Environmental Sociology - Spring 2021 SOC 196 (151) Westmont College MWF 2:10 - 3:15 pm (via Zoom, possible room TBA)

Instructor Blake Victor Kent, PhD bkent@westmont.edu 805-565-6783 Office: Dean Hall 209 Hours: Mon 3:30-5:00, Tue 2:30:4:00 or by appointment

> Without self-understanding we cannot hope for enduring solutions to environmental problems, which are fundamentally human problems. -Yi-Fu Tuan

### Description

For many years the study of society and the study of nature were well-differentiated spheres. In its early days, sociology was fundamentally concerned with human culture, capital, religion, morality, the political sphere, civil life, etc. while the natural world was studied in its own right. There was little awareness of how interdependent we are with the natural world, and we had yet to do sufficient damage to the earth and its non-human habitants to realize that as the natural environment suffers, so do we. Dominant expressions of the Christian faith also contributed to this ignorance when they emphasized a theology of "dominion" over the earth. The earth was conceived of as a rental home on which God had signed the lease, one that would be torn down after we spoiled the carpets, broke all the windows, and moved out to enjoy our eternal heavenly mansion. Post WWII, however, this "throw away" consciousness began to change. Nuclear weapons, awareness of the toxicity of pesticides, major oil tanker spills, and other environmental problems coalesced to demonstrate not only how deeply people can harm the environment, but how thoroughly a harmed environment can damage people.

While sociology's foundation was not designed to take the environment into serious account, as the sub-field developed in the 1970's it became clear that new tools could be made and others adapted and applied. Similarly, Christian theology has found significant resources for environmental care, though it often feels as if the Christian church in the West is still behind the curve. This course in environmental sociology is primarily that—a *sociology* course—rather than a theology course, but religion will be a sub-theme throughout. The connection between religion and the environment is emblematic of how sociology can be used to assess any number of arenas in relation to the environment: ideology, consumption, food, technology, governance, etc. In this course we will assess all these and more, with the aims of: 1) understanding the interconnection between society and the natural world, and 2) living justly and courageously in light of what we discover.

### Student Learning Outcomes

After completing the course, you will be able to:

- analyze environmental problems using several theoretical approaches
- evaluate the interconnected nature of environmental issues and social institutions
- reflect on your own ideological and religious heritage and its interplay with environmentalism
- articulate a vision of "green living" at the personal and structural levels

## **Required Resources**

- Veldman, Robin Globus. 2019. The Gospel of Climate Skepticism: Why Evangelical Christians Oppose Action on Climate Change. Oakland, CA: UC Press.
- Antal, Jim. 2018. Climate Church, Climate World: How People of Faith Must Work for Climate Change. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Additional readings (on Canvas)

# **Optional Resource**

• Bell, Michael Mayerfield and Loka L. Ashwood. 2016. An Invitation to Environmental Sociology 5<sup>th</sup> edition (or previous). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

## **Class Preparation**

This class will contain heavy doses of reading and discussion, including daily and weekly readings as well as your own outside reading. In order for our class to be successful you must read the assignments with care. Each time we meet you will bring a small reading summary, your questions, observations, and full presence.

### Academic Integrity

Westmont College holds all students responsible for maintaining academic integrity. Plagiarism, lying, unacceptable collaboration, submitting papers to more than one class, and cheating are all examples of violations of academic integrity. In the event that a student violates any provision of Westmont's policy on academic integrity, as spelled out in the student handbook, I reserve the right to assign whatever grade for the course that I deem appropriate, including a grade of F, without regard to the student's accumulated points. Violations of academic integrity will be handled in accordance with the College's policies. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the policies of the College regarding academic integrity and to avoid violating these policies. You will likely find this website helpful: <a href="http://www.westmont.edu/">http://www.westmont.edu/</a> offices/provost/Plagiarism/PlagiarismStudentInformation.html.

### Accommodations

Students with a documented disability in need of learning accommodation should inform me at the beginning of the semester, then obtain appropriate papers from the Office of Disability Services. Please visit <a href="http://www.westmont.edu/">http://www.westmont.edu/</a> offices/disability/ or contact Sheri Noble, Director of Disability Services (snoble@westmont.edu) for further assistance.

## Writing Center

The writing center is a creative, collaborative space where you can improve in writing skill and confidence. Our peer tutors serve as friendly "test readers" for your projects, helping you develop and revise your writing before submitting it to professors, employers, and others. During the Spring 2021 semester, <u>Writers' Corner</u> tutors will meet with you online using video conferencing and other tools. We encourage you to meet with a tutor at least 48 hours before your writing deadline. Be ready to share your assignment prompt and your latest draft, no matter how rough. All tutorials are free of charge. Make an appointment at <u>https://westmont.mywconline.com</u>; tutorials resume on Wednesday, January 20.

### Technology

Laptops, phones, and tablets are helpful tools...in some contexts. Research shows, however, that they actually decrease engagement in learning and comprehension (Mueller and Oppenheimer 2014). For this reason, and because they can prove distracting (internet, email, etc.), I do not permit them in class (applies to in-person learning only).

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#### Assessments

#### Attendance and Participation

Participation and attendance are two different things, and both will count toward your final grade. A participating student is one who is actively engaged in the collective learning process; an attending student shows up for class. Please do both. While I know that speaking up in class is hard for some, I will provide times of reflection that allow space to gather your thoughts. For full credit you must *regularly* volunteer thoughts during class discussion time. Full attendance but no verbal participation will result in 10 out of 20 points for the A&P grade. Grades will go up or down depending on missed classes or increased verbal participation.

#### Environment & Ideology Reflection Paper

In this self-reflective piece I want you to think about your own relationship to the natural world. What does it mean to you now? What has it meant to you in the past? What kinds of activities, experiences, and beliefs have shaped your interaction with the environment? Are you aware of explicit or implicit ideologies within your family, religion, or culture that have contributed to your views of/interaction with the natural world? Think like a sociologist and try to identify structural components (religion, family, geographic location, etc.) that have been influential. What about material and non-material culture (i.e., surfboards, songs, etc.)? Paper should be at least 1,000 words in length.

#### Reading Responses

To maintain accountability and increase conversation productivity, you will write a 250-350 word response to every assigned reading. This includes daily readings on Canvas as well as *The Gospel of Climate Skepticism* by Veldman. The responses are due at the end of the week, so for each week you should build your file. Have Monday's response ready for that class period, then add to that file for additional readings. The responses are meant to be productive for you, so you will have latitude in terms of what you discuss. What I require in terms of grading is that they provide evidence of your having read the material. You will probably find it helpful to answer one or more of the following questions:

- 1) What is the key message of this piece?
- 2) What is the theoretical takeaway?
- 3) What quotations sum up the key points and counterpoints?
- 4) What is the most interesting part of the reading?
- 5) Does this apply to anything I observe in the social world?
- 6) What questions do I still have?

There are a total of 12 responses, but you may have a break for two weeks: only 10 responses are required.

#### Environmental Issue Project (EIP)

You will complete a course-term project on an environmental topic of your choice. This will be made up several components: an initial book summary, a 15 minute class presentation, a peer review process, and a final paper. You can take several angles on the project, including doing a deep dive on a particular problem or event, or asking a specific research question and searching the literature to learn what you can about that particular question. Several details for the project follow.

## Independent Book Summary/Proposal

In preparation for the EIP, you will select a book on the topic you are interested in pursuing for your EIP. Think of this as a way to get your juices flowing as well a way to generate potential citations for your larger paper. Plan to submit a 1,000 word summary/analysis of the book in which you briefly outline its main structure and arguments, followed by discussion and commentary. The commentary should illustrate your evolving thinking on the issue using a sociological perspective. In an additional 200 words, describe what you would like to do for your EIP and include any additional citations you have collected.

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oward the end of the semester you will review a classmate's draft of their final paper, offering informative and	Commented [b7]: Certification criter
onstructive feedback. Further instructions will be supplied at the time of the peer review.	
lass Presentation aking all you have learned about your topic of interest, you will offer a 15 minute presentation on your topic,	
cluding an introduction to the problem/issue, any necessary literature or background information that will allow our listeners to develop a strong grasp of the problem/issue, the primary question that motivated you through the	
pic, and a summary of what you have discovered.	
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he final paper should thoroughly summarize the problem/issue/research question you selected for the semester,	
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cluding introduction, definition of problem/issue, background literature, and exploration of the topic. It should onclude with a strong statement about the issue and its relevance to human society. 3,500 - 4,000 words in length	

I reserve the right to modify this syllabus during the semester in order to meet our learning goals.

## Late Work

Providing timely feedback on your homework is a priority of mine since the feedbacks aids you in correcting any errors quickly. The speed of my feedback is dependent on the promptness with which you complete your work. For this reason, late work is not acceptable in this course.

## Grading

Letter grades are based on the total points you earn. You are encouraged to monitor your progress using the "Grades" function on Canvas. Please note that depending on your viewing settings your grade can be displayed in different ways. Please get in touch with me if you ever have a question about your progress.

Attendance & Participation	20%	A = 93-100%	C+ = 77-79%
Reading Responses (10)	20%	A- = 90-92%	C = 73-76%
Environment & Ideology Reflection	5%	B+ = 87-89%	C- = 70-72%
Independent Book Summary/Proposal	5%	B = 83-86%	D = 60-69%
Peer Review	5%	B- = 80-82%	F = below 60%
Class Presentation	15%		
Environmental Issue Paper	30%		
Total	100%		

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24   Consumption   Showe & Ward "Inconspicuous Consumption"   Commented [b17]: Certification criteria 1     26   Schossberg "Technology and the Interner"   Readings, GCS 6   Commented [b17]: Certification criteria 1     26   Food & Health   GCS discussion chapters 1/0   Commented [b17]: Certification criteria 3     27   Food & Health   Foer "Storytelling"/ "All Or Nothing or Something Else" Shellenberger "Have Your Steak and Eat it, Too"   Readings, GCS 7     28   Food & Health   Foer "Storytelling"/ Certification criteria 2   Commented [b19]: Certification criteria 3     29   Time for Scholarship   Independent book discussion chapters 7/8   Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3     202   Pr. Veldman class visit   Shellenberger "Flase Gods for Lost Souls"   Reading, GCS 8     203   Fuvironmental Justice   Mohai et al. "Environmental Justice" Rise episode 1   Mohai et al. "Environmental Justice"   Reading     204   Environmental Justice   Mohai et al. "Environmental Justice"   Reading   Commented [b23]: Certification criteria 3	/19		DIY reading on tech solution. 2040 film cont'd and discussion	Reading, GCS 5	
26   Schlossberg "Technology and the Internet"   Readings, GCS 6     71   A   GCS discussion chapters 1.6   Commented [b18]: Certification criteria 3     73   Food & Health   Foer "Storytelling"/ "All or Nothing or Something Else" Shellenberger "Have Your Steak and Eat it, Too"   Commented [b19]: Certification criteria 3     75   Time for Scholarship   Independent book discussions & feedback   IB Summary     70   Scholarship   Independent book discussions & feedback   Commented [b19]: Certification criteria 2     710   Scholarship   WORK ON EIP - NO CLASS   Commented [b20]: Certification criteria 2     711   SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS   Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3     712   Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3     713   Religion   GCS discussion chapters 7.8   Commented [b22]: Certification criteria 3     714   Pr. Veldman class visit   Gommented [b22]: Certification criteria 3   Commented [b22]: Certification criteria 3     714   Pr. Veldman class visit   Reading, GCS 8   Commented [b23]: Certification criteria 3     715   Shellenberger "False Gods for Lost Souls"   Reading, GCS 8   Commented [b23]: Certification criteria 3     715   Shellenberger "False Gods for Lost Souls"	/22		Smith et al. "Captive to Consumerism"		
26   Schlossberg "Technology and the Internet"   Readings, GCS 6     71   A   GCS discussion chapters 1.6   Commented [b18]: Certification criteria 3     73   Food & Health   Foer "Storytelling"/ "All or Nothing or Something Else" Shellenberger "Have Your Steak and Eat it, Too"   Commented [b19]: Certification criteria 3     75   Time for Scholarship   Independent book discussions & feedback   IB Summary     70   Scholarship   Independent book discussions & feedback   Commented [b19]: Certification criteria 2     710   Scholarship   WORK ON EIP - NO CLASS   Commented [b20]: Certification criteria 2     711   SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS   Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3     712   Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3     713   Religion   GCS discussion chapters 7.8   Commented [b22]: Certification criteria 3     714   Pr. Veldman class visit   Gommented [b22]: Certification criteria 3   Commented [b22]: Certification criteria 3     714   Pr. Veldman class visit   Reading, GCS 8   Commented [b23]: Certification criteria 3     715   Shellenberger "False Gods for Lost Souls"   Reading, GCS 8   Commented [b23]: Certification criteria 3     715   Shellenberger "False Gods for Lost Souls"	/24	Consumption	Shove & Ward "Inconspicuous Consumption"		Commented [b17]: Certification criteria 1
7.3   Food & Health   Foer "Storytelling"/ "All or Nothing or Something Else" Shellenberger "Have Your Steak and Eat it, Too"   Readings, GCS 7     7.5   Independent book discussions & feedback   IB Summary     7.10   Time for Scholarship   Independent book discussions & feedback   IB Summary     7.10   Time for Scholarship   Independent book discussions & feedback   IB Summary     7.10   Time for Scholarship   SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS   Commented [b20]: Certification criteria 2     7.17   SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS   SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS   Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3     7.19   SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS   Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3     7.19   SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS   Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3     7.20   Religion   Dr. Veldman class visit   Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3     7.21   Shellenberger "False Gods for Lost Souls"   Reading, GCS 8   Commented [b22]: Certification criteria 3     7.22   Fourionmental   Mohai et al. "Environmental Justice"   Reading, GCS 8   Commented [b23]: Certification criteria 3     7.23   Fuerionmental   Justice   Mohai et al. "Environmental Justice"   Reading, GCS 8	/26	-	Schlossberg "Technology and the Internet"	Readings, GCS 6	
7.3   Food & Health   Foer "Storytelling"/ "All or Nothing or Something Else" Shellenberger "Have Your Steak and Eat it, Too"   Readings, GCS 7     7.5   Independent book discussions & feedback   IB Summary     7.10   Time for Scholarship   Independent book discussions & feedback   IB Summary     7.10   Time for Scholarship   Independent book discussions & feedback   IB Summary     7.10   Time for Scholarship   SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS   Commented [b20]: Certification criteria 2     7.17   SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS   SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS   Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3     7.19   SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS   Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3     7.19   SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS   Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3     7.20   Religion   Dr. Veldman class visit   Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3     7.21   Shellenberger "False Gods for Lost Souls"   Reading, GCS 8   Commented [b22]: Certification criteria 3     7.22   Fourionmental   Mohai et al. "Environmental Justice"   Reading, GCS 8   Commented [b23]: Certification criteria 3     7.23   Fuerionmental   Justice   Mohai et al. "Environmental Justice"   Reading, GCS 8	/1				Commented [b18]: Certification criteria 3
As   Independent book discussions & feedback   IB Summary     100   Scholarship   Independent book discussions & feedback   IB Summary     110   Independent book discussions & feedback   IB Summary     111   WORK ON EIP - NO CLASS   Image: Commented [b20]: Certification criteria 2     115   WORK ON EIP - NO CLASS   Image: Commented [b20]: Certification criteria 2     116   SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS   Image: Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3     117   SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS   Image: Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3     118   Image: Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3   Image: Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3     119   Vertification criteria 4   Image: Commented [b22]: Certification criteria 3     119   Image: Commented [b22]: Certification criteria 3   Image: Commented [b22]: Certification criteria 3     119   Shellenberger "False Gods for Lost Souls"   Reading, GCS 8   Image: Commented [b23]: Certification criteria 3     120   Image: Province field 1   Mohai et al. "Environmental Justice"   Reading   Image: Province field 2     121   Image: Province field 1   Image: Province field 1   Image: Province field 1   Image: Province field 1     122   Ima	/3	Food & Health	Foer "Storytelling"/ "All or Nothing or Something Else"		
Time for Scholarship   Independent book discussions & feedback   Commented [b20]: Certification criteria 2     /12   WORK ON EIP - NO CLASS   Commented [b20]: Certification criteria 2     /15   SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS   Commented [b20]: Certification criteria 3     /17   SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS   Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3     /19   Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3     /20   Religion   Dr. Veldman class visit   Commented [b22]: Certification criteria 3     /21   Shellenberger "False Gods for Lost Souls"   Reading, GCS 8   Commented [b23]: Certification criteria 3     /22   Environmental Justice   Mohai et al. "Environmental Justice"   Reading, GCS 8   Commented [b23]: Certification criteria 3	/5	-	MacKendrick "Sociology of Environmental Health"	Readings, GCS 7	
Independent book discussions & feedback   Commented [b20]: Certification criteria 2     112   WORK ON EIP - NO CLASS   Image: Commented [b20]: Certification criteria 2     115   SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS   Image: Commented [b20]: Certification criteria 2     116   SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS   Image: Commented [b20]: Certification criteria 2     117   SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS   Image: Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3     118   Image: Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3   Image: Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3     119   Image: Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3   Image: Commented [b22]: Certification criteria 3     119   Image: Commented [b22]: Certification criteria 3   Image: Commented [b22]: Certification criteria 3     119   Shellenberger "False Gods for Lost Souls"   Reading, GCS 8     129   Environmental Justice"   Reading     131   Justice   Mohai et al. "Environmental Justice"   Reading     131   Rise episode 1   Reading   Reading	/8		Independent book discussions & feedback	IB Summary	Commented [b19]: Certification criteria 2
V12 WORK ON EIP - NO CLASS   V15 SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS   V17 OCS discussion chapters 7-8   V19 Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3   V20 Predigion   V21 OCS discussion chapters 7-8   Dr. Veldman class visit Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3   V21 Shellenberger "False Gods for Lost Souls" Reading, GCS 8   V21 Mohai et al. "Environmental Justice" Reading   V21 Mohai et al. "Environmental Justice" Reading	10		Independent book discussions & feedback		Commented [b20]: Certification criteria 2
V17   SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS     V19   Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3     V20   Religion   GCS discussion chapters 7-8   Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3     V21   Pr. Veldman class visit   Commented [b22]: Certification criteria 3     V20   Shellenberger "False Gods for Lost Souls"   Reading, GCS 8     V21   Mohai et al. "Environmental Justice"   Reading     V31   Mohai et al. "Environmental Justice"   Reading	/12	Scholarship	WORK ON EIP – NO CLASS		
Image: Problem in the system in the syste	/15				
Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3   Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3   Commented [b22]: Certification criteria 3   Commented [b23]: Certification criteria 3	/17		SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS		
Product					
Product	22		GCS discussion chapters 7-8		Commented [b21]: Certification criteria 3
Model Model Environmental Justice Model Reading   31 Justice Reading Reading	/24	Religion			
Z9 Environmental Mohai et al. "Environmental Justice"   /31 Justice Reading	/26			Reading, GCS 8	
Justice Rise episode 1 Reading		Environmental		,	commented [pro], certification citteria 5
				Reading	
	1/2			reading	

4/5	EASTER MONDAY - NO CLASS			
4/7	Commence	Bell & Ashwood "Governing the Ecological Society"		
4/9	Governance	Li & Shapiro China Goes Green chapter 1	Readings	
4/12		No reading. Paper draft due - peer review		
4/14	Change	Bell & Ashwood "Living in the Ecological Society"		Commented [b24]: Certification criteria 3
4/16		Lorenzen "Going Green"	Readings	Commented [b25]: Certification criteria 3
4/19		Presentations		Commented [b26]: SLO
4/21	Scholarship	Presentations		Commented [b27]: SLO
4/23		Presentations		Commented [b28]: SLO
4/26		Presentations		Commented [b29]: SLO
4/28	Scholarship & Wrap up	Last day of class		
4/30		Paper due		Commented [b30]: SLO