



School of Arts & Science
SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT

SOC 120-
Social Systems and the Environment
2008W

COURSE OUTLINE

The Approved Course Description is available on the web @ _____

Ω Please note: this outline will be electronically stored for five (5) years only.
It is strongly recommended students keep this outline for your records.

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.

1. Instructor Information

(a)	Instructor:	Peter Maidstone		
(b)	Office Hours:	Tues 3:30-5:00; Wed 11:30-12:20; Thurs 3:30-5:00		
(c)	Location:	Paul 230		
(d)	Phone:	370-3369	Alternative Phone:	
(e)	Email:	maidstone@camosun.bc.ca (brief messages only)		
(f)	Website:			

2. Intended Learning Outcomes

(No changes are to be made to this section, unless the Approved Course Description has been forwarded through EDCO for approval.)

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

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

3. Required Materials

(a)	Texts	Davidson, Debra and Kierstin Hatt (eds.). <i>Consuming Sustainability: Critical Social Analyses of Ecological Change</i> . Fernwood, 2005. Hossay, Patrick. <i>Unsustainable: A Primer for Global Environmental and Social Justice</i> . Zed Books, 2006.
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4. Course Content and Schedule

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

5. Basis of Student Assessment (Weighting)

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 **February 12**.

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 **March 13**.

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 **April 10**.

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 **February 28**.

Second Essay:

Each student is responsible for completing a seven hundred and fifty (750) word typewritten analysis of one of the environmental problem areas identified in the Davidson 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 **March 27**.

Required Reading:

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

6. Grading System

(No changes are to be made to this section, unless the Approved Course Description has been forwarded through EDCO for approval.)

Standard Grading System (GPA)

Percentage	Grade	Description	Grade Point Equivalency
90-100	A+		9
85-89	A		8
80-84	A-		7
77-79	B+		6
73-76	B		5
70-72	B-		4
65-69	C+		3
60-64	C		2
50-59	D	Minimum level of achievement for which credit is granted; a course with a "D" grade cannot be used as a prerequisite.	1
0-49	F	Minimum level has not been achieved.	0

Temporary Grades

Temporary grades are assigned for specific circumstances and will convert to a final grade according to the grading scheme being used in the course. See Grading Policy at camosun.ca or information on conversion to final grades, and for additional information on student record and transcript notations.

Temporary Grade	Description
I	<i>Incomplete:</i> A temporary grade assigned when the requirements of a course have not yet been completed due to hardship or extenuating circumstances, such as illness or death in the family.
IP	<i>In progress:</i> A temporary grade assigned for courses that are designed to have an anticipated enrollment that extends beyond one term. No more than two IP grades will be assigned for the same course.
CW	<i>Compulsory Withdrawal:</i> A temporary grade assigned by a Dean when an instructor, after documenting the prescriptive strategies applied and consulting with peers, deems that a student is unsafe to self or others and must be removed from the lab, practicum, worksite, or field placement.

Temporary grades are assigned for specific circumstances and will convert to a final grade according to the grading scheme being used in the course. See Grading Policy E-1.5 at camosun.ca for information on conversion to final grades, and for additional information on student record and transcript notations.

7. Recommended Materials or Services to Assist Students to Succeed Throughout the Course

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, at Student Services or the College web site at camosun.ca.

STUDENT CONDUCT POLICY

There is a Student Conduct Policy **which includes plagiarism**. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the content of this policy. The policy is available in each School Administration Office, at Student Services and on the College web site in the Policy Section.