

**Department of Sociology  
University of Toronto – St. George**

**SOC352H1F  
New Topics in Sociology  
Environmental Sociology  
Fall 2024**

Time: Wednesday, 4:10 PM – 6:00 PM and Tutorial 6:10 PM – 7 PM

Class Location: See Acorn

Instructor: Tyler Bateman

Email Address: [tyler.bateman@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:tyler.bateman@mail.utoronto.ca)

Office Hours: Mondays, 11 AM

Office Location: Office hours will take place on Zoom

Course Web Site: <https://q.utoronto.ca>

### **Zoom, Quercus, and Discord**

- This class has a Quercus site.
- The class has a Discord server.
- Zoom meetings may be used in cases such as extra office hours.

### **Discord link**

The link to join the Discord server is on the Home tab of the course website: <https://q.utoronto.ca>. Please sign up as soon as possible. When joining the Discord server, please use your real name! If you already have Discord with another name, I have to ask you to make another one for clearer communication. Please make your name something like “tylerbateman” (use your name of course!), where it is just your first and last name. You could have some variations of that but please have some manner of having firstname-lastname. Discord is very user-friendly. Please take the time to set it up and log onto our class server. The point of using it is that it is a great way for you to get quick communication on something or ask your peers in this class questions.

### **Zoom Link**

Also on the Home tab of the course website: <https://q.utoronto.ca>.

### **Course Description**

- This is a program-only course and is restricted to sociology majors and specialists.
- Prerequisite: SOC201H1, SOC202H1, SOC204H1 and 1.0 credit from SOC251H1, SOC252H1, SOC254H1. Students without these requirements will be removed at any time discovered and without notice.
- Breadth Requirements: Society and its Institutions (3)
- For more information on restrictions and requirements, consult the Departmental website: <http://sociology.utoronto.ca/st-george-campus/courses-3/new-topics-in-sociology/>

### **Detailed Course Description**

This course addresses how central sociological concepts such as structure and agency, and the interlacing of the material and the cultural, are part of both the problems of and solutions to environmental

issues. The class focuses on climate change, toxic chemicals, and mass extinction as three contemporary environmental problems, and applies sociological ways of thinking to assess what options lie ahead for creating grassroots solutions to these issues.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Explain how structure and agency matter in everyday choices, and how structures and decision-making impact the environment;
2. Explain how the cultural and the material are related in environmental issues;
3. Link multiple scales (such as individuals, relationships, institutions, and broad social structures) when thinking about environmental problems and solutions to them;
4. Explain how social relationships function as a means by which social structures are transmitted, and how these relationships structure how people think and act in relation to the environment;
5. Use Microsoft Excel effectively to organize ideas and categorize knowledge;
6. Provide an overview of what environmental sociology is, and of the prominent themes in the field

## Textbooks and Other Materials

The course materials are posted on Quercus. There is nothing to buy for the class.

## Academic Methods

In class, we will talk about different methods for doing well in academia. In most things, it is the methods you use rather than some kind of natural-born talent that determines whether you succeed or not. This has been demonstrated, for example, in psychology, in a 2008 book by Carol Dweck called *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, which I highly recommend reading. We will talk about how it is the methods that someone uses to do something that matter most when we look for precursors of success, and we will also learn about learning itself, reading, and other topics that I hope you can carry into your other classes and future work.

## Evaluation Components

### Summary of Evaluation Components

Assignment	Description	Due Date	Weight
Relationship with Land and the Environment	Your description of your relationship with the environment and Indigenous land	Friday Sept 27, 11:59 PM	10
Knowledge Mobilization Project	Taking an important set of facts and representing them in an entertaining way in an infographic, policy brief, OR video	Friday, Nov 7, 11:59 PM	20
Participation*	Answering questions on Mentimeter in class	Each Class	5
Reading Spreadsheet (2% each)	Filling in a reading spreadsheet for the class material in the course schedule	Weekly	20
What is Environmental Sociology? Project - Stage 1	Providing a draft introduction and an annotated bibliography	Friday, Oct 11 11:59 PM	7.5
What is Environmental Sociology? Project - Stage 2	Providing a draft introduction and an updated annotated bibliography	Friday, Nov 15, 11:59 PM	7.5
What is Environmental Sociology? Project - Stage 3	Term paper on environmental sociology, synthesizing work across the course reading list and your additional research	Friday, Dec 6, 11:59 PM	30

\*Please refer to the below section on “participation” to understand how your participation grade will be evaluated.

