

# Soc1146 Environment and Society Syllabus

## Winter 2001

Northeastern University, Key Number 78597

### [Course description](#)

Class meets sequence 9: TuF 10:30, W 4:05 in room 201 FR

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### Required Text (at the Bookstore)

G. Tyler Miller, Jr. *Living in the Environment*, 11th Edition, Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 2000.

[Supplementary online resources](#). [Select Hypercontents from the Resource list for each chapter.]

(<http://www.brookscole.com/biology/member/student/millerlite/chapter/index.html>)

### About the Course

The goal of this course is to explore the complex relationships between human society and the natural environment. Sociology will be emphasized, but the study of environmental sociology requires basic concepts drawn from the other social and natural sciences. It is important for students to develop an interdisciplinary approach to environmental issues and to integrate this approach with their own perspective on the environment.

To facilitate this process, students are asked to keep a journal in which they record their reactions to lectures, readings, and discussion questions. Journals should be typed, but may be written in an informal style. Journal entries will be due approximately every two weeks and cover what will be for most students a fairly heavy reading schedule. One general question will be assigned for each chapter. In addition, you are to write a short essay (one or two paragraphs will do) reacting to the material you have read and heard. If you can't think of what to write about, you can answer one of the discussion questions (from the end of chapters or from one of the guest essays).

The final journal entry will be an analysis of an environmental problem of your own choice. It may be based entirely on the material in the textbook. Grades will be based on your ability to describe an appropriate problem, present options for solving it, and indicate what the best solution would be and why. Students who wish to may substitute an appropriate environmental activity for the final essay, **BUT THESE MUST BE CHECKED WITH THE INSTRUCTOR FIRST.**

Grades for the journals will be based on evidence of your having read the assignments, listened to lectures and discussions, thought about both, and put the material together with your own experience in an analytic and critical way. See the guest essay on pages 46-47 by Jane Heinze-Fry.

## **Journal Due Dates:**

- Journal 1 due F January 19, 15 % of grade
- Journal 2 due F February 2, 20 % of grade
- Journal 3 due F February 16, 20% of grade
- Journal 4 due F March 2, 20 % of grade
- Journal 5 due at the time of the scheduled exam, 25 % of grade [If you have not finished your fifth journal you will have to do it as an open book final exam.]
- **Class participation** may also raise your grade by half a letter.

## **Weeks 1 - 2. Introduction to Environment and Society**

We will use the first two weeks to explore our beliefs about environmental problems.

**Read in Miller:** Chapters 1, 2 and 29.

### **Read online:**

Lancaster University's [Environmental Philosophy web site](http://www.lancs.ac.uk/users/philosophy/mave/Guide_1.htm).  
([http://www.lancs.ac.uk/users/philosophy/mave/Guide\\_1.htm](http://www.lancs.ac.uk/users/philosophy/mave/Guide_1.htm))

The United Nations' Environment Programme's description of [emerging environmental problems](http://www.unep.ch/earthw/Emergin.htm). (<http://www.unep.ch/earthw/Emergin.htm>). You might also like to read a bit [about](http://www.unep.ch/earthw.html) the site (<http://www.unep.ch/earthw.html>).

### **In Journal 1:**

1. Based on Chapter 29 and the supplementary philosophy material, discuss your environmental worldview.
2. Answer Critical Thinking question 5 **or** 8 **or** 12 on page 36 (Chapter 1).
3. Based on Chapter 1 and the UNEP web site, explain what an environmental problem is. Use at least one specific example.
4. Briefly explain what you hope to get out of this course and add any other comments you want to make.

## **Weeks 3 - 4. Ecosystems and Energy**

We will take a rapid tour of the key concepts of environmental science.

**Read in Miller:** Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

### **In Journal 2:**

1. Answer Critical Thinking question 9 **or** 10 on page 77 (Chapter 3).
2. Answer Critical Thinking question 3 **or** 8 on page 106 (Chapter 4).

3. Answer Critical Thinking question 11 on page 130 (Chapter 5). This is a three part question; answer only the first part.
4. Briefly discuss your attitude towards natural science (and anything else you want to say about these three chapters. For example, question 8 on page 130 is interesting.)

## **Weeks 5 - 6 . Political Economy**

**Read in Miller:** Chapters 27 and 28 (and review Chapter 29 again).

**Browse online:** sites offering environmental political and economic information. You can find them from the links for [Chapter 27](http://www.brookscole.com/biology/member/student/millerlite/chapter/hypercontents/ch27.html) and [Chapter 28](http://www.brookscole.com/biology/member/student/millerlite/chapter/hypercontents/ch28.html) (http://www.brookscole.com/biology/member/student/millerlite/chapter/hypercontents/ch27.html and (http://www.brookscole.com/biology/member/student/millerlite/chapter/hypercontents/ch28.html)

### **In Journal 3:**

1. Answer Critical Thinking question 3 **or** 7 on pages 774-775 (Chapter 27).
2. Answer Critical Thinking question 2 on page 792 **or** question 1 on page 796(Chapter 28)
3. Answer any one of the Critical Thinking questions on pages 810-811 (Chapter 29).
4. Write a short statement of the problem you have chosen for your 5th Journal and add any other comments you care to make about this section of the course.

## **Weeks 7 - 8. Population, Resources, and Pollution**

We will be examining the interrelated problems of population growth, food resources, and agricultural pollution.

**Read in Miller:** Chapters 10, 11, 12, and 21.

### **In Journal 4:**

1. Answer Critical Thinking question 7 on page 250 (Chapter 10).
2. Answer Critical Thinking question 6 **or** 7 **or** 9 on pages 276-277 (Chapter 11).
3. Answer Critical Thinking question 2 **or** 3 on page 307 (Chapter 12).
4. Answer Critical Thinking question 2 on page 576 (Chapter 21).
5. Write a paragraph (or a poem) on some other issue raised in this section of the course.

**Read online:** Search for information on your final journal topic.

## **Weeks 9 - 10 Environmental Problems (to be chosen by class)**

Lectures will cover the problems chosen by the class. Readings will cover the specific problem you have chosen.

**Read in Miller:** The chapter or chapters that cover the environmental problem you have chosen for Journal 5.

**Read online:** Additional material for your final journal.

**In Journal 5:** Discuss the environmental problem you have chosen.

*Revised: January 1, 2001.*

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