Course Outline

Programme Title	:	All Undergraduate Programmes
Programme QF Level	:	5
Course Title	:	Society and Nature
Course Code	:	SSC2315
Department	:	Social Sciences and Policy Studies
Credit Points	:	3
Contact Hours	:	39
Pre-requisite(s)	:	Nil
Medium of Instruction	:	English
Course Level	:	2

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"):
● **P**rofessional **E**xcellence;
● **E**thical **R**esponsibility; **&**
● **I**nnovation.

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$_1$ Assess the social meanings of the natural environment, and the social contexts in which it is situated.

    CILO$_2$ Critically examine the notions and debates of sustainability through the prisms of social institutions and forces.

    CILO$_3$ Appraise the social implications of using green technologies.

    CILO$_4$ 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.	*CILO$_{1,2,4}$*	• Interactive lectures • Small group discussions of readings and web-based materials • In-class debate
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?	*CILO$_{1,2,4}$*	• Interactive lectures • Small group discussions of readings and web-based materials • In-class debate
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.	*CILO$_{1,2,4}$*	• Interactive lectures • Small group discussions of readings and web-based materials • In-class debate
4. Promises and limits of technologies: How much can science and technologies make the differences, and what might be the risks and	*CILO$_{2,3,4}$*	• Interactive lectures • Small group discussions of

		readings and web-based materials
uncertainties involved?		• 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.	*CILO$_{1,2,3,4}$*	• 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?	*CILO$_{1,2,3,4}$*	• 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%	*CILO$_{1, 2, 3, 4}$*
(b) Group presentation Students are required to give a group presentation on their group project report.	20%	*CILO$_{2, 3, 4}$*
(c) Test Consist of short response questions and longer open-ended essay questions.	50%	*CILO$_{1, 2, 3, 4}$*

5. Use of Generative AI in Course Assessments
Please select one option only that applies to this course:

☐ *Not Permitted*: In this course, the use of generative AI tools is not allowed for any assessment tasks.

☑ *Permitted*: In this course, generative AI tools may be used in some or all assessment tasks. Instructors will provide specific instructions, including any restrictions or additional requirements (e.g., proper acknowledgment, reflective reports), during the first lesson and in relevant assessment briefs.

6. Required Text(s)
Nil.

7. 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* (1st 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.* (3rd 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.

8. 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/

9. 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

10. **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/0000000016336798924548BbN5). Students should familiarize themselves with the Policy.

11. **Others**

    Nil.

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