*You should receive at least one significant mark (10%) before 30 Oct 2024. By that date, you will have received 10% of assignment grades (with comments) and several weeks of reading spreadsheet grades.*

*Please note that Grades in Quercus gives early access to preliminary grades; it does not represent your official final marks. For final grades log on to ACORN.*

### 1. Reading/Listen/Watch Notes

In this assignment, you take notes on the assigned class material according to a spreadsheet method. I have a template that I will ask you to use. Learning how to use Excel spreadsheets to manage information is an extremely useful skill that you can use in your personal life and in many jobs.

## 2. Relationship with Land and the Environment

In this assignment, you'll describe your relationship with the environment in your life so far. As part of this, you'll also discuss how you relate to the Indigenous notion of land and to Indigenous communities, since this class is taking place on colonized land. More detailed instructions are attached as an appendix.

## 3. Knowledge Mobilization Project

In this project, you will take an idea or set of facts about the environment & society and create a vibrant way to represent them to a general audience. You can make an infographic, policy brief, or video (max 10 minutes) that takes an important set of facts about something in the environment and makes them vibrant to a general audience. More detailed instructions are attached as an appendix.

## 4. Term Paper

In this project, you'll write a paper that shows your understanding of environmental sociology and central concepts in sociology. More detailed instructions are attached as an appendix.

## Participation (5%)

Your participation grade is based on answering questions on Mentimeter in class. Mentimeter is no cost to you, and you don't need to make an account. I use Mentimeter because it is a way to have participation without needing you to speak in class if you'd prefer not to.

I do expect you to attend class, respond to the Mentimeter, and, during class, be focused on our class—**not browsing the internet, going on social media, nor answering emails during class time.** You doing those things is very distracting for your peers. Please respect your peers and stay focused.

## Bonus Mark: Teach me something!

There is a 1% bonus mark in the class for teaching me something about the cultural activities you are enmeshed in, about nature, or about something else! The reason for this is that knowing about all of the interesting cultural producers in your lives and other things relevant to you help me make better teaching examples and just helps me to be more educated about life in general, something that is important for all sociologists! Biographical details about yourself wouldn't count, but say your ancestors are a group that has a particular history of migrating across the world that I didn't know about—e.g., I learned a few years ago about the Roma people's migration from India to Europe, which I did not know about before—then that would count.

There is a template for this that I will share on the course website.

## Course Policies

### Plagiarism

A good rule with plagiarism is that if you have 3 or more words copy and pasted from someone else, you need quotes. **I will distribute an anti-plagiarism guide** and we will talk about it.

## AI

There are many ways that you can use AI to help you do the research for this class, like for your knowledge mobilization project and term paper, that I'm ok with you using. Tools such as Consensus and SciSpace may be able to help you in this class.

I will show you how to use a literature review method using Web of Science that is a non-AI way to find many good sources, as well. I personally like to use a non-AI way of doing literature reviews, because I can think through things more thoroughly, but you may prefer AI tools to find literature and facts, which is your preference.

For your writing, it will be best if you do your own synthetic writing in this class, and not use AI tools for your writing. In your writing, you'll have to synthesize across many very specific sources. We'll talk a lot about how to do this successfully – part of my teaching philosophy is that you need to be taught more of the hidden curriculum of academia than is generally the case, and I'll show you methods for writing in synthetic ways. Synthesis means that you are able to show how, for a theme, many different sources talk about it, and to show the similarities and differences across these sources. So please, for your own writing in this class, please work on your own prose writing, and avoid AI tools as much as you can. The point of your writing in this class is to help you learn how to make large organized ideas – it is a skill that is hard to learn outside of an academic context, and your ability to do is valuable to many employers. I encourage you to win the struggle of finding your ability to write clearly, in an organized way, and in an evidence-based way.

