

Michael Lengefeld, PhD  
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Goucher, Van Meter, 213

Location: Van Meter 213  
MonWedFri 12:00 PM - 1:10 PM

Office / Hours: Van Meter G18, MonWed 10:30-11:30, and by appointment

Updated 2-26- Changes in Red below

### Course Description

This course aims to provide students with an overview of major approaches and debates central to understanding the relationship between nature and society. While the course is specifically intended to provide general background to sociology and environmental studies students, it is not limited to such students. Our general goal is to deepen collective understanding of the dynamics of power and inequality that shape individuals, human societies, and their interactions with the natural environment. The class will pursue this goal by contextualizing the early work, reviewing core theories of human-environment dynamics, and using these newfound theoretical skills to consider the issues surrounding the social construction of nature, political economy, environmental justice, and development. We will examine the interactions of these problems through in-depth study of issues including agricultural production, energy use, and resource conflict.

	Expected Student Learning Outcomes	Method of Evaluation
1.	Evaluate environmental sustainability issues by systematically using discipline-specific knowledge	Two exams, discussion leader, reflection journal, final project
2.	Determine how personal and collective decisions and actions affect the environment	Reflection journal, essay questions on two exams, final project
3.	Write effectively and analytically about contemporary nature-society relations	Discussions and in-class activities, final project

**1. Evaluate environmental sustainability issues by systematically using discipline-specific knowledge.** We will examine discipline-specific pieces of writing, information, and data in order to distinguish practices of representing the social world from the social world being represented. Sociology and Environmental Studies majors demonstrate a vivid awareness of the relationship between personal biography and historical conditions.

**2. Determining how personal and collective decisions and actions affect the environment.** Sociology and Environmental Studies majors make sense of empirical facts and findings as instances of more general social forms, processes, or relationships. They invoke concepts to envision the particulars of social life in context while developing an understanding of how structures of inequality, social institutions, and public policies shape the natural environment and the life courses and life chances of individuals.

**3. Write effectively and analytically about contemporary nature-society relations.** Sociology and Environmental Studies majors use sociological methods to systematically investigate social phenomena. They organize and analyze empirical materials to develop findings that illuminate social processes and problems, and express themselves thoughtfully and articulate ideas with a continuous respect for others.

## Resources and Grading Required

## Texts

Lee, Kai N., William R. Freudenburg, and Richard B. Howarth. 2013. *Humans in the Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Studies*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. Available in the Goucher Bookstore, listed as “*Humans in the Landscape*” in the Course Schedule below. ISBN: 978-0-393-93072-6

Students should bring a printed or electronic version of the readings to class each day. **This is the only time personal electronics are allowed in class** (see section on Classroom Civility below for details). All other readings will be available via the course website.

## Learning Opportunities and Evaluation

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
1. Individual Meetings with Dr. Lengefeld (2%) and “Letter to Self” (3%)	5%	Meetings must be scheduled by Week 3, Letter Due first Week of Class
2. Reading Assessment Pop Quizzes	10%	--
3. Participation in Group Discussion/Activities	15%	Weekly
4. Reflection Journal (5 total, 5% each)	25%	2-10, 3-4, 3-30, 4-20, 5-4
5. Midterm Exam	20%	3-25
6. Final Project	25%	TBA

## Letter Grade Scale

<b>A</b> .... 95%-100%	<b>B-</b> .... 80%-82%	<b>D+</b> .... 66%-69%
<b>A-</b> .... 90%-94%	<b>C+</b> .... 77%-79%	<b>D</b> .... 60%-65%
<b>B+</b> .... 87%-89%	<b>C</b> .... 73%-76%	<b>F</b> .... 59% and below
<b>B</b> .... 83%-86%	<b>C-</b> .... 70%-72%	

\*A grade represents my best professional evaluation of a piece of work. It neither is, nor can be, a judgment about the person who submitted the work.

