Course Information and Outline of Readings

A. Course Description

This course is an introduction to the sociological study of the environment. In this course, students will learn about how the natural environment affects human interaction and development, while also considering how human societies impact the environment. The course will help students analyze current environmental issues from a critical, anti-racist, eco-feminist perspective, with a focus on achieving environmental justice. Students will also consider the relationship and tensions between capitalism and the environment.

B. Background

The goal of this course is to analyze the relationship between human society and the rest of the natural world, keeping in mind that human society is part of the natural world, and cannot exist separately from it. Beyond understanding the environmental issues that face human civilizations, the course seeks to provide students with the tools necessary to both discuss and to challenge them. Consequently, the course wraps up with a substantial treatment of the modern environmental justice movement, which seeks to eliminate environmental and resource inequities based on race, gender, class, or nationality, in North America and abroad.

The looming threat of planetary environmental collapse makes it imperative that students engage themselves in critical thinking and look at the relationship between humans and the environment in new ways. The course seeks to unravel the deeper roots of our environmental crisis as a necessary first step in the search for viable solutions.
C. Methods of Evaluation

1. Environmental Issues in the News (25 percent)

2. Mid-Term Exam (25 percent)

3. Environmental Film Analysis (25 percent)

4. Final Exam (25 percent)

Grading System:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade Point</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95 - 100</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Excellent. Superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 - 94</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Good. Clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 - 84</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>Satisfactory. Basic understanding of subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77 - 79</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73 - 76</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 - 72</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67 - 69</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>Marginal performance. (Generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63 - 66</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 62</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 - 59</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>Fail. Assigned to students:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 54</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>a) who do not meet the academic requirements of the course, or</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>b) who cease to continue in the course, but do not withdraw as per Mount Royal University policy.</td>
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D. Office Hours.

Office hours are by appointment. Please email me to make an appointment.
E. Course Policies

If you do not agree to the following conditions, you should not take this course:

- **Accommodation:** Students experiencing a disability should let me know how I can make the learning environment more comfortable for you. It is a student's responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student experiencing a disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with Accessibility Services, please contact their office at 403.440.6868. You must be registered with Accessibility Services to access academic accommodations.

- **Attendance:** If you are aware of events that may preclude you from attending a series of class meetings, you must let me know as soon as reasonably possible. After the fact, you will not have the opportunity to make up missed work (with the exception of unforeseen injury or illness. DO NOT come to class if ill, particularly if contagious). If you have any problem with the course, including non-attendance, come to see me as soon as you can. Early on we can resolve the problem, but by late in the course it may be too late for me to be of help. I do not penalize nonattendance per se, but it will be impossible to obtain a high mark in the course if you are not consistently present.

- **Technology:** Refrain from using phones, ipads, and/or any other device during class. You may use your laptop in class (solely for course related purposes) provided it is not distracting to any other students and/or the instructor. This is a privilege, not a right; therefore, this rule can be changed at the discretion of the instructor.

- **E-mail:** You may e-mail questions or concerns to me, but be advised that I normally reserve at least one business day to respond. So, an e-mail sent on Friday may not be answered until Monday. Usually I will respond much sooner, but occasionally other commitments may keep me from responding immediately, so please leave at least one business day for a response. If questions require lengthy responses I will likely ask you to come to office hours to discuss the issue.

- **Student-Athletes:** MRU Student Athletes who miss missing a test because they are travelling for a competition must provide complete documentation (e.g., note from their coach) outlining the dates of travel and will then be allowed to schedule a time to make up the test. If a student athlete misses class the day a paper is due (with prior notice provided), the paper will be due at the start of the first class after the student returns from travel.

- **Honesty:** Students suspected of cheating on an examination or plagiarizing in an assignment, in the instructor’s opinion, will result in the application of the most severe sanctions possible as provided for under the MRU Student Code of Conduct. Students are expected to comply with all university regulations as outlined in the MRU Calendar. Students are expected to understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it (if you have any questions please see the supplementary materials/handouts available at the information desk in the library).

- **Turning in Assignments:** All papers should be turned in at the start of the class meeting at which they are due. E-mail attachments are not an acceptable medium for turning in work. Late work can be turned into the dropbox outside of room B278.

- **Late Work:** All assignments will lose 10 percentage points for each day they are late. This
does not count weekends. So, 19/25 paper, due Thursday, will receive a mark 16.5/25 if
turned in on Friday and a mark of 14/25 if turned in Monday (a deduction of 2.5 points per
day).

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to see me at your convenience. I hope you
enjoy the course and I wish you every success in your personal and academic pursuits.

F. Learning Skills Centre

If you are interested in refining (or developing) your studying, note taking, or writing abilities,
consider visiting the Learning Skills Centre at T-123 or calling them at 403-440-6452. Their free
hands-on assistance and group workshops could help you become a more efficient and effective
student. They can be of assistance with study skills, text book reading, exam taking, or a number
of other student needs.

G. Your Mental Health

Feeling stressed, anxious, sad, overwhelmed, alone, or sick and achy? Finding it hard to be
motivated, meet deadlines or attend class? Having a hard time sleeping, concentrating or
retaining information no matter how much you study? Help is available! See MRU’s Mental
Health Website for all resources.

H. Dating, Domestic and Sexual Violence

You are encouraged to find general information on healthy relationships and dating, domestic
and sexual violence as well as information on how these issues are addressed at Mount Royal
University. See MRU’s Dating, Domestic and Sexual Violence Website.

I. Reading

Available for purchase at bookstore:


All other readings will be posted to blackboard.
G. Weekly Outline of Topics, Readings, and Due Dates

Week 1 — Introducing the Course

January 7:  No reading

Week 2—Thinking Sociologically about the Environment

January 12:  20 Lessons, Introduction

January 14:  20 Lessons, Chapter 8

Week 3 -- Theories of Environmental Sociology

January 19:  20 Lessons, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2


Week 4—Labour, the Economy, and the Environment

January 26:  20 Lessons, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5

January 28:  20 Lessons, Chapter 17

Week 5—Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation

February 2:  20 Lessons, Chapter 15

February 4:  20 Lessons, Chapter 14

Environmental Issues in the News Paper Due

Week 6 —The Sociology of Science and Technology

February 9:  20 Lessons, Chapter 6

February 11:  20 Lessons, Chapter 7 and Chapter 11
[Reading Break – No class February 16 or 18]

Week 7— Food, Water, and Agriculture

February 23: 20 lessons, Chapter 12
February 25: 20 Lessons, Chapter 13

Week 8— Food, Water, and Agriculture

March 1: Mid-Term Exam
March 3: Possible Guest Speaker—stay tuned!

Week 9— Energy

March 8: 20 Lessons, Chapter 9
March 10: No reading

Week 10— Energy, Cont'd

March 15: No Reading
March 17: No Reading

Week 11— Environmental Justice

March 22: 20 Lessons, Chapter 10

Environmental Film Analysis Due
Week 12 — Environmental Justice

March 29: 20 Lessons, Chapter 19

March 31: 20 Lessons, Chapter 20

Week 13 — Environmental Movements and Social Change

April 5: 20 Lessons, Chapter 16

April 7: 20 Lessons, Chapter 18

Week 14 — Social Movements and Change


April 14: No reading

Final Exam will occur during the regularly scheduled final exam period, between April 19 and April 29.