## Community Guidelines

The following agreements will help us relate to each other better and establish common ground for interactions. We are all bounded by these guidelines (this includes the instructor). Thus, if you feel these guidelines have been disrespected or not held, please message me to address the issue and improve our class. Thanks to my partner (and professor) Andrea Roman Alfaro for many of the items in the following list, which have also developed in conjunction with my discussions with students in previous classes. In the first classes, I will also ask you what principles you see as important for guiding our class, and we will add that to our community guidelines.

**Accountability:** This class is a safe space. As such, we should guarantee that we all feel safe and acknowledged. Conflict is normal in human relations. However, conflict doesn't have to lead to harm and violence. As such, we will not tolerate any aggression, harm, or violence in this class.

**Active listening:** When others speak or express their opinions, please play close attention to what they say with empathy.

**Curiosity:** Approach others and yourself with a curious, non-judgmental attitude. Ask yourself: why am I reacting to what this person is saying in this way? What emotions are arising? What do I need to feel better?

**Compassion:** Learning can be uncomfortable. We will feel challenged by the course materials and others' comments. We will always make mistakes. Treat yourself with love and kindness when making mistakes, getting feedback, or feeling uncomfortable. We are all imperfect beings. Please extend compassion to yourself and others.

**Respect:** Mutual respect is critical for learning and teaching. Respect others' identities, silence, emotions, and needs.

**Safety and no-harm:** Sometimes, our intent doesn't match the impact of our actions. We all make mistakes, and we are learning. However, this doesn't mean we cannot or shouldn't take responsibility for our actions. Be responsible for what you say and do. Admit responsibility and actively engage in repairing any harm you may have caused. We are here to support each other in that process.

**Trauma-informed learning:** Many students are recovering from traumas and so may find material triggering beyond the typical discomfort associated with learning. I try to announce when content might include such triggers with "content warnings," but I'm imperfect, and I can't predict all of them. Feel free to step away from sessions if necessary or speak to me if you have any concerns. If you are currently experiencing trauma, I encourage you to access the university's mental health resources.

**Scholarly Attitude:** In this class, I hope you will adopt what has been called the Scholarly Attitude (thanks to Andrew Lindner and Clayton Childress for this idea). This class does evaluate "participation" as a part of students' course grades. But what we're looking for isn't only "participation" - how much you do or don't talk, sit up or fall asleep, attend class or skip class. Instead, we hope to see students adopt a "scholarly attitude." Having a "scholarly attitude" involves developing intellectual curiosity and a genuine engagement with the ideas presented in the course. Students with a scholarly attitude take the role of the student seriously and demonstrate their commitment to academic pursuits by actively engaging in the material, reflecting deeply on the readings, raising thoughtful questions and comments in class, may bring unsolicited materials to share that are directly relevant to the topics being covered, and connect the course to their life experience. Students who lack a scholarly attitude passively complete the readings and responses, occasionally or frequently engage in other activities during lecture (playing with phones, texting, daydreaming, playing video games, etc.), and are primarily concerned with obtaining a particular grade in the course. I of course understand that grades are important for scholarships and getting into many degree programs. But I hope to some extent you will develop a scholarly attitude that goes beyond those extrinsic rewards. You could also see the scholarly attitude as a means for those extrinsic rewards, because this kind of scholarly attitude will probably help you get higher grades (as long as you also apply good learning strategies—we will talk about such strategies in the class).

### Late Policy

This class has a 24-hour grace period on **all due dates except the reading spreadsheet. The point of the reading spreadsheet is that you've read the readings before class, so the due date is the time listed in the syllabus, just before each class.**

There is a 5% reduction in assignment grades per weekday (not including holidays, so holidays do not count as a "weekday") after a due date passes, as a late penalty.

