

SOC 320: Population, Natural Resources, and the Environment
Department of Sociology – Colorado State University

Instructor: Elizabeth A. Bennett
Email: Elizabeth_Bennett@brown.edu
Website: ElizabethAnneBennett.com
Office: Clark A008A

Class times: Tues/Thurs 9:30-10:45am
Location: Clark A206
Final exam: last week of class
Office hours: 10:45-11:45am and by appt

Description

Human beings are continuously and simultaneously shaping and being shaped by their environment. How many people can the earth support? Which human behaviors increase or decrease the earth's carrying capacity? How do perspectives on population and the environment translate into cultural norms and public policies on reproductive health and natural resources? When do individuals, societies, and the global community cooperate or conflict about these issues? The first unit of the course explores how historical and contemporary thinkers, leaders, and societies have addressed such questions. The second unit examines how human populations have managed their relationships with specific natural resources—such as water, trees, and air. The third unit focuses on environmental justice—who bears the burden of these problems—and specific areas of action, activism, and advocacy in the United States.

Intended Learning Outcomes

- Develop a demographic perspective, and relate that perspective to environmental issues.
- Understand historical and contemporary theories on population and the environment.
- Foster the ability to read, contextualize, and evaluate contemporary articles presented in both academic literature and popular media.
- Identify connections between individual behavior, social norms, public policy, and the environment.

Evaluation (out of 100)

This class fulfills a requirement for both sociology and natural resource majors. It is expected that all students draw on their training—whether in the social or natural sciences—to make thoughtful and interesting contributions to the class. In doing so, please make an effort to explain concepts and provide background that allows everyone to participate in the conversation—regardless of his/her area of study.

5	Attendance – deductions taken for absences and tardiness
5	Participation/preparation – as evaluated by the instructor
30	Assignment – group research project or individual literature review
30	Exam 1 – population and natural resources
30	Exam 2 – environmental action, activism, and advocacy

Grading Scale

97 - 100 A+	87 - 89 B+	77 - 79 C+	67 - 69 D+
93 - 96 A	83 - 86 B	73 - 76 C	63 - 66 D
90 - 92 A-	80 - 82 B-	70 - 72 C-	60 - 62 D-

Suggestions for Success

- **Before class**, complete all assigned reading, take notes, and prepare to discuss.
- **In class**, be on time, participate, and take detailed notes on all lectures, discussions, and films.
- **After class**, answer all review questions.
- **Before exams**, re-read your notes, study the review questions, and prepare a 3x5 notecard.
- If you are struggling with course material, form a study group and/or come to office hours.
- You should plan to spend about 2.5 hours preparing/reviewing for each 1.25 hour class.

Unique Needs

If you require *special accommodations* (e.g., extra time for taking exams), please let me know during the first two weeks of class and provide documentation as soon as possible. If you have an *ongoing problem* (e.g., emotional or physical health concern) that is likely to present challenges to meeting the expectations, please talk to me as soon as possible, so that I can support you in meeting your goals.

Special Circumstances

If you are absent due to a doctor's appointment, athletic event, religious holiday, or other unavoidable activity, please provide the appropriate documentation. You will (of course) not be penalized for these absences. If you miss an exam or presentation and do not have a documented excuse, **you may not reschedule.**

Open Communication

If, for any reason, you are unhappy with or uncomfortable in this class, please let me know immediately. Providing a safe, healthy, productive, and supportive environment is my priority.

Conduct and Ethics

This course adheres to the CSU Academic Integrity Policy (pages 6-7 of the General Catalog) and the Student Conduct Code. Students are highly encouraged to ask questions about "gray areas" of academic integrity to ensure full compliance of these expectations. *At a minimum*, violations will result in a grading penalty in this course and a report to the Office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services.

Required Readings

Before each class, you will read the assigned academic journal articles, books, textbooks, newspapers, magazines, or blogs; viewing films; or listening to podcasts. Links are in the syllabus and documents are in Dropbox. *You must come to class prepared to discuss.*

Optional Textbooks

If you are struggling to understand lectures or would like to further develop your knowledge on a particular topic, these books will be helpful:

- Massimo Livi-Bacci. *A Concise History of World Population*, 5th Ed. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012)
- John R. Weeks. *Population: An Introduction to Concepts and Issues*, 11th Ed. (Wadsworth, 2011)

