

SOCI 207¹ Ecology, Society, and Global Change



Image: Climate Rally, New Delhi, India. [Hindustan Times via Getty Images](#)

Course Description

How has our political and economic system rewarded environmental degradation? In a world of plenty, why do some groups in society lack access to basic needs like fresh air and clean water? What strategies for social change can effectively support human and ecological flourishing?

This course introduces an array of concepts, theories and case studies that reveal the complex interplay between powerholders and the environment. We will focus on the unequal distribution of ecological harms and benefits across social groups, along with debates on how to address the climate crisis. We will also investigate social movements seeking to realize justice and sustainability at a local and global scale.

Knowledge and skills developed in this course will help prepare you for environmental challenges that will increasingly intersect with many career paths, and for contributing to public life as resourceful, conscientious, and critical thinkers.

¹ This outline is only intended to give students a general sense of the course, and course details may change. Detailed course syllabi will be made available for all registered students on the first day of class. Only those syllabi are considered official.

Instructor



Professor Anelyse Weiler

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Office hours TBD.

Format

This class will be offered in person on **Mondays and Thursdays from 11:30am-12:50pm**. Classes will include a combination of lectures and guest lectures, multimedia, and participatory activities (e.g., small group exercises and class-wide discussions). For your term project, you will have the option of conducting either a standard academic assignment *or* a local environmental volunteering project and critical reflection. We may also have a class field trip where you can contribute to ecological restoration!

This class will not be recorded; in-person attendance is expected and valued.

Course Objectives

1. Describe and critically evaluate various explanations for the causes of environmental degradation, including population growth, self-interest, consumerism, capitalism, and colonialism.
2. Analyze why distinct groups of people experience disproportionate environmental harms and systematically lack equal access to environmental benefits.
3. Compare and assess various proposed solutions for addressing the climate crisis and environmental inequality.
4. Engage in effective teamwork and contribute to productive group dialogue on environmental problems.
5. Apply the concept of environmental justice to an issue of your choice through a persuasive op-ed or video commentary; OR critically reflect on how your volunteer experience relates to course material through an essay or video.
6. Critically reflect on the relevance of environmental problems, inequalities, and solutions to your own life and learning, including your emotional skills.

Topics May Include

Capitalism, Corporate Power, and the New Climate Denialism; Mental Health and the Environment; Eco-Fascism; Petro-Masculinity; Consumption and Lifestyle Choices; Environmental Justice and Colonialism; Political Polarization; Mining and Agriculture; Indigenous Environmental Movements; Civil Disobedience; Eco-Sabotage; Youth Environmental Activism.

Course Pre/Co-requisites

SOCI 207 is recommended prior to SOCI 316, SOCI 318, SOCI 321, SOCI 326, SOCI 355, SOCI 388, and SOCI 437.

Required Textbook/Readings

There is no textbook required for this course. All required readings will be uploaded on Brightspace. A list of all required readings will be included in the detailed course syllabus.