

New Soc/Crim courses in the Winter quarter (2016):

Environmental Sociology—SOC 2701, section 21 [Sociology elective]
4-5:50pm M/W Sturm Hall 424 Professor Ellen Berrey

Course Overview

Some people think of nature as a vast expanse of wilderness. For others, nature is inconvenient and dirty. For still others, it is something to exploit. But is there a pure and real nature out there, apart from humans? According to environmental sociologists, the answer is no. What counts as “natural” is a human invention. The environment also is a matter of human interference—and often that interference causes problems. This course investigates the social dynamics of environmental problems, looking at the ways humans perceive and intervene in the environment. We will cover topics such as the social construction of nature, the political economy of environmental destruction, environmental inequalities, and the politics of science. Throughout the quarter, there will be an emphasis on environmental activism and other strategies of change, particularly regarding climate change.

Why take a sociology class on the environment? With a sociological perspective, we see how people’s cultures inform their views and behavior regarding bottled water, fracking, climate change, toxic exposure, and other pressing issues. We see that well-intended policies can have tragic consequences for the most disadvantaged members of society. We learn how ecological damage is inherent to contemporary capitalist economies. Ultimately, we can understand environmental problems more clearly, and we can devise more thoughtful, effective strategies to address them.

City Life –SOC 2701, section 22 [Sociology elective]
4-5:50pm T/R Sturm Hall 412 Professor Ellen Berrey

This course explores city life in the U.S. and the social conditions that shape it. To understand city life, we will examine it from a macro-level perspective—from 500 feet up in the air—to see the major economic, political, and demographic patterns that shape cities, and we will look at it up close—from 5 feet off the ground—to understand what everyday life is like in a city. The course content covers the topics of deindustrialization, racial and class segregation, redevelopment and gentrification, and policy solutions. We will discuss sociological research, such as ethnographic studies and demography, and our own first-hand observations of cities as well as journalistic accounts, documentaries, and other video content.

For more information, contact Dr. Ellen Berrey at Ellen.Berrey@du.edu. You can learn more about Dr. Berrey at ellenberrey.com.

Sociology of Denial—SOC 2701, section 23 [Sociology OR Criminology elective]
2-3:50pm T/R Sturm Hall 480 Professor Jared Del Rosso

This class will be a mix of readings and topics that include:

- How, in normal interaction, we overlook & ignore troubling and distressing conditions, ranging from a minor faux pas to more significant social conditions, such as homelessness
- How techniques of neutralization facilitate deviance & crimes on individual & organizational levels
- How, through political rhetoric, societies downplay and deny troubling social conditions, particularly violence
- How, through rhetoric and other social processes (memorialization, prosecutions, etc.) some communities are, at least partially, able to address and acknowledge troubling social conditions—again, particularly violence

More specifically, we will read about, hear about, or discuss (among other things):

- The US response to torture during the war on terror
- DU’s response to the Sand Creek Massacre
- DU’s response to sexual assault
- Cambodia’s effort to acknowledge the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge through memorialization & prosecutions

The required texts are a mix of books on the sociology of denial, violence & visual culture, and socio-culture responses to genocide.