Additional Resources

- American Association for Advancement of Science Atlas of Population and Environment: <http://atlas.aaas.org/>
- United States Census Bureau Website: www.census.gov
- American Fact Finder Database: <http://factfinder2.census.gov>
- United Nations Data: <http://data.un.org/>
- Headwaters Economics: <http://headwaterseconomics.org/>
- Google Public Data: <http://www.google.com/publicdata/explore>
- Women Stats Project <http://www.womanstats.org/>
- Gapminder: <http://www.gapminder.org>
- Environmental Health News: <http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/>

Course Schedule and Readings

Unit 1: Population

T 8/27	<p>Course Introduction</p>
R 8/29	<p>The Issues (listen to podcast – no class meeting)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — NPR. “7 Billion and Counting: Can the Earth Handle It?” January 6, 2011. http://www.npr.org/2011/01/06/132708954/meeting-the-needs-of-the-booming-global-population (47 min)
T 9/3	<p>Demographic Perspectives I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Population in Perspective. “A Sampling of beliefs about population.” (cartoon) — Engber, Daniel. “Should Americans have fewer babies to save the environment?” <i>Slate</i>, Monday, September 10, 2007. — Engber, Daniel. “Daniel Engber talks with readers about depopulation and the environmental impact of procreating.” <i>Slate</i>, September 13, 2007.
R 9/5	<p>Demographic Perspectives II (note: heavy reading day)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Ehrlich, Paul R. and John P. Holdren. “Impact of Population Growth.” <i>Science</i>, New Series, Vol. 171, No. 3977. (Mar. 26, 1971), pp. 1212-1217 — Harden, Garrett. “Living on a Lifeboat.” <i>Bioscience</i>, Vol. 24. No. 10 (1974).
T 9/10	<p>Population Growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Rosling, Hans. “Global Population Growth, Box by Box” Ted Talk, July 9, 2010: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTznEIZRkLg (10 min) — Navarro, Mireya. “Breaking a Long Silence on Population Control.” <i>The New York Times</i>, October 31, 2011.
R 9/12	<p>Fertility and Population Control (note: heavy reading day)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Smail, J. Kenneth. “Beyond Population Stabilization: The Case for Dramatically Reducing Global Human Numbers.” <i>Politics and the Life Sciences</i>, Vol. 16, No. 2 (1997) pp. 183-192. (beginning at the section titled “prospects for population reduction,” to end) — Abernethy, Virginia. “The Right Incentive: How Perceived Scarcity May Stop Population Growth in Time.” <i>Politics and the Life Sciences</i>, Vol. 16, No. 2 (1997) pp. 193-195. — Hartmann, Betsy. “Numbers Games and Final Solutions.” <i>Politics and the Life Sciences</i>, Vol. 16, No. 2 (1997), pp. 204-205.
T 9/17	<p>Discussion and Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Complete review questions and bring to class

Unit 2: Natural Resources

R 9/19	<p>Food, Hunger, and Agricultural Policy I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Food First/Institute for Food and Development Policy. “Twelve Myths of World Hunger.” 2006.
T 9/24	<p>Food, Hunger, and Agricultural Policy II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Carolan, Michael. “Introduction” and “Chapter 6: Cheap Food and the Environment” from <i>The Real Cost of Cheap Food</i>. Routledge, 2011.
R 9/26	<p>Natural Resource Management: Water, Trees, and Soil</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — My Ecological Footprint: read “Frequently Asked Questions”: http://myfootprint.org/en/about_the_quiz/faq/ — My Ecological Footprint: take quiz and record results (number earths, total global acres, and in what areas your acres are above/below average) http://myfootprint.org/en/quiz_results/
T 10/1	<p>Environment and Human Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Brown, Phil, Rachel Morello-Frosch, and Stephen Zavestoski. “Introduction: Environmental Justice and Contested Illnesses.” In <i>Contested Illnesses: Citizens, Science, and Health Social Movements</i>. University of California Press, 2011. Available as an E-book at the CSU library (eISBN: 9780520950429)
R 10/3	<p>Energy and Climate Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — NPR, “Hot in my Backyard” episode 495 of <i>This American Life</i>. May 17, 2013 http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/495/hot-in-my-backyard (60 min)
T 10/8	<p>Discussion and Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Complete review questions and bring to class
R 10/10	Exam I

