

## **SOCI-X135-001 ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY (F-2003) 3:30-4:45 pm T/R**

Instructor: Dr. Anthony Ladd  
Office: MO 537-D  
Phone: 865-3640

Classroom: MO 251  
Office Hours: M/W 11:00-3:30;  
T/R 11:00-12:30;  
and by appointment

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course represents a broad and integrated exploration of the relationship of humans and their societies to the natural environment. As an elective in both the Common Curriculum and the Environmental Studies Minor, the class brings together environmental perspectives from a number of academic viewpoints, including sociology, biology, history, economics, philosophy, and religious studies. In general, the course will introduce students to basic ecological concepts and principles that underlie human existence, an historical examination of some of our spiritual beliefs and philosophies regarding nature, a sociopolitical analysis of our environmental crisis, an overview of the history of the American Environmental Movement, as well as a brief look at some exemplars of grassroots environmental justice struggles and direct action within the environmental movement today, including Louisiana. Overall, the readings, lectures, films, discussion, and speakers for this class will enable you to become a more informed and critical thinker regarding your relationship to nature and the future of life on this planet. My aim is to increase not just your *knowledge* about the world that you share, but develop in you the *wisdom* to envision and practice a way of life which can help to ensure its sustainability.

There will be two (2) in-class exams for the course that will account for 80% of your total grade (40% each), one (1) 5 page paper on "What's In Your Backyard?" that will comprise 10% of your grade, one (1) 3 page reaction paper to The Legacy of Luna / "Butterfly" (book and film) (format provided) that will comprise 6%, and the remaining 4% of your grade will be comprised by the quality and quantity of your daily classroom discussion/participation throughout the course. Additional extra credit can also be earned by attending local environmental events throughout the semester (speakers, films, public hearings, programs, etc.), completing an additional book or film critique from the suggested reading/film list, or completing some other approved assignment.

Course grades will be determined by the following standard categories:

90-100% = A; 88-89% = B+; 80-87% = B; 78-79% = C+; 70-77% = C; 68-69% = D+; 60-67% = D; 59% or below = F.

### **ATTENDANCE / ASSIGNMENT / EXAM POLICY:**

Class attendance is mandatory. You will be allowed up to two (2) class absences—this also includes coming to class late. For each additional absence or tardiness beyond 2, one point will be subtracted from your final grade. You are responsible, should you be absent or present, for whatever materials are presented in class, be it lectures, speakers, films, or handouts.

Taking make-up tests or submitting papers late without penalty will only be allowed in the event of an immediate, serious illness or personal emergency that physically prevents you from attending class. If such an emergency should take place, you must notify me in person or by telephone on or before the day of class, stating the problem and specifically when you will be in touch with me about making-up the assignment. No after-the-fact explanations or rationalizations will be allowed—NO EXCEPTIONS!

If you are required, for a legitimate reason, to miss an upcoming class/test/ assignment that you know about in advance, please see me beforehand. Failure to notify me beforehand about a missed test or paper deadline will constitute an “unexcused late paper” and will result in a full grade reduction from the assigned grade for each regular class day past the due date the paper is turned in. (Keep in mind, however, that a late F paper is much better than earning a Q !) In other words, just like a job in the “real” world, show good judgement and responsibility toward your work and educational commitments.

This course will greatly educate you about our environment and world today, but doing well in it will require strong attention to the basics for every class—careful reading and review, being prepared for class discussion, attentiveness, curiosity, and good note-taking in class, as well as excellent research, writing, and proofreading skills for your papers. Like anything else in life, you will get out of the class as much as you put into it and you will earn the grade you receive. Let’s all work together to make it a great class and learning experience!

### **MISCELLANEOUS CLASS POLICIES AND SUGGESTIONS:**

- It is a privilege to attend college and to learn. Take your education seriously and treat the classroom experience and your classmates with respect. Turn off all cell phones/pagers and remove baseball caps while in class.
- Arrive to class on time and do not begin packing up your belongings or stand up to leave until the professor dismisses the class. Please visit the restroom and water fountain before class starts.
- If you bring a beverage can into class, take it out with you—along with any used paper—and recycle them in Loyola’s can/paper bins in the building. Please dispose of any other nonrecyclable trash around you in the trash can when you leave.
- Words are a beautiful thing so treat the English language with respect. Always take time to write thoughtfully, clearly, and proofread your writing many times—with a tutor or friend if necessary—before you turn in an assignment. Use the WAC lab or Academic Resource Center staff if you need assistance with your writing—as most students do.
- By the same token, think before you speak and be clear and articulate in your verbal communications. Avoid “mall-speak” and today’s street talk, e.g., filling up your communication interactions with empty words such as “like,” “uh,” “you know,” “whatever,” “cool,” “really,” etc. Say what you mean and mean what you say.
- Socrates said “The unexamined life is not worth living.” Formulate questions about whatever you read or learn and ask them in class. The only “stupid” question is the one not asked.
- Do not cheat. It will only end in bitterness.
- If for any reason you find yourself having a problem with the class material, my teaching style, other students, or any other issue that is negatively affecting your enjoyment of the course, please make an appointment to come talk to me about your issues so we can try to solve them together, before your grade starts to suffer.
- Finally, read more, contemplate the world around you, and CARPE DIEM!!! (See the films “Dead Poets Society” and “Finding Forrester” for some excellent academic role models.

