

Environmental Sociology Syllabus

SOCI 375 – Spring 2025

“The challenge of modernity is to live without illusions and without becoming disillusioned.”

- Antonio Gramsci, *Letters from Prison* (1994)

Instructor: Erick Axxe, PhD
Office: Mills 220
Class time: TR 2:45-4:00 PM

Email: axxe@hendrix.edu
Student hours: TR 10-11am, MWF noon-1pm
Class location: Mills 303

Course Description

This course examines the complex relationship between human societies and the environment, focusing on how social, economic, and cultural factors shape environmental attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes. Students will explore a wide range of topics, including climate change, environmental justice, sustainability, and the roles of institutions and social movements. Special attention will be given to understanding why individuals and groups develop varying perspectives on environmental issues, from active engagement to apathy or denial. Through readings, interactive activities, and critical analysis, students will engage with the sociological dimensions of environmental challenges, gaining the tools to analyze and address the intersection of social inequalities and ecological crises.

This course meets in-person two times a week (see above for more information). During the semester, students are expected to submit reading notes, complete course assignments, and facilitate a class session. At the end of the semester, students will submit one end-of-term writing assignment. Students must gain access to the course textbook. Other course materials will be distributed through Microsoft Teams.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will:

- Be able to analyze environmental challenges using sociological theories and frameworks, including concepts like the social construction of nature, environmental inequality, and institutional influences.
- Understand why individuals and groups hold varying attitudes toward the environment, ranging from active engagement to apathy or denial.
- Gain experience with applied tools and real-world scenarios, such as environmental justice mapping, social media analysis, and climate simulations, to explore and address environmental issues.

- Critically evaluate dominant narratives about environmental problems and develop innovative approaches to promote social equity and sustainability.

Required Materials and/or Technologies

- [20 Lessons in Environmental Sociology, 3rd Edition](#)
- On select days, I will ask that you please bring a laptop or tablet to class. If you lack access to a device, please let me know so I can plan accordingly.
- All other materials (readings, videos, podcasts, etc.) will be posted on Teams in the “General” channel under “Files”.

Grading and Faculty Response

How Your Grade is Calculated

Assignment Category	Percent of Grade
Reading notes	25%
Lead a class session	20%
Course activities	40%
Final paper	15%
**Three unexcused absences will reduce your final grade by 10 percentage points.	

Descriptions of Major Course Assignments

Reading notes

Description: Students will submit reflective and analytical notes on weekly readings. Each set of notes must also include at least one thoughtful discussion question that engages with key concepts or critiques from the reading. The question should be designed to spark dialogue and encourage critical thinking among classmates.

Academic Integrity and Collaboration: You must complete reading notes yourself, without collaborating with your peers. Ensure that your notes and discussion question reflect your individual understanding and analysis of the reading.

Lead a class session

Description: Working in pairs, students will facilitate a discussion and activity based on a course reading, demonstrating mastery of the material and encouraging peer engagement. Each

pair will present a summary of the assigned reading, pose thought-provoking questions, and design an interactive activity (e.g., debates, case studies, role-playing) that helps classmates engage with the material. Both partners should contribute equally to the preparation and facilitation. To ensure balance, pairs will submit a brief reflection after the session detailing their individual contributions and overall collaboration experience.

Academic integrity and collaboration: While you are encouraged to collaborate fully with your assigned partner to prepare and lead the session, your work must reflect your own critical engagement with the material. Both partners should contribute equally to the preparation and facilitation. Consultations with the instructor are required at least one week before the scheduled class session to review your plan, address any questions, and ensure alignment with course objectives.

Course activities

Description: Students will participate in a series of interactive activities designed to apply sociological concepts to real-world environmental issues, such as environmental justice mapping, analyzing social media through the lens of climate change denial, and exploring climate solutions through simulations and case studies.

Academic integrity and collaboration: While some activities may involve group work, your contributions must reflect your own understanding and analysis. For individual components, you are expected to complete them independently. When group collaboration is required, ensure that your contributions are fair, clearly distinguish individual input when needed, and respect the intellectual property of your peers.

Final paper

Description: A research-based paper that synthesizes course material to analyze a specific environmental issue through a sociological lens.