Please discuss with the instructor if you can't make a due date, and please work with an accessibility advisor if you have any barriers that restrict your potential to succeed in this class. Students who miss a paper deadline or a test will receive a mark of zero for that paper or test unless the reason is a circumstance beyond their control. Within three days of missing a paper deadline or test, students must send the instructor a request for consideration. Students must document their request with **one** of the following:

- Absence declaration via ACORN
- U of T Verification of Illness or Injury Form
- College Registrar's letter (e.g., in case of personal/family crisis or emergency)
- Letter of Academic Accommodation from Accessibility Services

### Turnitin

For major assignments, students will be required to submit their assignments to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so,

students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

For some of your assignments, we will be using the software Turnitin. It uses text matching technology as a method to uphold the University's high academic integrity standards to detect any potential plagiarism. Turnitin is integrated into Quercus. For the assignments set up to use Turnitin, the software will review your paper when you upload it to Quercus.

Students not wishing their assignment to be submitted through Turnitin will not be assessed unless a student instead provides, along with their work, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper they submit is truly their own.

### **Accessibility Services**

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/as> as soon as possible.

## Schedule

Class	Date	Lecture Topic & Assigned Material	Tutorial Topic and Assigned Material	Assignments Due
1	Sept 4	<u>Course Introduction</u>  Syllabus		NA
2	Sept 11	<b>Foundations 1: Structure and Agency</b>  <u>CHOOSE one of these:</u>  Emirbayer, Mustafa, and Ann Mische. 1998. "What Is Agency?" American Journal of Sociology 103(4):962–1023. doi: 10.1086/231294.s → This article is one of the main statements on what agency is in sociology. It doesn't have to be quite so complicated as they say it here in my view, but this is still a strong statement that is very theoretically informed on what agency is.  Porpora, Douglas V. 1989. "Four Concepts of Social Structure." Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour 19(2):195–211. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-5914.1989.tb00144.x. → Often in sociology we talk about social structure, but have you ever defined it clearly? In this article, Porpora talks about 4 different ways structure has been defined. One of the ways – as a structure of social positions – is the one I most often see contemporary sociologists standing behind (e.g., with the method of social network analysis).	Reading using Excel  Excel Skills  My reading methods (e.g., Listening.com, Interconnected matrix method)	Reading Spreadsheet Entry #1 (Due Wednesday, 3:59 PM)
3	Sept 18	<u>Foundations 2: The Material and the Cultural</u>  Selections from: Bell, Michael, Isaac Sohn Leslie, Laura Hanson Schlachter, and Loka L. Ashwood. 2021. An Invitation to Environmental Sociology. Sixth edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. → <b>SEE QUERCUS FOR THE UPLOAD CALLED "Bell et al. 2021 – preface and intro"</b>	The Growth Mindset	Reading Spreadsheet Entry #2 (Due Wednesday, 3:59 PM)
4	Sept 25	<u>Foundations 3: The Sociological Imagination and the Environmental Annual Review</u>  Norgaard, Kari Marie. 2018. "The Sociological Imagination in a Time of Climate Change." Global and Planetary Change 163:171–76. doi: 10.1016/j.gloplacha.2017.09.018.  Beckfield, Jason, and Daniel Alain Evrard. 2023. "The Social Impacts of Supply-Side Decarbonization." Annual Review of Sociology 49(1):155–75. doi: 10.1146/annurev-soc-031021-012201. → One way that academic fields are defined are by these review articles in "Annual Review" journals. I	Self-Compassion	Reading Spreadsheet entry #3 (Due Wednesday, 3:59 PM) <b>***Relationship with Land and the Environment (Due Friday, 11:59 PM)</b>



