

# THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

## Course Outline

### Part I

<b>Programme Title</b>	:	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Integrated Environmental Management
<b>Programme QF Level</b>	:	5
<b>Course Title</b>	:	Society and Nature
<b>Course Code</b>	:	SSC2315
<b>Department</b>	:	Social Sciences and Policy Studies
<b>Credit Points</b>	:	3
<b>Contact Hours</b>	:	39
<b>Pre-requisite(s)</b>	:	Nil
<b>Medium of Instruction</b>	:	English
<b>Course Level</b>	:	2

### Part II

The University's Graduate Attributes and seven Generic Intended Learning Outcomes (GILOs) represent the attributes of ideal EdUHK graduates and their expected qualities respectively. Learning outcomes work coherently at the University (GILOs), programme (Programme Intended Learning Outcomes) and course (Course Intended Learning Outcomes) levels to achieve the goal of nurturing students with important graduate attributes.

In gist, the Graduate Attributes for Sub-degree, Undergraduate, Taught Postgraduate, Professional Doctorate and Research Postgraduate students consist of the following three domains (i.e. in short "PEER & I"):

- Professional Excellence;
- Ethical Responsibility; &
- Innovation.

The descriptors under these three domains are different for the three groups of students in order to reflect the respective level of Graduate Attributes.

The seven GILOs are:

1. Problem Solving Skills
2. Critical Thinking Skills
3. Creative Thinking Skills
- 4a. Oral Communication Skills
- 4b. Written Communication Skills
5. Social Interaction Skills
6. Ethical Decision Making
7. Global Perspectives

### 1. Course Synopsis

This course introduces the relationship between environment and society, and the different analytical perspectives through which the relationships could be understood. The course begins with fundamental questions of social scientific inquiries on environmental problems: What is “nature,” and how do people of different social milieus conceive it differently? To explore these important questions, the course will introduce students to specific issues and debates, including: social construction of environmental problems, the sociological basis of scientific knowledge, media and environmental discourse, environmental injustices, gender and the environment, the role of capital/ism, the promises and limits of green technologies and strategies for moving to sustainable societies. Students completing this course will have a solid understanding and appreciation of the social nature of environment.

### 2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

*Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:*

- CILO<sub>1</sub> Assess the social meanings of the natural environment, and the social contexts in which it is situated.
- CILO<sub>2</sub> Critically examine the notions and debates of sustainability through the prisms of social institutions and forces.
- CILO<sub>3</sub> Appraise the social implications of using green technologies.
- CILO<sub>4</sub> Apply social perspectives in considering the sources and possible responses of environmental problems.

### 3. Content, CILOs and Teaching & Learning Activities

Course Content	CILOs	Suggested Teaching & Learning Activities
1. Why bother about the society? Introducing the social perspectives on environmental issues and sustainability development.	<i>CILO<sub>1,2,4</sub></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactive lectures</li> <li>• Small group discussions of readings and web-based materials</li> <li>• In-class debate</li> </ul>
2. The nature-society “divide” and competing explanations for environmental degradation: how social forces (e.g. modernization, development) affect the nature, and how they create and engender environmental problems, and vice versa?	<i>CILO<sub>1,2,4</sub></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactive lectures</li> <li>• Small group discussions of readings and web-based materials</li> <li>• In-class debate</li> </ul>
3. Nature and social structures: Exploring how institutions like gender, class, religion, media and market have shaped individual and collective perceptions and responses of environmental issues.	<i>CILO<sub>1,2,4</sub></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactive lectures</li> <li>• Small group discussions of readings and web-based materials</li> <li>• In-class debate</li> </ul>
4. Promises and limits of technologies: How much can science and technologies make the	<i>CILO<sub>2,3,4</sub></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactive lectures</li> <li>• Small group</li> </ul>

differences, and what might be the risks and uncertainties involved?		discussions of readings and web-based materials • In-class debate
5. How nature and environmental changes might bring about equalizing and un-equalizing effects to different groups in the society, and the larger issues of equality and justice.	<i>CILO</i> <sub>1,2,3,4</sub>	• Interactive lectures • Small group discussions of readings and web-based materials • Class presentation
6. Life-style change and individual agency: do individuals matter and how bottom-up social changes of values and behavior might help the environment?	<i>CILO</i> <sub>1,2,3,4</sub>	• Interactive lectures • Small group discussions of readings and web-based materials • Class presentation

#### 4. Assessment

Assessment Tasks	Weighting (%)	CILO
(a) Group Project Students are required to undertake a group project report related to environmental issues and their social implications.	30%	<i>CILO</i> <sub>1, 2, 3, 4</sub>
(b) Group presentation Students are required to give a group presentation on their group project report.	20%	<i>CILO</i> <sub>2, 3, 4</sub>
(c) Test Consist of short response questions and longer open-ended essay questions.	50%	<i>CILO</i> <sub>1, 2, 3, 4</sub>

#### 5. Required Text(s)

Nil.

#### 6. Recommended Readings

Anker, P. (2020). *The Power of the Periphery: How Norway Became an Environmental Pioneer for the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bell, M. M. (2020). *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*. California: Sage Publication Inc.

Descola, P., & Palsson, G. (Eds.). (1996). *Nature and Society: Anthropological Perspectives* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). London: Routledge.

Dicken, P. (2004). *Society and Nature: Changing Our Environment, Changing Ourselves*. London: Polity.

Dryzek, J. S., Norgaard, R. B., & Schlosberg, D. (2013). *Climate-challenged Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dryzek, J. S., Norgaard, R. B., & Schlosberg, D. (Eds.). (2013). *The Oxford Handbook of Climate Change and Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Elvin, M., & Liu, T. (Eds.). (2009). *Sediments of Time: Environment and Society in Chinese History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eunlap, R. E., & Brulle, R. J. (Eds.). (2015). *Climate Change and Society: Sociological Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hannigan, J. (2014). *Environmental Sociology*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). London: Routledge.
- Hird, M. J. (2012). *Sociology of Science: A Critical Canadian Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kimura, A. H., & Kinchy, A. (2019). *Science by the People: Participation, Power, and the Politics of Environmental Knowledge*. London: Rutgers University Press.

## 7. Related Web Resources

- Copenhagen Consensus  
<https://www.copenhagenconsensus.com>
- Environmental Investigation Agency  
<https://eia-international.org/>
- Global Environmental Goals Tracker  
<http://ede.grid.unep.ch/gegslive/>
- Global Witness  
<https://www.globalwitness.org/en>
- Natural Resources Defense Council  
<https://www.nrdc.org/>
- WHO Health and Environment Linkage Initiative  
<https://www.who.int/heli/en/>
- 中国可持续发展研究会  
<https://www.cssd1992.org/>

## 8. Related Journals

- Annual Review in Sociology*
- Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*
- Ecology and Society*
- Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*
- Environment and Society: Advances in Research*
- Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions*
- Environmental Sociology*
- International Sociology*
- Society & Natural Resources: An International Journal*
- Technology in Society: An International Journal*

## 9. Academic Honesty

The University upholds the principles of honesty in all areas of academic work. We expect our students to carry out all academic activities honestly and in good faith. Please refer to the *Policy on Academic Honesty, Responsibility and Integrity* (<https://www.eduhk.hk/re/uploads/docs/000000000016336798924548BbN5>). Students should familiarize themselves with the Policy.

## 10. Others

Nil.

*Updated August 2024*