## REQUIRED TEXTS:

- First Along the River: A Brief History of the U.S. Environmental Movement (2000, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) – Benjamin Kline
- Chronicles from the Environmental Justice Frontline (2001) – J. Timmons Roberts & Melissa M. Toffolon-Weiss
- The Legacy of Luna (2000) - Julia Butterfly Hill

(Additional readings and handouts will be provided by the instructor.)

NOTE: You will need to bring your textbooks with you to class everyday for reference and discussion purposes as we use them.

## GENERAL TOPICS AND READINGS

### DATE CLASS TOPIC

#### **I. UNDERSTANDING THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

- 8/26 (T) A. Course Syllabus and Introductions
- 8/28 (R) B. Conceptualizing the Environment and The Human-Ecological Complex
- 9/2 (T) C. Ecology, Biophysical Principles, Thermodynamics, and the Limits of Carrying Capacity
- 9/4 (R) D. Dominant Western Cultural Values and the Ideology of Growth  
Film/Discussion: “Affluenza”

#### **II. THE U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT**

- 9/9 (T) A. Philosophical Foundations  
The 1400s - 1700s: Inhabiting a New Land  
Readings and Class Discussion: First Along the River, Chs. 1, 2
- 9/11 (R) B. The 1700s - 1800s: Destroying the Frontier  
Readings: First Along the River, Ch. 3  
Film/Discussion: “The Way West,” Part I
- 9/16 (T) C. The End of Native American Freedom  
Discussion over Ch. 3 and film
- 9/18 (R) Film Clips: “The Way West,” Parts III and IV
- 9/23 (T) D. The 1860s - 1900s: Building an Industrial Nation: First Along the River, Ch. 4;
- 9/25 (R) E. The 1900s - 1930s: Beginnings of the Conservation Movement  
Readings and Class Discussion: First Along the River, Ch. 5

- 9/30 (T) F. The Pioneers of Wilderness Protection: Leopold, Marshall, and Zahniser  
Film/Discussion: "Wild By Law"
- 10/2 (R) G. The 1940s - 1960s: Prelude to the Green Decade  
Readings and Class Discussion: First Along the River, Ch. 6
- Mid-Term Review Sheet**
- 10/7 (T) **Mid-Term Exam**
- 10/9 (R) H. The 1970s: The Conservation Movement Matures  
Readings and Class Discussion: First Along the River, Ch. 7  
Film Clip: "The National Resources Defense Council"
- 10/14 (T) **FALL BREAK**
- 10/16 (R) I. The 1980s: A Conservation Backlash  
Readings and Class Discussion: First Along the River, Ch. 8  
Film: "James Watts' Environment"
- 10/21 (T) J. The Early 1990s: Government Retrenchment and Public Apathy  
Readings and Class Discussion: First Along the River, Ch. 9
- 10/23 (R) K. The Late 1990s-2003: The Institutionalization of the Environmental Movement & The Bush Record  
Readings and Class Discussion: First Along the River, Ch. 10
- III. THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT IN LOUISIANA**
- 10/28 (T) A. The Struggle for Environmental Justice  
Readings and Class Discussion: Chronicles from the Environmental Justice Frontline, Ch. 1  
Handout: "The Environmental Justice Movement in the U.S." – A. Ladd
- 10/30 (R) Film: "Toxic Racism"
- 11/4 (T) B. In Our Own Back Yard: The LES and Shintec Facility Cases  
Readings and Class Discussion: Chronicles..., Chs. 2–4
- 11/6 (R) C. Environmental Advocacy and Organizing  
Guest Speaker: Rebecca Dayries, Community Outreach Coordinator,  
Tulane University Law Clinic
- 11/11 (T) D. In Our Own Back Yard: The Grand Bois and Agriculture Street Landfill Cases  
Readings and Class Discussion: Chronicles..., Chs. 5-6

11/13 (R) E. Films: "A Town Under Siege" & "Green"  
**"What's In Your Backyard?" Paper Due**

11/18 (T) F. Implications for the Future  
Readings and Class Discussion: Chronicles..., Ch. 7  
Film: "We All Live Downstream"

#### **IV. POLITICS AND ACTIVISM IN CONTEMPORARY ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICTS**

11/20 (R) A. Civil Disobedience and Direct Action: The Struggle to Save the Redwoods  
Readings and Class Discussion: The Legacy of Luna, Chs. 1-7  
Film/Discussion: "Butterfly"

11/25 (T) B. Continued Readings and Class Discussion: The Legacy of Luna, Chs. 8–  
Epilogue

11/27 (R) **HAPPY THANKSGIVING! (Remember the Native Americans!)**

12/2 (T) C. Film/Discussion: "Butterfly"

12/4 (R) C. Wrap-up / Final Review Sheet / Course Evaluation  
**Reaction paper to The Legacy of Luna / "Butterfly" Due**

12/11 (R) **FINAL EXAM — December 11, 2003, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm**