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Sociology of the Environment (244)
AY 2019/2020
(for public use)

Case Studies in the Environment: Assignment Details

Over the course of this quarter, you will write a high-quality essay in the format of an article that could be submitted to the journal *Case Studies of the Environment* (CST). This academic journal is a collection of peer-reviewed articles about human-environment interactions. Scholars and scientists, ranging from wildlife ecologists to biologists to sociologists, write brief case studies with the aim to inform students, educators, professionals, and policymakers about the best practices in environmental sciences and studies. The goal of this quarter-long assignment is to enable you to systematically and accurately analyze—and professionally communicate—some aspect of human-environment interaction that is important to you.

To enable a timely and polished final product, this assignment is comprised of four graded parts:

- a. (10%) CST reverse outline: In preparation for writing your own case study, you will select one case study from the Journal, *Case Studies in the Environment* (found in this tab), and write a reverse outline of the paper in which you explain the paper's goals, methods, evidence, and organization. Due week 3
- b. (5%) Submit topic and outline: After conducting research outside of class on possible case studies, you will submit your proposed case study topic and a 1-2 page outline of the essay. Due week 7
- c. (5%) Case Study presentations: Before the final paper is due, you will present the key points of your case study and receive suggestions from the class so you can improve your paper. Due week 10
- d. (15%) Final Case study paper: You will write a polished 8-10 page paper (Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced) in the case study format. You will apply multiple theories in environmental sociology to an environmental topic. A detailed assignment description will be distributed in class. Due week 11.

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a) (10% of total grade) CST reverse outline:

In preparation for writing your own case study, you will select one case study from the Journal, Case Studies in the Environment (found in this tab), and write a reverse outline of the paper in which you explain the paper's goals, methods, evidence, and organization.

In addition to following the instructions for writing assignments (see Rubrics), please organize your reverse outline as follows:

1. Author, title, and date of CSE article you are outlining.
2. Format of reverse outlining you have selected to use (as explained in the Reverse Outline handout: *Topic Sentence*, *One-Sentence Summary*, or *Idea-by-Idea*).
3. A one-paragraph summary of the paper (150-300 words) including one sentence that states the argument of the paper.
4. And a one-paragraph (150-300 words) discussion of this paper's organization. Use at least one of the following questions to start your reflection:
 - a. How did this paper present its argument?
 - b. Why might the authors have made certain organizational choices?
 - c. What worked, what didn't work in this paper?
 - d. Is there an imbalance in the ratio of paragraphs/treatment of themes?
 - e. Could the authors have combined or separated ideas to communicate their main point more clearly?

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b) (5%) Submit topic and outline

According to Burns (2019, *The Case for Case Studies, CSE*), “a “case study” involves the investigation of “real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationship” (p. 1). In preparation for writing a Case Study for this class, you will need to conduct initial research outside of class to determine whether or not there is sufficient and accurate information available for this assignment. Cases can be place-specific (analyzing local relationships, impacts, and conflicts), object-specific (focusing on the flows of a commodity, migrating animal, plant, or insect, or movement of water and air), or problem-specific (a multi-site issue concerning a policy, for instance). Conducting enough advanced research on a possible subject for your CSE assignment to write a detailed outline for the paper will ensure that your topic is a viable case study.

For this stage of the CSE assignment, you will submit your proposed case study topic and a 1-2 page outline of the essay. In addition to following the instructions for writing assignments (see Rubrics), please organize your outline as follows:

1. In one paragraph (150-300 words)

- a) State your topic precisely (1-2 sentences)
- b) Identify the axes of environmental conflict that you see in this topic, including key actors, communities, and concerns (see handout on Axes of Environmental Conflict). (2-3 sentences)
- c) Explain the organization of your paper (2 sentences) and rationalize why this organization communicates your case study effectively.

2. In the remainder of your 1-2 pages, outline your plan for this paper. Keep in mind that the final product will be 5-6 pages.

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c) (5%) Case Study presentations

Before the final paper is due, you will present the key points of your case study and receive suggestions from the class so you can improve your paper.

You will give a 5-minute presentation (time limit strictly enforced) explaining the argument, case, and conclusions of your CSE paper. To aid your presentation, you will create exactly 5 PowerPoint/Google slides that you will present on your laptop/tablet (or a colleague's laptop).