Academic integrity and collaboration: The final paper must be completed independently. Collaboration with classmates is not permitted, though seeking feedback on clarity and grammar from external sources, such as writing centers, is encouraged. In formal assignments, you should follow ASA style to cite the ideas and words of your research sources. In general, you are prohibited from turning in work from a past class to your current class, even if you modify it. Students are not permitted to use large-language models (e.g., Chat GPT, Google Bard) to complete written assignments.

Late Assignments

Please refer to schedule below for due dates. Due dates are set to help you stay on pace and to allow timely feedback that will help you complete subsequent assignments.

Unexcused, late assignments will receive a maximum of 85% of the original grade. Assignments will not be accepted a week after the original deadline.

Instructor Feedback and Response Time

I am providing the following list to give you an idea of my intended availability throughout the course.

- **Preferred contact method:** If you have a question relevant to the entire class, please contact me first through our course's [discussion board Q & A on Teams](#). If your question is specific to you, please email my Hendrix email address (axxe@hendrix.edu). I will reply to emails within **48 hours on days when class is in session at the college**.
- **Class announcements:** I will send all important class-wide messages through the General channel on Teams.
- **Grading and feedback:** For assignments submitted before the due date, I will try to provide feedback and grades within **seven days**. Assignments submitted after the due date may have reduced feedback, and grades may take longer to be posted. Detailed rubrics will be provided for each assignment to guide students on expectations.

Grading Scale

89.5–100: A

79.5–89.49: B

69.5–79.49: C

59.5–69.49: D

Below 59.49: F

[Course Schedule, Subject to Change](#) [click link to see]

Academic integrity: Hendrix College is committed to high standards of honesty and fairness in academic pursuits. Such standards are central to the process of intellectual inquiry, the development of character, and the preservation of the integrity of the community.

Please familiarize yourself with the statement of Academic Integrity, which can be found at:

<https://www.hendrix.edu/catalog/default.aspx?id=103330>

Statement on diversity: Hendrix College values a diverse learning environment as outlined in the College's Statement on Diversity. All members of this community are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment for every other member of the community. If you believe you have been the subject of discrimination, please contact the Dean of Students Office (Donna Eddleman, 501.450.1230) or [submit a Title IX Report](#). If you have ideas for improving the inclusivity of the classroom experience, please feel free to contact Dr. Axxe. For more information on Hendrix non-discrimination policies visit [Hendrix.edu/nondiscrimination](https://www.hendrix.edu/nondiscrimination).

Title IX Reports of Discrimination Based on Sex, including Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Stalking, Dating Violence, or Gender-Based Harassment:

All faculty and staff at Hendrix College are designated as a "Responsible Employee" and are mandated reporters required to report Sexual Misconduct. Hendrix College requires all faculty and staff to report sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, and stalking against a student or employee to the Title IX Coordinator, Dr. Jennifer Fulbright at fulbright@hendrix.edu or 501-505-2901. Hendrix College cares about the safety of our employees and students and has created this notice because interpersonal violence and sex discrimination in all forms are unacceptable. Hendrix College is committed to holding perpetrators accountable and keeping reporting parties safe. Student's privacy is of utmost importance and Hendrix College will strive to protect your privacy to the extent possible while complying with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations as well as Hendrix College policy. Students who desire that details of the incident be kept confidential have two options.

1. Request to speak with a licensed counselor (service available free to students and employees can utilize the Employee Assistance Program), or
2. contact an off-campus rape crisis center.

Pregnant and Parenting Students: Title IX prohibits discrimination against a student based on pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery from any of these conditions; and for parenting a child under one year of age. To learn more about how to request support. For pregnant and parenting students, contact Title IX Coordinator, Dr. Jennifer Fulbright at fulbright@hendrix.edu or 501-505-2901.

Health and wellbeing: Hendrix recognizes that many students face mental and/or physical health challenges. If your health status will impact attendance or assignments, please communicate with me as soon as possible. If you would like to implement academic accommodations, contact Julie Brown in the office of Academic Success (brownj@hendrix.edu). To maintain optimal health, please utilize campus resources like Hendrix Medical Clinic or Counseling Services (501.450.1448). Your health and wellbeing are important.

