

COURSE OUTLINE

Course Code / Title : HS2023 Environmental Sociology

Pre-requisites : HS1001 Person and Society

No. of AUs. : 3

Contact Hours : 39

Course Aims

The course introduces Environmental Sociology as a field of inquiry, emphasizing the birth of environmentalism, contemporary theories of society-nature relations, global climate politics, human-animals relations, environmental justice, the role of science and/in policy, and sustainability debate. A central theme that emerges in this course is that the environmental issues we face are almost always profoundly social issues, as well. Sociology points us beyond technical and scientific issues to the social roots of contemporary environmental issues. Why have some societies treated their environment differently than others? Why do some environmental issues gain attention while others don't? What makes the way modern societies interact with their environment different from the way earlier ones did? Is it technology and industrialization? Is it our economic system? Is it too much or too little democracy? Does religion or culture make a difference? Does science help, or is it actually part of the problem? Sociology also raises questions that have significant justice implications. How do power and status affect whose ideas about natural resources are given priority? And who actually suffers from the effects of pollution, toxic waste, loss of biodiversity, and environmental degradation? The aim of the course is to provide a foundation for an informed, critical approach to contemporary environmental issues in society.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Identify environmental sociology as a unique field of inquiry.
2. Describe key theories that account for human's metabolic relations with nature.
3. Evaluate the causes and consequences of major environmental problems.
4. Explain when science and technologies are part of the environmental problem and how they can be transformed into viable solutions.
5. Articulate connections between imperialism, exclusion, and ecological violence.
6. Employ environmental justice and sustainable development for an alternative environmental future.

Course Content

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: Environmental Sociology as a field of inquiry

Week 3: Environmentalism: Dynamics, narratives, and paradigms

Week 4: Theories of Environmental Sociology: I

Week 5: Theories of Environmental Sociology: II

Week 6: Animal Rights and the Environment

Week 7: Global Climate Politics

Week 8: Science, state and the environment

Week 9: Environmental (and Climate) Justice

Week 10: Asian Environmentalism

Week 11: Greening Singapore

Week 12: Sustainability Debate and alternative Environmental Future

Week 13: Semester-end review/revision

Course Assessment

CA1 In-class quiz/test : 15%

CA2 Class participation : 10%

CA3 Class presentation : 10%

CA4 Essay : 25%

Final Examination : 40%

Total -----
100%