-write of first paper, 20%): Once obtaining comments on your first paper from the professor, revise the paper and make all the changes that make sense to you. This will be your second paper. If a requested change doesn't make sense to you, please speak with the professor since the professor is not infallible and your confusion may be warranted. Please also note that any thorough review of a research paper (written by a student or faculty member) is likely to result in a wealth of comments/suggested revisions (in your case from the professor and in the professor's case from a journal editor). So, don't be discouraged by multiple comments/suggestions (for example, I received three single-spaced pages of requested revisions from the editor of Social Science and Medicine—I made the changes and the paper was published).

In addition to the revised paper, provide a **"List of Revisions"** that were made and the location of the revisions in the paper. This is a requirement when you have submitted a paper for publication and you get it back from the editor and the editor asks you to respond to the reviewers' comments that are provided to you. For example, if you had a comment in your paper, on the top of the second page, that stated you need to add a sentence that lets the reader know what is to be covered, you would make the change in the text and then on your "List of Revisions" you would have something like this:

Page 2, top of page: added a sentence letting the reader know what is covered in the paper.

**When you turn in the second paper, you must also turn in your first paper with the suggested comments that you were given** in order to receive credit for the second paper. Also be sure to follow the same requirements regarding the paper's format. Again, if you have any questions about a particular requested change provided on your first paper, it would be beneficial to meet with the professor and discuss it and, as noted above, in some cases the professor may agree with you that a change is not needed or a different change would be best. In any case, such meetings are a great opportunity to improve your writing skills and to get to know the professor on a more personal level.

### **GRANT PROPOSAL (PHD STUDENTS ONLY)**

**First Grant Proposal** (40% of total grade): Each Ph.D. student will write a grant proposal that is responding to the National Science Foundation's sociology dissertation request for proposals (RFP). The NSF RFP for the Sociology Program Dissertation Improvement Grant can be found by searching "NSF Sociology Dissertation Improvement Grant" or entering:

<https://www.asanet.org/academic-professional-resources/asa-grants-and-fellowships/asa-doctoral-dissertation-research-improvement-grants-asa-ddrig>

Your proposal should address some issue related to environmental sociology. It should follow the guidelines outlined in the NSF RFP. In addition, the "Review of the Literature" or sometimes referred to as "Background," should be roughly 10 pages in length. This is the part of the proposal where you review all relevant/important research related to your proposal topic.

The **grading of each grant proposal will be based on how much effort has been put into preparing, researching, and writing the proposal.** Indications of effort will be number of appropriate references/citations referred to in the proposal, thoughtful organization of the proposal (e.g., follows the major focuses of the RFP), use of sub-headings, writing style, etc. (see also MA Research Paper above). The references used in the literature review of the proposal should be PRIMARILY (at least 80%) from professional peer-reviewed research journals (e.g., American Sociological Review, Environmental Psychology) and scholarly books. No more than 10% of reference citations should be web based and no more than 10% should come from non-professional publications (e.g., the newspaper, Time Magazine).

When writing the literature review section of the grant proposal, it should be organized into sections with each section having its own heading (see MA research paper above). Further, headings within the proposal should match any requests of the NSF RFP. For example, the NSF RFP may ask for an Introduction, Hypotheses or Research Problems, Importance of the Proposed Research, Review of Literature, Methods to be Used, Potential Benefits, etc.

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**Second Grant Proposal** (i.e., re-write of first grant proposal, 20%): Once obtaining comments on your first proposal from the professor, revise the proposal and make all the changes that make sense to you. This will be your second grant proposal. If a requested change doesn't make sense to you, please speak with the professor since the professor is not infallible and your confusion may be warranted. Please also note that any thorough review of a grant proposal (written by a student or faculty member) is likely to result in a wealth of comments/suggested revisions (in your case from the professor and in the professor's case from proposal reviewers). So, don't be discouraged by multiple comments/suggestions. Know that it is a valuable learning experience to obtain feedback beyond a simple grade. I submitted a grant proposal to the National Science Foundation. The proposal was not funded but I did receive six pages of comments. I re-submitted the proposal after making the suggested revisions and the proposal was funded (\$120K).

As with the MA Research Paper you should provide a **"List of Revisions."** Please see above for details.

**When you turn in the second proposal, you must also turn in your first proposal with the suggested comments that you were given** in order to receive credit for the second proposal. Again, if you have any questions about a particular requested change provided on your first proposal, it would be beneficial to meet with me and discuss it.

### **Helpful Hints for Writing Papers (both MA research papers and PHD proposals)**

(these issues are often found in student papers so this gives you a heads up on what is expected and not expected)

1. Use first or second person sparingly in the paper.
2. Don't make editorial/opinion statements except perhaps in the conclusion. It should not be an editorial or opinion piece—it's a research paper reporting various social science studies/research findings on the topic. All statements should be reporting what you have found in the literature about your topic. Try to avoid writing something like: "Towns and cities take for granted the rivers they build around." Instead, use a citation if available such as: Smith (2022) has pointed out that towns and cities take for granted...
3. Use citations liberally but use quotes sparingly.
4. When reporting previous research use past tense. "Jones (2014) reported that..." Not, "Jones (2014) reports...". The reason for this is that Jones may no longer even believe what s/he reported in 2014 so to say "Jones reports" or "Jones argues that" is inaccurate and may be false (NOTE: this convention isn't followed by all researchers but it makes the most sense to me).
5. Include page numbers.
6. Write the paper for readers who know nothing about the topic (have you ever heard of KISS—keep it simple stupid). This is what you would do if you were going to submit the paper to a journal and this is the group you want to influence. Typically avoid jargon but, if you need to use jargon, define within the paper all jargon that is used.
7. When quoting, you must provide not only the author and date of the publication but also the page number where the quote can be found.

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8. Within the text, you should rarely use a researchers/authors first name. For example, you would state: “Smith (2022) has reported...” Not, Mary Smith (2022) has reported...”

**How to Structure MA Research Paper**  
(each section below is a requirement of the paper)

- 1, Introduction (1 or 1 ½ pages)
  - a. Gain the reader’s attention/interest by pointing out the importance of the topic (we’ll call the topic “xxx”).
  - b. State the purpose of the paper (i.e., to provide a thorough review of the existing scientific studies that have examined xxx—the topic of your paper)
  - c. End the introduction with something like: Provided below is first a definition of XXX, this is followed by an overview of relevant research that has been done on the topic and areas where research is still needed.
2. Definition of XXX
3. Organize the relevant existing research into three to five sub areas. Then, have a sub-heading for the first sub-area followed by a review of the literature on the sub-area; follow this with a second sub-heading and review of literature on this second sub-area. Continue for three to five sub-areas.
4. Implications and Conclusion
5. The paper should be roughly 10 – 12 pages.