

Environmental Sociology

Code: 101129
ECTS Credits: 6

Degree	Type	Year	Semester
2500262 Sociology	OB	3	2

The proposed teaching and assessment methodology that appear in the guide may be subject to changes as a result of the restrictions to face-to-face class attendance imposed by the health authorities.

Contact

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Use of Languages

Principal working language: catalan (cat)
Some groups entirely in English: No
Some groups entirely in Catalan: No
Some groups entirely in Spanish: No

Teachers

Guillem Sala Lorda

Prerequisites

None

Objectives and Contextualisation

The objective of the course is double. On the one hand, the aim is to understand the relationships between nature and society through the different theoretical contributions of the social sciences, particularly from the already long tradition of environmental sociology. On the other hand, it is intended to reflect on environmental risks, their social and political implications and the main theoretical and practical debates related to their social perception, management and governance. In both objectives, emphasis will be placed on the issue of power and inequalities, on the role of scientific knowledge in the definition and management of environmental problems, in the different types of social and political responses implemented to address these issues.

Competences

- Analysing the problems arising from the implementation of public policies and conflict situations by recognising the complexity of the social phenomena and political decisions affecting democracy, human rights, social justice and sustainable development.
- Applying the concepts and approaches of the sociological theory, specially the explanations of social inequalities between classes, between genders and between ethnic groups, to the implementation of public policies and to the resolution of conflict situations.
- Assessing the contributions of sociological approaches to the study of culture, education, interaction between society and environment, social policy, and work.
- Demonstrating a comprehension of the analysis of social phenomena presented in English, as well as observing their strengths and weaknesses.
- Demonstrating a comprehension of the approaches of the sociological theory in its different aspects, interpretations and historical context.

- Describing social phenomena in a theoretically relevant way, bearing in mind the complexity of the involved factors, its causes and its effects.
- Developing critical thinking and reasoning and communicating them effectively both in your own and other languages.
- Developing self-learning strategies.
- Respecting the diversity and plurality of ideas, people and situations.
- Students must be capable of managing their own time, planning their own study, managing the relationship with their tutor or adviser, as well as setting and meeting deadlines for a work project.

Learning Outcomes

1. Applying the same social and environmental analysis to another country.
2. Comparing the theoretical approaches concerning interaction between society and the environment.
3. Defining the interaction society-environment from these approaches.
4. Defining the sociological concepts that interpret the interaction between society and the environment.
5. Demonstrating a comprehension of the analysis of social phenomena presented in English, as well as observing their strengths and weaknesses.
6. Developing critical thinking and reasoning and communicating them effectively both in your own and other languages.
7. Developing self-learning strategies.
8. Differentiating the concepts adopted by actors involved in these policies and conflicts (productivist, environmentalist, sustainabilist, etc.).
9. Distinguishing sociological concepts, as well as the methods and techniques of social investigation commonly used by environmental sociology.
10. Distinguishing the vision of society that these actors take for granted.
11. Expressing the epistemological assumptions that led to this interaction.
12. Identifying the social phenomena by which the society and the environment interact.
13. Relating the approaches of the sociological theory in its different aspects with the global ecological dimension.
14. Relating the concepts methods and techniques of environmental sociology with general theoretical and methodological debates.
15. Relating them with the debates about order, social change and capitalism.
16. Respecting the diversity and plurality of ideas, people and situations.
17. Students must be capable of managing their own time, planning their own study, managing the relationship with their tutor or adviser, as well as setting and meeting deadlines for a work project.
18. Using their analysis to reflect the social and environmental reality of Spain and Catalonia.

Content

Contents:

1. Relationships nature / society:

Different theoretical interpretations

Human activity and environmental vectors: water, energy, waste, food, biodiversity, territory and urban planning, air quality and climate change (these vectors will also appear in the rest of the sections of the program)

2. Contemporary environmental concerns:

Origins and evolution. Different theoretical interpretations (causes based on technology, economics, politics, institutions, social constructionism, etc.).

Ecological explanations: Chicago School (Park, Burgess, etc.); Model POET (Duncan); Model HEP-NEP (Catton & Dunlap), etc.

Explanations from the political economy: Wheel of production model (Schnaiberg); Second contradiction of capitalism (O'Connor); Popular Ecology (Martínez-Alier); Risk Society (Beck), Ecological Modernization (Mol and Spargaaren), etc.

3. Environmental and technological risks:

Concept of risk and its social and political implications. The social dimensions of risk.
 Social perception of environmental and technological risks: Different perspectives (psychometric, cultural, institutional, etc.).
 Environmental conflicts: Models of analysis of the structure of conflicts.

4. Social movements and the environment:

The origins of socio-environmental mobilization: Conservationism and environmentalism.
 The increase (of perception) of environmental risks and the new ecologism (or political ecologism).
 Other social movements (naturism, etc.) and contemporary evolution (platforms, etc.)

5. Environmental policies:

Ecological modernization and sustainable development
 Environmental governance and the precautionary principle
 Degrowth and transitions towards sustainability

6. Transversal issues

Sociology of health

Urban sociology

Sociology of energy

Sociology of agrifood system

Methodology

The teaching methodology includes the following activities:

1- Master classes

2- Seminars: Conferences, work in small groups in the classroom and debates.

3- Realization of group work

4- Group tutorials

5- Preparation of the written test. Analysis and study of readings and materials.

6- Written test (exam).

At the beginning of the course, the specific instructions and the calendar to be followed will be detailed.

Activities

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Seminars	23	0.92	1, 2, 4, 3, 5, 10, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 13, 15, 18
Theoretical classes	15	0.6	1, 2, 5, 6, 10, 8, 9, 17, 12, 14, 13, 15, 18
Type: Supervised			
Tutorials	15	0.6	4, 5, 17
Type: Autonomous			

Assessment

The assessment of the subject consists of:

- a) Attendance at two seminars, which will require a subsequent individual written reflection (20% of the final mark, 10% each one).
- b) A team work to analyze an environmental conflict (30% of the final mark).
- c) An exam (50% of the final mark).

Criteria:

- Both the exam and the team work must be approved separately.
- The final mark results from the average of all partial notes (seminars, exam and team work), in accordance with the indicated proportionality.
- Those who, for any justified reason, can not carry out these activities, may agree to other methods of individual assessment (provided they do so before the date indicated by the teachers at the beginning of the course).
- In the event that someone is not present in the exam or does not do the group work, it will be considered 'Not Applicable'.
- The recovery will consist of an examination of the failed parts. To participate in the recovery exam one's must have been previously evaluated of the exam and team work, at least. No minimum mark is required to be able to do the recovery exam.

Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Exam	50%	5	0.2	1, 2, 4, 3, 5, 7, 10, 8, 9, 11, 17, 12, 14, 13, 15, 16, 18
Seminars	20%	1	0.04	1, 2, 4, 3, 5, 7, 6, 10, 8, 9, 11, 17, 12, 14, 13, 15, 16, 18
Team work	30%	1	0.04	1, 2, 4, 3, 5, 7, 10, 8, 9, 11, 17, 12, 14, 13, 15, 16, 18

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[Note: at the beggining of the course some of these references can be modified]

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