This presentation will be given in small groups on Monday, March 9. Each group will be comprised of four or five students. Following the presentation, each speaker will receive 5 minutes of questions and constructive suggestions from the group. The group's goal is to help you think through your argument and make sure you are addressing all components of the CSE assignment rubric.

5 Minute speed presentation format

You will speak for 5 minutes. Practice in advance by writing out your script and timing yourself. You may use notes when giving your talk, though it is not necessary.

There will be five slides per talk. Avoid small text and use no more than twenty words per slide, as you will be presenting the slides on a laptop screen. Abide by the following format:

- Slide 1: Title slide—use the question driving your case study as the title.
- Slides 2, 3, and 4: Substance of your case study.
- Slide 5: Conclusions, including recommendations, a restatement of the argument, connections with broader contexts, and/or theories of environmental sociology.
- Before class on XX, you will submit your slides to our online learning platform.

What will you get out of doing a 5 Minute speed presentation?

- Brevity creates excitement. Be prepared for a robust discussion about your case study your time is up.
- Crafting a concise talk gives forces you to highlight the most important aspects of your research. Use this process to revise your CSE essay.
- You will learn to tell your story in a clear, succinct manner. In a world on information overload, we are truly successful only when we help others see why our work is important in a short, impactful way.

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d) (15%) Final Case study paper

For this assignment, you will write a high-quality, 8-10-page essay in the format of an article that could be submitted to the journal Case Studies of the Environment (CSE) and submit it by midnight on Wednesday, March 18th to our online learning platform.

Your final paper must:

- reflect the organization of CSE articles. See the ARTICLE CASE Template below.
- systematically and accurately analyze some aspect of human-environment interaction that is important to you
- situate your case in reaction to at least one theory that we learned about in Soc244
- present your case as a “case of” a broader human-environmental process, problem, or conflict
- define all terms
- be polished, professional writing
- have all sources cited meticulously, correctly, and consistently.
- respect the page limit and formatting requirements (below)

Formatting rules:

- Include your name, class, date, and assignment title in the top left corner of the assignment.
- 8-10 pages (not including Works Cited page)
- Double-spaced
- 1-inch margins
- 12-point, Times New Roman font
- Cite meticulously, correctly, and consistently. I suggest that you use one of the main three: APA, MLA, or Chicago. Practice what is proper for your field. If you're not sure which one, ask a professor in your major.
 - When should you cite? If you directly quote another book/text/article/blog post, etc. AND if you use any information that isn't common knowledge. (Use the 'naïve but intelligent' rule: reread your paper. Is there any information that you present that a reader who is smart, but hasn't researched this topic for weeks, would not know? Cite it!)
 - Include a Works Cited page at the end of your paper. This is not included in your page count.

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Grading Rubric for the final paper

Grade: A	B	C	D
Systematically and accurately analyze multiple dimensions aspect of human-environment interaction	Analyze one dimension of human-environment interaction	Explain some aspect of human-environment interaction	Show basic human-environmental relationships or conflicts
Define and meaningfully engage with least one theory that we learned about in Soc244	Define and minimally engage with least one theory that we learned about in Soc244	Mention a theory that we learned about in Soc244, but fail to define it fully or engage with it	Little engagement with any theory that we learned about in Soc244
Consistently build a logical argument towards a clear conclusion	Make an argument that is strong in the introduction and conclusions, if weaker through the case discussion	Make an argument somewhere in the paper	Make little to no argument
Explicitly show how your case is a “case of” a broader human-environmental process, problem, or conflict	Generally, situate your case in broader human-environmental issues	Some to little connection between your case and broader issues	Little to no connection between your case and broader issues
Define all key terms	Define most terms	Half or fewer key terms defined	Few to no definitions
Page-length: 8-10 pages	Page-length: 6-8 pages	Page-length: 4-6 pages	Page-length: under 4 pages
Citations: Consistent and meticulous	Citations: Present for all information that is not common knowledge	Citations: inconsistently present	Citations: not present
Writing style: Very polished	Writing style: 2 nd draft	Writing style: Rough draft	Writing style: Rough draft, with errors