

# Environment and Society

ENVST-UA 101  
Spring 2021  
Tues/Thurs 2:00-3:15pm

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## **Description:**

Environment & Society is a broad and inevitably selective exploration of the foundations of Environmental Studies. It examines several of the major concepts that have been developed and refined over the years, decades and centuries to attempt to understand humanity's relationship with nature and manage our impact on the environment. Many of the ideas we will explore in class underpin a range of environmental sub-disciplines, from environmental governance and ethics, to environmental justice and history. As such, it is one of the gateway courses to the Environmental Studies major.

More specifically, the issues we will cover of the course of the semester include environmental history and concepts of nature and the environment; the rise of environmentalism; environmental skepticism; anthropogenic global change; population and consumption, ecological footprint analysis and other environmental indicators; environmental justice; public goods and collective action problems; environmental politics; environmental values; and the future of environmentalism. This course will cover a significant amount of demanding material in order to prepare students for upper-level courses. It will be challenging, and students should expect a steep learning curve. Teaching Assistants will be available to help students along the way.

## **Reading:**

Schlottmann C. et al. (2016) "Environment and Society: A Reader", NYU Press

*Hard copies are available for purchase online and in the NYU Bookstore. All proceeds go towards scholarships for NYU Environmental Studies students. The book is also available online for free via the NYU Library website.*

Supplementary readings will be indicated and shared on the course Google spreadsheet.

## **Requirements:**

You are required to attend every lecture and recitation and do all of the assigned reading. In addition, over the course of the semester you are required to upload seven postings to NYU Classes based on the readings prior to recitation (no more than one posting per recitation). These will be critical analysis postings of 300-400 words focused on a particular reading or theme from the week's readings. The posting should also include a brief definition (1-2 sentences) of a keyword from the week's readings. They will all be graded. You will have to post at least once every two weeks, starting from Week 3 (the week of February 8-12) of the semester.

In addition, there will be three essay assignments of 750-1000 words. You will have the option of rewriting one of the first two papers in response to TA comments, but with no guarantee of an improved grade. For each assignment you will have the choice of writing an essay on one of three topics. Late papers will only be accepted if you have a very good excuse and notify your TA by the due date at the latest. Paper 1 will be assigned 3/2 and is due by midnight on 3/9. Paper 2 will be assigned on 3/23 and is due by midnight on 3/30. Paper 3 will be assigned on 5/6 and is due by midnight on 5/13. Optional rewrites are due by midnight on 5/6.

You will also be graded for attendance and participation in your recitation. If you need to miss a class or recitation, or you fall ill, please contact your recitation leader or the professor ASAP. Missing more than one recitation without permission will negatively impact your grade. "A lot" of absences (i.e. five or more recorded by your recitation leader) will cut your attendance grade by around half. "A couple" of absences (i.e. 2-3 recorded by your recitation leader) will reduce it by about 10%.

**Grading:**

The essays will determine 50% of your grade, postings 30%, and attendance and participation in lecture and recitation 20%.

**Plagiarism and Academic Support:**

Plagiarism results in failure in the class and referral to your academic dean. Examples of plagiarism include: copying sentences or fragments from any source without quotes and references; not citing a source used in your papers; citing internet information without proper citation; presenting someone else's work as your own; or inadvertently copying verbatim from any source. More detail can be found at <http://cas.nyu.edu/page/academicintegrity>. NYU offers academic support and tutoring at the University Learning Center: [www.nyu.edu/cas/ulc](http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ulc) , (212)998-8085.

**Tentative Lecture Schedule:**

1/24: Course overview and introduction

Weeks 1 & 2: Ideas of Nature

Weeks 3 & 4: Environmentalism and Environmental Movements

Weeks 5 & 6: Population and Consumption

Weeks 7 & 8: Public Goods and Collective Action

Weeks 8 & 9: Values and Justice

Weeks 10-12: Environmental Controversies

Weeks 13-14: Current environmental challenges