

# Minnesota State University Moorhead

## SOC 319: Society and the Environment

### A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Credits: 3

Lecture Hours/Week: 3

Lab Hours/Week: \*.\*

OJT Hours/Week: \*.\*

Prerequisites: None

Corequisites: None

MnTC Goals: Goal 10 - People/Environment

Throughout time societies have struggled to maintain an appropriate balance between human groups and the physical environment. This course analyzes the social causes of environmental problems in an interdisciplinary fashion. Ecology, policy, politics, culture, ethics and history are all viewed through a sociological lens to explain the relationship between humans and the physical environment. The main goal of this course is to demonstrate the complexities of relationships between people and the environment. It also focuses heavily on the processes of social change. MnTC Goal 10.

**B. COURSE EFFECTIVE DATES:** 08/25/2008 - Present

### C. OUTLINE OF MAJOR CONTENT AREAS

1. The first section of the course covers the definition of ecosystem(s) and people's place in them. It also discusses environmental problems, human systems in relation to those problems with a focus on energy as an example. We then turn to possible solutions related to sustainability and begin by defining sustainability and offering some alternative futures.
  - a. Ecosystems
  - b. Environmental Problems/human systems
  - c. Energy
  - d. Sustainability
2. The second section of the course deals with some specific environmental issues and their relationships to human systems. How are they socially caused and how can we fix them using social systems? We will also focus on social class and the environment and cover examples of global social change.
  - a. Energy - Coal, oil and their impact
  - b. Population
  - c. Water Issues
  - d. Environmental Justice

### D. LEARNING OUTCOMES (General)

1. Understand the historical and intellectual roots of environmental problems in relation to society.
2. Understand and analyze social forces that create environmental problems.
3. Understand and develop potential solutions to environmental problems.
4. Think critically about social change in relation to environmental problems.

## **E. Minnesota Transfer Curriculum Goal Area(s) and Competencies**

### Goal 10 - People/Environment

1. Explain the basic structure and function of various natural ecosystems and of human adaptive strategies within those systems.
2. Discern patterns and interrelationships of bio-physical and socio-cultural systems.
3. Describe the basic institutional arrangements (social, legal, political, economic, religious) that are evolving to deal with environmental and natural resource challenges.
4. Evaluate critically environmental and natural resource issues in light of understandings about interrelationships, ecosystems, and institutions.
5. Propose and assess alternative solutions to environmental problems.
6. Articulate and defend the actions they would take on various environmental issues.

## **F. LEARNER OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT**

As noted on course syllabus

## **G. SPECIAL INFORMATION**

None noted