Class attendance: At Hendrix, we believe that regular student attendance in class is necessary for student learning, constitutive of student professional development, and a central component of the Hendrix experience. Therefore, students who do not attend classes have failed to meet an important standard of achievement by not living up to their responsibilities as a member of the campus community. This is particularly true given the emphasis on student discussion and participation in many Hendrix courses. Classroom teachers often consider attendance a significant factor in the evaluation of student performance. Thus, students are expected to attend all class meetings, even in cases when the classroom teacher chooses not to take attendance.

If students must be absent from class, they are expected to email Dr. Axxe before class. Without prior notification, absences are unexcused (barring true emergencies). I understand emergencies may arise, and I am willing to work with students to ensure academic success. Three unexcused absences will lead to a 10-percentage point reduction in your final grade. Students will be excused for absences resulting from observance of religious holidays, cases of illness, and athletic competition, as well as any additional reasons as determined by the classroom teacher (e.g., conference travel, Model UN). Students do not need to present third-party documentation for absences related to physical or mental illness. Misrepresenting reasons for an absence to a classroom teacher is a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy.

Students are expected to review the materials they miss during class. In-class assignments can be submitted for excused absences but not for unexcused absences. Because repeated absences impair academic performance regardless of the reason for the absences, **classroom teachers shall contact the student and report repeated absences to their advisor.** If attendance does not improve, the classroom teacher shall inform the Office of Academic Success.

After following this procedure, classroom teachers may, at their professional discretion, remove from their courses any student whose unexcused absences over any three-week period reach or exceed 50% by notifying the Registrar prior to the deadline for withdrawing from a course. A student removed from a course under these circumstances will be notified by the Office of the Registrar through the student's Hendrix email account. A student may appeal this action by contacting the Registrar within three business days of the drop notice date. The Registrar will forward the appeal to the Academic Appeals Committee for review and action.

Technology: I ask that on select days you please bring a laptop or tablet to class for course activities. Other than the assigned textbook, all readings will be distributed digitally, so this will also allow you to have the materials in class. Much of the technology we interact with is made to be addictive. I suggest you find and use resources that will help you resist distractions. [Here's](#) a website with a list of website blockers. Similar software exists for apps on phones and tablets.

Other Useful Resources

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide any resources that I may possess.

- **Local housing shelters and women's shelters:** [Research](#) indicates that a number of low-income college students face homelessness or transient/insecure housing accommodations. [Affordable Colleges Online's website](#) provides statistics about college homelessness as well a way to locate local services.
- **Food Pantries:** [Here's](#) a list of local food pantries.
- **OneNote:** I recommend all students use a note-taking software. I recommend [OneNote](#) as a good option.
- **Zotero:** [Zotero](#) is a free citation management software.
- **Grammarly:** [Grammarly](#) is free software which checks and suggests fixes to grammatical errors.
- **The Writing Center:** The Writing Center is a community of peers ready to assist you with your writing projects, in all genres and fields, and at any stage of development. We work with you in one-on-one meetings that you can book in advance or request during our office hours. In-person appointments will follow all pertinent COVID safety protocols. Virtual appointments are

available for medical reasons or by special arrangement. To book appointments, and for more information, visit <http://www.hendrix.edu/writingcenter/> or contact pruneda@hendrix.edu. We look forward to working with you!

- **Hendrix Bailey Library:** Bailey Library's mission is to collaborate and empower all members of our community so that they become their best selves, cherish the scope of human knowledge, and positively contribute to the librarians are happy to help locate quality resources supporting research and classroom work and to assist with the critical evaluation of academic information. Librarians and Library Associates provide individual research assistance by appointment. The library building is open seven days a week, and access to the library's online resources is available 24/7. You can visit the library's website at <https://www.hendrix.edu/baileylibrary/> for more information, to book an appointment, and to access the library's Discovery search, Class Guides, and full-text article databases.
- **ADA accommodations:** As your instructor, it is my legal obligation to ensure that all students have equal access to course materials and equal opportunity to perform well in the course. In addition, "It is the policy of Hendrix College to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law. Students should contact Julie Brown in the Office of Academic Success (505.2954; brownj@hendrix.edu) to begin the accommodation process. Any student seeking accommodation in relation to a recognized disability should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course.