

SOCI 437 ¹

Issues in Environmental Sociology and Climate Change: Sustainable Agri-Food System Transitions

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Course Description:

Agri-food systems provide an ideal entry point to study environment and climate change issues from a sociological perspective, as they are shaped by ecological realities and societal structures while also being intimately linked to our daily lives and experiences. What historical trajectories gave rise to the dominant industrial food system we see today? What are the different propositions for how to advance environmentally and climate-friendly agri-food systems, and how do they reflect distinct assumptions about power and societal change? How do agri-food systems link to struggles for environmental and climate justice? What can we (as individuals and collectives) do to advance sustainable agri-food system transitions in our own lives?

This course will equip students to understand key debates, concepts and theories related to environmental and climate justice in agri-food systems. Together, we will examine how environmental injustices and unsustainability are produced by the dominant agri-food system, and key theories and proposals for pathways to agri-food system change.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will be able to

- Describe and engage in key agri-food systems debates as they relate to environmental and climate change issues
- Identify key sociological theories that relate to the sustainability of agri-food systems
- Discern individual and collective approaches to agri-food systems change
- Analyze a topic of interest related to agri-food system sustainability, explored through an independent research paper
- Recognize how their everyday lives relate to agri-food system sustainability challenges, and possibilities to advance change.

¹ This outline is only intended to give an overall sense of the course. A detailed course outline will be made available before the first day of class. Only that outline is to be considered official.

Course Pre-requisites:

Minimum third-year standing; and declared Honours or Major in Sociology; or permission of the Department.

Topics May Include:

Food System Sustainability; Food regimes; The Metabolic Rift; Environmental Justice; Climate Justice; Settler Colonialism; Agricultural Labour; Agroecological Diversification; Conventionalization of Organics; Agroecology; Food Sovereignty; Eco-modernism; Critical Agrarianism; Agri-tech.

Required Resources May Include:

There is no textbook for the course. All required readings will be uploaded on Brightspace as the course progresses. A list of all required readings will be included in the detailed course syllabus.