		want to introduce you to this one, but there are others as well that you can find and use in your term papers. They will help you understand how environmental sociology thinks of itself.		
5	Oct 2	<p><b><u>Foundations 4: Just-sustainable Well-being – What do social justice and well-being have to do with environmental sociology?</u></b></p> <p>Agyeman, Julian, Robert D. Bullard, and Bob Evans. 2003. "Joined-up Thinking: Bringing Together Sustainability, Environmental Justice and Equity." Pp. 1–16 in Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World, edited by J. Agyeman, R. D. Bullard, and B. Evans. Cambridge, MA, USA and London, UK: MIT Press and Earthscan.</p> <p>→ Robert Bullard is arguably the founder of the discipline of environmental justice, especially in sociology. Julian Agyeman, while not someone with the official title of "sociologist", is an environmental social scientist who has developed a concept I find extremely useful: just-sustainability. In this we think about how social justice and environmental sustainability can come about together.</p> <p>Environmental justice as a discipline has often been about the unequal distribution of both environmental bads (e.g., toxic pollution) and goods (e.g., parks). Just sustainability is more aspirational, thinking about how we can generate both social justice and environmental sustainability together.</p> <p><b>Selections:</b> brown, adrienne maree. 2017. Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds. Chico, CA: AK Press.</p> <p>→ One thing I hope you learn about environmental sociology in this class is that it is often in dialogue with environmental thinkers from other academic disciplines and also with activists. adrienne maree brown is an activist and author. Many students find her perspective refreshing, and Indigenous activists I have worked with really appreciate her work. She provides a perspective on how a deep engagement with the environment can be part of broad-based political organizing for just-sustainability, although she doesn't use that explicit concept, instead discussing the concepts of emergence and emergent strategy.</p> <p><b>→ Uploaded to Quercus.</b></p>	Developing a Planning System & Task-Based Planning	Reading Spreadsheet Entry #4 (Due Wednesday, 3:59 PM)
6	Oct 9	<p><b><u>Case 1: Climate Change Part 1 – The Problem</u></b></p> <p><a href="#">Murphy, Raymond. 2021. The Fossil-Fuelled Climate Crisis: Foresight or Discounting Danger? Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.</a></p> <p><b>→ CHAPTER 1 AND CHAPTER 2</b></p> <p><small><a href="https://librarysearch.library.utoronto.ca/portal/link01/UTORONTO_INST/redis/1/c05_sskiew/pubs_vlebooks_0783030533250">https://librarysearch.library.utoronto.ca/portal/link01/UTORONTO_INST/redis/1/c05_sskiew/pubs_vlebooks_0783030533250</a></small></p>	Reference Managers	<p>Reading Spreadsheet Entry #5 (Due Wednesday, 3:59 PM)</p> <p><b>***Term Paper Stage 1 (Due Friday, 11:59 PM)</b></p>

7	Oct 16	<p><u>Case 1: Climate Change Part 2 – Solutions</u></p> <p><a href="#">Murphy, Raymond. 2021. The Fossil-Fuelled Climate Crisis: Foresight or Discounting Danger? Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.</a>  <b>→ CHAPTER 7 AND CHAPTER 8</b></p> <p><small><a href="https://librarysearch.library.utoronto.ca/permalink/01LUTORONTO_INST/fedca15df_askewhchs_vlebooks_0763030533250">https://librarysearch.library.utoronto.ca/permalink/01LUTORONTO_INST/fedca15df_askewhchs_vlebooks_0763030533250</a></small></p>	Using Web of Science to search for articles with a publication-title-specific search term	Reading Spreadsheet Entry #6 (Due Wednesday, 3:59 PM)
8	Oct 23	<p><u>Case 2: Toxic Chemicals Part 1 – Problems</u></p> <p><a href="#">MacKendrick, Norah. 2018. Better Safe than Sorry: How Consumers Navigate Exposure to Everyday Toxics. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.</a>  <b>→ CHAPTER 1 AND CHAPTER 2</b>  <b>→ You need to download this yourself from the university website. Click the reference (blue hyperlink) or this below link to take you there, if you don't want to search yourself:</b></p> <p><small><a href="https://librarysearch.library.utoronto.ca/permalink/01LUTORONTO_INST/r14bjeso/alma991106915159406196">https://librarysearch.library.utoronto.ca/permalink/01LUTORONTO_INST/r14bjeso/alma991106915159406196</a></small></p>	Making Videos for Knowledge Mobilization	Reading Spreadsheet Entry #7 (Due Wednesday, 3:59 PM)
9	Nov 6	<p><u>Case 2: Toxic Chemicals Part 2 – Solutions</u></p> <p><a href="#">MacKendrick, Norah. 2018. Better Safe than Sorry: How Consumers Navigate Exposure to Everyday Toxics. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.</a>  <b>→ CHAPTER 5 AND CHAPTER 7</b>  <b>→ You need to download this yourself from the university website. Click the reference (blue hyperlink) or this below link to take you there, if you don't want to search yourself:</b></p> <p><small><a href="https://librarysearch.library.utoronto.ca/permalink/01LUTORONTO_INST/r14bjeso/alma991106915159406196">https://librarysearch.library.utoronto.ca/permalink/01LUTORONTO_INST/r14bjeso/alma991106915159406196</a></small></p>	Excel Skills 2	Reading Spreadsheet Entry #8  <b>***Knowledge Mobilization (Due Friday, 11:59 PM)</b>
10	Nov 13	<p><u>Case 3: Mass Extinction Part 1 – The Problem</u></p> <p>Besek, Jordan F., and Richard York. 2019. "Toward a Sociology of Biodiversity Loss." <i>Social Currents</i> 6(3):239–54. doi: 10.1177/2329496518815867.</p> <p>Cunsolo, Ashlee, David Borish, Sherilee L. Harper, Jamie Snook, Inez Shiwak, Michele Wood, and The Herd Caribou Project Steering C. 2020. "You Can Never Replace the Caribou": Inuit Experiences of Ecological Grief from Caribou Declines." <i>American Imago</i> 77(1):31–59. doi: 10.1353/aim.2020.0002.</p>	Writing Style & Analytical Writing	Reading Spreadsheet Entry #9 (Due Wednesday, 3:59 PM)  <b>***Term Paper Stage 2 (Due Friday, 11:59 PM)</b>
11	Nov 20	<p><u>Case 3: Mass Extinction Part 2 – Solutions</u></p> <p>Bacon, J. M. 2021. "Who Had to Die so I Could Go Camping?": Shifting Non-Native Conceptions of Land and Environment through Engagement with Indigenous Thought and Action." <i>Ethics, Policy &amp;</i></p>	Synthetic Reading & Writing	Reading Spreadsheet Entry #10 (Due Wednesday, 3:59 PM)

		<p>Environment 24(3):250–65. doi: 10.1080/21550085.2021.1955600.</p> <p>Bateman, Tyler. 2024. "The Genesis of Care: Knowledge-Emotion Connections, Extension of the Self, and Care for Nature at an Urban Nature Centre." <i>Qualitative Sociology</i> (Forthcoming).</p> <p>→ This should be uploaded by the end of September, please remind me if I haven't uploaded it (it will hopefully be available from the publisher soon, but is in the middle of being published)</p> <p>→ Developing a closer relationship with nature itself is one way to learn how to care about it. If you don't have a relationship with nature, why would you care? This article is about what happens when people enable themselves to observe nature and learn from it, and how knowledge traditions can make this observation more exciting. Furthermore, it shows how gaining emotional and knowledgeable relationships with anything can lead to people feeling that their self is now extended into it, which can lead to care. I'm asking you to read this because I – of course – know it well but also because it is the only article I know of that links sociology with the practice of connecting with nature as a means to help address the problems of biodiversity and habitat loss.</p>		
12	Nov 27	Course Review	Mental Health in Undergrad	
NA	Dec 6	Term Papers Due		<b>Term Paper Final (Friday, Dec 6, 11:59 PM)</b>