- 1. Individual Meetings with Dr. Lengefeld:** By the end of week 3 of the semester, each student must meet with Prof. Lengefeld during Study Hall. In these meetings we will discuss learning styles, and your goals for the course worth 2% of the course grade. Students will sign up for these meetings during class. On the first day of class students will complete a “Letter to Self” worth 3% of the course grade.
- 2. Reading Assessment Pop Quizzes:** These low-stakes pop quizzes will test for comprehension of the central concepts from assigned readings. Constitutes 10% of the overall grade.
- 3. Participation in Group Discussion/Activities:** By keeping up with class material and assignments, engaging in debate, and participating in general, you help to create a more dynamic learning environment. Regular attendance and active participation constitute 15% of the course grade.

4. **Reflection Journal:** Over the course of the semester, you will complete five 750-1,000 word (ie, ~3 page) essays responding to a prompt given out in class. These individual writing opportunities will allow you to engage in deep reflection regarding significant topics in the course. Constitutes 25% of the grade.

5. **Midterm Exam:** Your participation, attendance, and reading notes will help you immensely in your preparation for this exam. The exam will consist of a mix of identifications (of key terms, people, etcetera) and essays that are drawn from concepts in *Humans in the Landscape* and the other course readings. There will be no surprises on this exam – every identification and essay question will be covered during the course. I do not provide an exam study guide – students should use their reading notes and lecture notes. Constitutes 20% of the grade.

6. **Final Project:** Students will be assigned to small groups, and each group will investigate a local source of toxic pollution. Ideally, groups will draw connections across scales, relating local environmental issues to regional or national concerns. Each group will create a short presentation that educates the class on their topic. Details for this project will be provided, and we will have several in-class workshops to prepare these projects. Constitutes 25% of the course grade.

**Attendance:** Students are permitted 3 class absences, no questions asked. Unless prior accommodations are established, any further absences will result in grade penalties; any student with five unexcused absences will fail the course.

**Missed Examination/Assignments/Late Work:** All of the test and assignment due dates are given in the “learning opportunities and evaluation” section above, and in the course schedule. There will be no makeup test given unless you receive permission from me *before* the exam is given or the assignment is due. Written documentation of a serious emergency is required to be excused from taking an exam at the scheduled time or turning in an assignment late. If you miss a scheduled exam or assignment without receiving prior permission to take a make-up test, you will receive a zero for that exam or assignment.

**Lecture Notes:** Students should take notes in class – no cell phone photography is allowed. I do not provide my lecture slides outside of the classroom without a specific and approved accommodation. Students are responsible for obtaining lecture notes from someone else in the class for the day if they are absent.

**Extra Credit:** Students can earn up to five points of extra credit on their final grade by writing up to five letters to a legislator(s) regarding a topic or bill they are concerned about. Students must write (or type) and address the letter to the legislator and put it in a stamped unsealed envelope – emails or phone calls are not accepted. All letters must be submitted by the last week of November, and I will grade these based on completion (not content or position) and then mail them for you. No other extra credit opportunities are available in the course. These letters should follow the format found here:

<https://www.nlacrc.org/home/showdocument?id=272>

**Classroom Civility:** Very simply, do not disrupt the classroom environment. Specifically, please refrain from eating, reading, chatting, and wearing earphones during class. As a commonsense, movie-theater type of courtesy, please turn off your cell phones and do not distract me or others by texting or browsing the web. Do not schedule any activities that will require you to leave early or arrive late to class – please use the restroom facilities before class, during our regular break, or after class. Finally, laptops are a tool, and a tool can very useful for one task and detrimental for others – we would not use a hammer to install a screw. **The use of laptop computers, cell phones, or smartwatches in class is allowed only for**

**specifically defined class activities, final presentations, or with my permission.** Students will turn off and store these items in their backpack during class. Use of these technologies during exams or quizzes will result in zero credit for the assignment. Research demonstrates that laptops can hinder classroom learning for both users and nearby students, but can be useful for specific learning activities:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360131512002254>. Please see me by the second week of the semester if you would like to discuss laptop use.

**Email:** I ask for your cooperation in using email only when truly necessary, **after first checking the syllabus** for your answer. In general, it is always best to meet in person for longer questions. If you would like to send me an email, please take your time with the message. Emails to professors are a form of formal writing; they are not the equivalent of sending a text message - “Text message” style responses are not acceptable. For example, your message should include a greeting: (“Hi Dr. Lengefeld,” “Hello,” “Hi Professor,” etc.), sign your email, and proofread. I recommend waiting until you are at a computer before sending your message. This will give you the time and space to send a well-crafted email. The standard response time is 24-48 hours (weekdays).

**Incompletes:** To be considered under extreme or exceptional circumstances.

**Academic Honor Code:** We will be working together as a community of writers and thinkers as we explore topics within environmental studies. While this means that no one will have to go through an assignment without any guidance, it also means that the work you submit as yours must be, in fact, your own. According to Goucher College policy, plagiarism is broadly defined as passing off someone else’s ideas or writing as your own work. If you are having difficulties with an assignment and are tempted to use someone else’s ideas, please come see me. We will work together to help you present your ideas in a manner that is original and your own. Plagiarism also includes self-plagiarism, or using the same writing in more than one class. If you would like to use writing from another class, you must have permission of both instructors. I take academic integrity incredibly seriously so please familiarize yourself with the guidelines of the Academic Honor Code regarding independent work, proper citation practices, and codes for learning. Please review Goucher’s Honor Code:

<https://www.goucher.edu/learn/documents/AcademicHonor-Code.pdf>.

**Accommodations:** We all learn in different ways and have different strengths and capabilities. In an effort to honor all of our abilities, I will strive to create a supportive learning environment. Please feel free to discuss with me questions or concerns regarding disabilities or learning differences (especially invisible ones) by the second week of the semester. Please also take advantage of Goucher’s policies:

<http://www.goucher.edu/learn/academic-support-and-resources/>

**Religious Observance Policy:** If you need to request accommodation for religious observance, fill out the following form:<http://www.goucher.edu/experience/getting-involved/religious-and-spiritualife/documents/religious-holidays/Religious-Observance-Form.pdf> and submit it to me as soon as possible and at least two weeks before the observance. If you communicate with me in a timely manner and complete any mutually agreed upon make-up work, any such absences or schedule changes will be excused and will not adversely affect your grade.

**Grade Questions:** All questions concerning grades must be discussed with the professor in person, and **grades will not be conveyed via email.** Federal guidelines mandating the protection and privacy of student records (FERPA) can be found here: <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs97/web/97859.asp>

### Support Services for Students

Academic Center for Excellence (ACE): The Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) is an academic support center that assists students in their effort to prepare for a life of inquiry, creativity, social responsibility and to develop a sense of personal and professional ethics and integrity. ACE provides individual academic coaching sessions, academic and wellness workshops and content-specific tutoring. <http://www.goucher.edu/learn/academic-support-and-resources/ace/>

Center for Race, Equity and Identity: The Center for Race, Equity and Identity (CREI) invites all students to engage in educational and co-curricular opportunities dealing with social justice, intersectionality and Critical Race Theory (CRT). CREI seeks to foster an environment in which marginalized and oppressed community members feel affirmed and comfortable exploring and expressing their identities. From individual advising to group support and workshops open to the public, many services are offered to help build community and support your success. Learn more at [www.goucher.edu/experience/equity-and-identity/center-for-race-equity-and-identity/](http://www.goucher.edu/experience/equity-and-identity/center-for-race-equity-and-identity/)

Counseling Services: Counseling services provided on campus are free, confidential, and do not require a referral. Services include brief individual counseling (typically 1-12 sessions), couples counseling, group counseling, and outreach and consultation. <http://www.goucher.edu/experience/stayinghealthy/counseling-services/>

Office of Accessibility Services: Goucher College makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students requesting accommodations must make their request and provide appropriate documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS). Because classes change every semester, eligible students must sign a Release of Information form at ACE in order for their professors to be notified to have the accommodations implemented. The Director of OAS (Arnelle Quashie Hanley) is available by appointment to answer questions and discuss any implementation issues you may have. Address general inquiries to 410-337-6146 or email [access@goucher.edu](mailto:access@goucher.edu).