Unit 3: Environmental Action, Activism, and Advocacy

T 10/15	Discuss assignment, select groups/topics	No reading: use time to write papers.
R 10/17	Environmental Activism Film: <i>If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front</i>	
T 10/22	Environmental Justice	
R 10/24	Ethical Consumption: Green Labeling and Green Washing	
T 10/29	Energy & Institutions with Carol Dollard, CSU Environmental Engineer	
R 10/31	Energy & Individuals with Stacey Baumgarn, CSU Campus Energy Coordinator	
Su 11/3	Papers Due—upload to Dropbox before midnight	
T 11/5	Student Presentations – read student papers	
R 11/7	Student Presentations – read student papers	
T 11/19	Student Presentations – read student papers	
R 11/21	Student Presentations – read student papers	
T 11/26 R 11/28	<i>Thanksgiving Recess – no classes</i>	
T 12/3	Student Presentations – read student papers	
R 12/5	Student Presentations – read student papers	
T 12/10	Exam II	
R 12/12	No class meeting at regular time/place. This class will be rescheduled for a different day/time, and will be held at the New Belgium Brewery (500 Linden St, Fort Collins, CO 80524). The Director of Sustainability will give a lecture on New Belgium’s environmental metrics, waste diversion plan, local sourcing, and water reduction, and lead us on a brewery tour focused on sustainability-oriented innovations. Let’s celebrate the end of the semester!	

SOC 320: Population, Natural Resources, and the Environment
Assignment Option #1: Research Project

Objectives

- Identify the symptoms, proximate causes, and systemic support of an environmental problem.
- Consider the ways in which public policies, cultural norms, social movements, and individual behaviors are related to this problem and to each other.
- Learn about the ways that people are working for change.
- Gain experience writing, using PowerPoint, presenting, and working as a group.

Assignment

Students will work independently or in small groups (up to 4 people) to research how people in the United States are taking action, advocating for change, and encouraging activism to address specific tensions between the human population and the environment. Each group will circulate a paper and present to the class. The content of these papers and presentations are included in the second exam.

Topics

No topic may be selected by more than one group. Groups are welcome to propose a topic not on this list. Some topics overlap—students should avoid focusing on an issue central to another group’s topic. For example, the food groups should not focus on GMOs.

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|---|--|
| 1. Food – meat consumption | 9. Renewable energy – technology and access |
| 2. Food – organics | 10. Renewable energy – university divestment |
| 3. Transportation – public/mass transit | 11. Urban planning and smart cities |
| 4. Transportation – private vehicles | 12. Agricultural productivity and GMOs |
| 5. Transportation – alternatives | 13. Abolition of carcinogens |
| 6. Disposable bags and packaging | 14. Water conservation – technology/policy |
| 7. Recycling | |
| 8. Composting | |

Guiding Research Questions

1. Definition – What is the issue? What issues are related? On which aspect will your group focus?
2. History – When was it identified as a problem/solution? Why? By whom? How did the problem/solution gain public attention?
3. Today’s leaders – Who is addressing this issue? How are their objectives and tactics similar or different? (Consider academics, grassroots activists, major organizations, politicians, social movements, etc.)
4. Root causes – What systemic or structural problems contribute to this problem?
5. Symptoms and consequences – What indicates that this is a problem? What are the negative impacts? How are these impacts measured?
6. Ethical consumption – What are consumers encouraged to do? How does individual behavior relate to the larger issue? To what extent can consumption behavior solve the problem?
7. Radical communities – Who is pushing the envelope? What is the message? What tactics do they use? What makes them “radical”? Who are their adversaries and allies?
8. Public policies – What current policies (or loopholes) relate? What policies do people advocate? How has public policy changed over time?
9. Victories – Where has progress been made? Has the problem been solved in any way? Have there been successes? Are efforts becoming more or less successful over time?
10. Challenges – What has frustrated activists? What setbacks have occurred? What prevents this problem from being solved? Why have various solutions not been adopted?

This project is worth 30% of your final grade.

Evaluation of paper (out of 20)

Content and sources

- Should demonstrate deep understanding of the issue, synthesizing a variety of expert opinions
- Information should come from a variety of sources, such as organizations' websites, popular media (use LexisNexis to search), think tanks, and government
- Facts, figures, arguments, assertions must be cited in endnotes (see below)

Writing and style

- Polished, organized, clear, smooth, and proofread—read aloud to be sure!
- Be CONCISE (see here for examples: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/572/01/>)

Organization and formatting

- 8-10 pages BEFORE endnotes, Times New Roman, 12 point font, single spaced, 1" margins
- No bibliography is needed—put all citation information in endnotes (see below)
- Graphics, charts, photos, etc. are included as appendices (following the paper)
- Number pages (in Word, go to insert, then page numbers) and include group members' names

Note: Papers will be carefully evaluated for plagiarism.

