

CAMOSUN COLLEGE
School of Arts & Science
Social Sciences

**SOC 120 – SOCIAL SYSTEMS AND
THE ENVIRONMENT**

Fall 2004

COURSE OUTLINE

Instructor Information

- (a) Instructor: Dr. Peter Maidstone
- (b) Office hours: TBA
- (c) Location: Paul 230
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Calendar Description:

In this course social relations are seen within a larger biophysical context. Sociological analysis is applied to the understanding of the ideological and social-structural aspects of environmental sustainability. Economic activity, public policy, and social movements are analyzed by focusing on specific environmental issues at the regional and global levels.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

At the end of course the student will be able to:

- Demonstrate a knowledge of the major Canadian and global environmental issues such as climate change, declining biodiversity, and water scarcity.
- Employ a sociological perspective to critically assess the neoliberal, political economy, and ecological paradigms' explanations of the environmental issues.

Required Texts:

Harper, Charles. *Environment and Society: Human Perspectives on Environmental Issues* (3rd ed). Prentice Hall, 2004.

Suzuki, David and Holly Dressel. *From Naked Ape to Superspecies, Revised ed.* Greystone, 2004.

Evaluation Procedures:

First exam	30%
Second exam	35%
Third exam	15%
First essay	10%
Second essay	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

First Exam:

The exam will be an "objective style" multiple-choice exam, but will attempt to test one's conceptual rather than factual knowledge. It will focus on material covered to date in the course, and will be written in class on **October 19**.

Second Exam:

The second exam will have the same format as the first. It will be based on material covered since the first exam. It will be written in class on **November 16**.

Third Exam:

The third exam will retain the same format as the other exams. It will focus upon the topics covered since the second exam. It will be written in class **December 9**.

First Essay:

Each student is responsible for completing a seven hundred and fifty word (750) typewritten, critical analysis of a current Canadian newspaper or magazine article. This assignment, which will be explained more fully in class, will be evaluated on a Pass-Fail basis. A copy of the article together with the analysis is due **November 2**.

Second Essay:

Each student is responsible for completing a seven hundred and fifty (750) word typewritten analysis of the seven environmental problem areas identified in the Harper text. The analysis will be developed in terms of one of the paradigms or theoretical perspectives that have been discussed in class, with the objective of utilizing a particular perspective in order to present its account of the environmental problem area selected by the student.

A fuller explanation of this assignment will be given in class. The assignment will be evaluated on a Pass-Fail basis, and will be due **November 30**.

Grading System

The following percentage conversion to letter grade will be used:

A+ = 95 - 100%	B = 75 - 79%	D = 50 - 59%
A = 90 - 94%	B- = 70 - 74%	F = 0.0 - 49%
A- = 85 - 89%	C+ = 65 - 69%	
B+ = 80 - 84%	C = 60 - 64%	

Required Reading:

The student will be required to read selected chapters of the texts, as well as material on reserve in the library.

LEARNING SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

There are a variety of services available for students to assist them throughout their learning. This information is available in the College Calendar, Registrar's Office or the College web site at <http://www.camosun.bc.ca>

ACADEMIC CONDUCT POLICY

There is an Academic Conduct Policy. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the content of this policy. The policy is available in each School Administration Office, Registration, and on the College web site in the Policy Section.
www.camosun.bc.ca/divisions/pres/policy/2-education/2-5.html

Course Objectives:

The aim of the course is to utilize a sociological viewpoint as a means of critically examining the range of perspectives which seek to account for the relationship between humans and their biophysical environments. By comparing both the arguments of the texts and critical responses to them, the course will attempt to arrive at some conclusions as to the most viable accounts of human agency and social structure with respect to the current state of the environment, how it came about, and the prospects for change. The course will place the perspectives and issues that are examined, in both a Canadian and a global context.

Course Topic Areas:

Environmental Problems: an Overview.

Understanding the environment: Social Scientific Perspectives.

Assessing Risk: A Look at Some Issues.

Sustainability: Is There an Alternative Future?

Environmentalism: The Role of Social Movements.

Social Structures: The Potential for Change.

The Global Context: Globalization – from Above and Globalization – from – Below.

Activism: Antidote to Despair