Library: Our librarians are available to help students define and refine their research questions and aid their search for the appropriate supporting materials. [www.goucher.edu/library/](http://www.goucher.edu/library/)

Qualitative Reasoning Center: The Quantitative Reasoning (QR) Center supports students in mathematics, science, social science, and other courses with a QR emphasis with programming for student development of quantitative literacy and applications of mathematics and math-based skills to real-life situations. This semester, the QR Center will host drop-in tutoring (no appointment needed!) for students in STEM-based courses who need help with math-based skills or content involved in their coursework. Programming for the QR Center occurs in the Learning Commons (previously Information Commons) in the Athenaeum, and the schedule will be posted on the QR Center website (TBD). Please contact Dr. Justine Chasmar Stauffer at [Justine.chasmar@goucher.edu](mailto:Justine.chasmar@goucher.edu) or 410-337-6302 with questions.

Title IX Office: Goucher College seeks to provide an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have been the victim of discrimination/sexual harassment/misconduct/assault, we encourage you to report this. **If you report this to a faculty member, she or he must notify our Title IX coordinator about the basic facts of the incident including your name.** For more information about your options at Goucher visit: <https://www.goucher.edu/title-ix/>

Additionally, there are confidential resources available to you on campus who do not have to share your disclosure with the college:

- Health and Counseling Services (first floor of Heubeck Hall): 410-337-6050 for Health Center appointments; 410-337-6481 for Counseling Center appointments, (note walk-ins for counseling services are also accepted)
- Chaplain Cynthia Terry (basement of the Chapel), 410-337-6048
- Rabbi Josh Snyder: 410-337-6545
- Peer listeners: 443-632-7799, call any night between 7 p.m. and 2 a.m. to make an appointment.

### Writing Center:

The Writing Center, located on the 3rd floor of the Athenaeum, is available to assist you with any academic, personal, or professional writing project. Writing tutors are trained to work with you on all stages of your writing process, from brainstorming to organizing, to editing your papers. Each tutoring session is individually designed to help meet your particular needs. Simply bring the writing prompt, your draft (if you have one), and your questions about the writing to your appointment. Here is a link to the Center's website: [www.goucher.edu/writingcenter](http://www.goucher.edu/writingcenter)

### **Course Outline and Reading Assignments**

*lecture topics are approximate and subject to variation*  
*lecture topics will not necessarily correspond to readings readings*  
*are due on the last day of the week they are listed*

### **Date                      Unit/Topic**

#### **Module 1: A Sense of Place**

#### Week 1: (1-27 thru 1-31): The Social Construction of Nature

Questions: What is nature and what is natural? How does the definition of progress shape our interpretations and uses of nature?

- *Letter to your future self*: starts with "Dear Jane ..." Find a spot in nature and provide a 1-2 sentence description of your spot, and then respond to the following questions: what is the most significant environmental issue of our time? What is my role in this problem? What can I do to ameliorate this issue? What ought to change in order to address this issue?
- In-class discussion rules activity
- *Humans in the Landscape, Chapters 1-2*
- Gary Snyder. 1990. "The Place, the Region, and the Commons" in *The Practice of the Wild*.

#### Week 2: (2-3 thru 2-7) Ideology, Religion, and Nature

Questions: How have Western thought and religious belief shaped attitudes towards the human transformation of the environment? How have humans "constructed" wilderness in different times and places? Why is it important to recognize these variations?

- Bell, Michael and Loka Ashwood. 2016. "The Ideology of Environmental Domination" in *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology, 5th edition*.
- Cronon, William. 1996. "The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature." *Environmental History* 1(1):7-28.

#### Week 3: (2-10 thru 2-14) Historical Perspectives on the Environment

Questions: How do institutions shape human uses of the commons?

#### **Monday 2-10: Reflection Journal 1 Due**

- *Humans in the Landscape, Chapter 3*
- Dietz et al. 2003. "The Struggle to Govern the Commons," *Science* 302: 1907-12.



- Jamie Steckart, “From Peru to the Sioux”: [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/peru-and-the-siouxthough\\_b\\_12622622](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/peru-and-the-siouxthough_b_12622622)
- *End of the Line*

#### Week 4: (2-17 thru 2-21) Indigenous and Latin American Perspectives

Question: What is the pristine myth? How does ideology shape attitudes towards the environment? What is settler colonialism and how does it relate to the Pristine Myth? What is the relevance of corn?