Note: 1 point off for every day the paper is late (one day = 1 min-24 hours after deadline)

Evaluation of presentation (out of 10)

1. All issues are included
2. Information is presented clearly and logically, concepts carefully explained
3. Content is in-depth but presentation is basic enough to be accessible to your peer audience
4. Presentation is within the range of assigned length (TBD)
5. Photos, charts, graphics, videos are used as tools for communicating information
6. The sources of photos, charts, graphics, videos are cited
7. Power point is expected, unless an alternative style is approved by the instructor
8. Video clips total no more than 10% of total presentation time (e.g., 3 min of 30 minute presentation)
9. Every group member presents, answers questions, and behaves professionally
10. Presentation is polished: technology works, students know where to stand, speech has been rehearsed, no typographical errors

Note: Presentations cannot be re-scheduled without documentation of special circumstances

Note: After completing the assignment, each student will complete a report detailing how work was distributed among group members. Inequitable distribution may impact individual students' grades.

Citations

You must acknowledge your sources by citing them in an endnote. You do not need to include a bibliography. The footnote should include all of the information necessary to understand what the source is (Lecture? Film? Book? Magazine article? Blog?) and to locate it (e.g., author, title, date, publisher/publication, URL). This is not a typical method of citation, so it requires some judgment on what to include and how to include it. Examples are provided below. When in doubt, lean to the side of *too much* information—not too little. This is how you cite a book.¹ This is how you cite a website.² This is how you cite a lecture.³ This is how you cite a newspaper article.⁴ Typically, article and lecture titles are in “quotes” while books, journals, newspapers are *italicized*. To use endnotes in Word: go to insert, footnote, check “endnote”, go to options, then numbers (1, 2, 3...).

¹ Bennett, Elizabeth. *My Book*. Fort Collins: CSU Press. 2013.

² Center for Fair and Alternative Trade. <http://cfat.colostate.edu/>. Accessed June 2013.

³ Murray, Doug. “Fair Trade USA’s split from FLO” lecture October 24, 2011 at CSU. Summary: <http://cfat.colostate.edu/fair-trade-usas-split-from-flo-issues-and-implications/>. Accessed June 2013.

⁴ Downie, Andrew. “Fair Trade in Bloom.” *New York Times*. October 2, 2007. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/02/business/worldbusiness/02trade.html>. Accessed June 2013.

SOC 320: Population, Natural Resources, and the Environment
Assignment Option #2: Literature Review

Objectives

- Engage the classic literature and influential thinkers of this field.
- Describe, compare, and contrast highly influential demographic perspectives.
- Gain experience reading, summarizing, and critiquing primary texts.
- Develop a well-informed and well-argued perspective on population and the environment.

Literature

- Thomas Malthus. *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798)
- Aldo Leopold, *The Land Ethic* (1949)
- Esther Boserup. *The Conditions of Agricultural Growth* (1965)
- Paul Ralph Erlich. *The Population Bomb* (1968)
- Rachel Carson. *Silent Spring* (1972)
- Birdsall, Nancy and Steven Sinding. *Why Population Matters* (Oxford University Press, 2001)
- Ehrlich, Paul R. and Anne H. Ehrlich. *The Dominant Animal: Human Evolution and the Environment* (2009)
- Steingraber, Sandra. *Living Downstream: An Ecologist's Personal Investigation of Cancer and the Environment* (2nd Edition, 2010)
- A work of your choosing (with approval from instructor)

Students will produce a paper comprised of three sections:

- **Review:** For three classic works, the student will summarize the argument; cite (with page numbers) the evidence, theory, or calculations used to support the argument; include several key quotes; and discuss the author's suggested or implied policy implications. This section should be a tight, polished, concise snapshot that demonstrates nuanced comprehension of each work. (1 page each, 3 pages total)
- **Analysis:** The student will compare and contrast perspectives, evaluate the arguments against present-day data (were the forecasts correct?), and compare the policy implications with policies (both historical and contemporary). This section should show how authors borrow from or push back against one another, demonstrating the student's analytical capacity. (2 pages)
- **Opinion:** Finally, an opinion section provides an opportunity for the student to reflect and comment from his/her own perspective. The student should posit his or her own argument, compare it to those described in the previous sections, provide supporting evidence, and note the policy implications. (1 page)

The paper will be 6 pages, single-spaced, 1" margins, Times New Roman font, submitted electronically and in hard copy. The writing must be extremely concise—use each page, paragraph, sentence to communicate new meaning. **NO FLUFF!**

Evaluation (out of 30)

- 15 Reviews – 5 points each
- 10 Analysis
- 5 Opinion

Note: 1 point deducted for each day late (one day = 1 min - 24 hours)

Note: Papers will be carefully evaluated for plagiarism, and students may be asked to discuss the paper with the instructor.

This project is worth 30% of your final grade.