- Charles C. Mann, “1491” in *The Atlantic Monthly* (2002)
- Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. 2014a. "Chapter 1: Follow the Corn" in *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press.
- Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. 2014b. "Chapter 3: The Covenant." *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press.
- Class activity - Rorschach.

#### Week 5: (2-24 thru 2-28) Open Veins in a World Without Edges

Questions: What is environmental disproportionality, and what is its relation to the concept of “a world without edges?” What is the connection between environmental disproportionality and the “Open Veins” of Latin America? Are we the most successful species?

- *Humans in the Landscape, Chapter 4 and 6*
- Galleano, Eduardo. 1973. “Introduction: 200 Million Children in the Eye of the Storm” in *The Open Veins of Latin America*
- *The Story of Stuff*

#### Week 6: (3-2 thru 3-6) Population, Demographic Transition, and Planetary Structure

Questions: What key demographic trends are problematic? How have different perspectives framed the problem of population?

##### **Wednesday 3-4: Reflection Journal 2 Due**

- *Humans in the Landscape, Chapter 8*
- *Humans in the Landscape, Chapter 5*

#### Week 7: (3-9 thru 3-13) Biodiversity

Questions: Why is biodiversity important for the natural world, and for the human world?

- *Humans in the Landscape, Chapter 9*
- Wilson, E.O. 1992. “The Fundamental Unit,” Chapter 4 in *The Diversity of Life*

#### Spring Break 3-14 thru 3-22

#### Week 8: (3-23 thru 3-27) Climate Change

##### **Wednesday, 3-25: Midterm Exam**

- *Humans in the Landscape, Chapter 7*
- Wednesday, 3-25: Midterm Exam
- *Chasing Ice*

Week 9: (3-30 thru 4-3) Corporations and the Global Economic Order

Question: How does the structure of the world economy shape environmental degradation? What is unique about the “corporation” and how does the global media shape our understanding of environmental problems?

**Monday 3-30: Reflection Journal 3 Due**

- *Humans in the Landscape, Chapter 10* • *Humans in the Landscape, Chapter 13*
- McCright, Aaron and Riley Dunlap. 2010. “Anti-reflexivity: The American Conservative Movement’s Success in Undermining Climate Science and Policy.” *Theory, Culture & Society* 27(2-3):100-133.
- *The Corporation*

Week 10: (4-6 thru 4-10) Nature of Science vs. the Science of Nature

Question: What is the difference between personal problems and public issues? How does the social construction of technology impact social and environmental outcomes?

- *Humans in the Landscape, Chapter 12*
- Frickel and Vincent 2007. “Hurricane Katrina, contamination, and the unintended organization of ignorance.” *Technology in Society* 29:181-188.

Week 11: (4-13 thru 4-17) Consumption, Affluence, and the Individualization of Responsibility

Question: How does the individualization of responsibility impact our capacity to address environmental problems?

- *Humans in the Landscape, Chapter 14*
- Maniates, M.F. 2001. "Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World?" *Global Environmental Politics*, 1(3): 31-52.
- Personal Ecological Footprints
- *The Lorax (1971)*

Week 12: (4-20 thru 4-24) Ecological Modernization**Monday 4-20: Reflection Journal 4 Due**

- *Humans in the Landscape, Chapter 11*
- Pellow, David, and Robert Brulle. 2007. "Poisoning the planet: the struggle for environmental justice." *Contexts* 6(1):37-41.

Week 13: (4-27 thru 5-1) The Treadmill of Production

- Hooks and Smith. 2004. “The Treadmill of Destruction: National Sacrifice Areas and Native Americans.” *American Sociological Review* 69(4):558-575.
- *The Age of Stupid*

Week 14: (5-4 thru 5-7, Last week of Classes) The Treadmill of Destruction**Monday, 5-4: Reflection Journal 5 Due**

- *Humans in the Landscape, Chapter 15* • *The Age of Stupid*, and *Revisited*

Week 15: May 12-15 Final Exam Week



***Required*** *Format for submission is a Word document saved as: LastName\_ES140S002\_Name of Assignment*

Note: I reserve the right to make changes in the syllabus and course schedule at any time.