

**Department:** Sociology  
**Course Title:** Introduction to Community, Environment, & Development (SOCL 270)  
**Proponent:** Nicole Breazeale, Sociology Department  
[Nicole.breazeale@wku.edu](mailto:Nicole.breazeale@wku.edu); 270-659-6982

**1. What course does the department plan to offer in *Connections*? Which subcategory are you proposing for this course? (Social and Cultural, Local to Global, Systems)**

I am proposing that Sociology 270, "Introduction to Community, Environment, & Development," be included in the "Local to Global" subcategory.

**2. How will this course meet the specific learning objectives of the appropriate sub-category? Please address all of the learning outcomes listed for the appropriate subcategory.**

SOCL 270 focuses on the study of people and the places in which they live. The course is organized around a set of questions which evaluate how power structures the everyday lives of communities and examines possibilities for organizing everyday life differently. Throughout the semester, we explore how processes we have come to call globalization are both changing the way we live in communities and the way we relate to our environment. Key questions that guide this course include:

"Is economic growth necessary for well-being?"

"What does community mean in the current era of globalization?"

"Can projects organized at the community level survive and thrive in a global economy?"

Such questions lead us to discuss some of today's most pressing social and environmental problems. A key theme of the course will be to ground the interconnectedness of local events and processes unfolding in different localities around the world.

SOCL 270 will address the following learning outcomes:

1. Analyze issues on local and global scales.

This course provides analytic tools to help students understand the interconnectedness of events and processes unfolding in different localities around the world. In the first part of the course, students gain an understanding of key concepts, including: community, place, development, growth, environment, sustainability, globalization, and neoliberalism. These concepts are discussed in light of contemporary debates about what is fair, just, and desirable for the places where we live and the world as a whole. Students also learn to identify important actors in processes affecting community and environment, including: government, corporations, transnational institutions, and social movements.

2. Examine the local and global interrelationships of one or more issues.

The second half of the course examines a series of issues marked by tensions between the projects of local communities and economic globalization. We explore the following local/global issues:

- Local economic integration
- Resource control (water privatization)
- Environmental injustice

- Agriculture & food systems (local food movements, food security, etc.)
- De-industrialization
- Migration

3. Evaluate the consequences of decision-making on local and global scales.

Students will identify key actors engaged in struggles over the aforementioned issues, such as government, corporations, transnational institutions, and social movements. They will determine whose interests are ultimately represented in the “compromises” that ensue and examine the local and global consequences of such decision-making. For instance, during the “water wars” in Cochabamba, Bolivia, Oscar Olivera led public protests against the rate hikes imposed by Bechtel, a transnational corporation that had taken over their newly privatized water system (privatization of public water utilities was a condition of World Bank loans in many places around the world, and Bolivia was no exception). Their local actions led to changes in the Bolivian government and International Monetary Fund (IMF) policies.

**3. In addition to meeting the posted learning outcomes, how does this course contribute uniquely to the *Connections* category (i.e., why should this course be in Colonnade)? Discuss in detail.**

At a time in which the economy is in crisis and the social fabric of America is unwinding, the average WKU student may wonder: What is happening to the people and places I care about? How did we get here? And if we pull together, can we repair the situation? This course engages with contemporary debates about the scope, meaning, and promise of development in a globalizing world. As such, students gain crucial knowledge about how power structures our communities and about the possibilities for organizing everyday life differently. The course does not aim to convert students into activists, but does directly challenge them to consider the local and global ramifications of their individual and collective choices.

**4. Please identify any prerequisites for this course. NOTE: Any prerequisites MUST be *Colonnade Foundations* or *Explorations* courses.**

There are no prerequisites for this course beyond the requirement that students have taken 21 hours of Colonnade Foundation and Explorations courses before enrolling in a Connections course.

**5. Syllabus statement of learning outcomes for the course. NOTE: In multi-section courses, the same statement of learning outcomes must appear on every section’s syllabus.**

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

- Recognize the interconnectedness of events and processes unfolding in different localities around the world.
- Analyze the tensions between the projects of local communities and economic globalization.
- Identify the consequences of decision-making for various localities and developments at the global scale.
- Consider and evaluate various alternatives for how everyday life might be organized.

**6. Give a brief description of how the department will assess the course beyond student grades for these learning objectives.**

The Department Assessment Committee will review a random sample of 10% of the student papers assigned in this class. The papers will be assessed on the following:

- Does the response paper draw convincing links between the local and the global?
- Does the response paper demonstrate students' awareness of the power relations that structure the way we live and how our communities are developing?
- Does the response paper demonstrate an understanding of how decision-making impacts developments at both the local and global scale?
- Does the response paper provide evidence of thoughtful consideration for how everyday life might be organized differently?

**7. Please discuss how this course will provide a summative learning experience for students in the development of skills in argumentation and use of evidence.**

Evidence and argument is the heart of sociology (a social science whose purpose is to utilize systematic methods of observation to describe, explain, evaluate, and analyze the social world). As such, students must incorporate evidence and argument into each response paper. Prompts require that students critique and/or apply what they have read, moving beyond a basic summary of the material. They must present their ideas in no more than one, single-spaced page, which forces students to develop a succinct argument. Finally, students are required to revise and expand on one response paper. They must do a modest amount of additional research, expand and clarify their paper, polish the writing, and turn in a three-page version.

**8. How many sections of this course will your department offer each semester?**

Initially three sections of this course will be offered in a two-year period. Eventually it will be offered every semester.

**9. Please attach sample syllabus for the course. PLEASE BE SURE THE PROPOSAL FORM AND THE SYLLABUS ARE IN THE SAME DOCUMENT.**

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY – GLASGOW  
Fall, 2012

Introduction to Community,  
Environment & Development  
(SOCL 346)

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Wednesday 12:30-3:15      Glasgow 169

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*“It’s hard to know exactly what locality might mean in a world in which other places are constantly part of our own worlds.”*

*–Arjun Appadurai, Modernity At Large*

## Course Description

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This course is an introduction to the sub-discipline of Community, Environment, & Development that focuses on the study of people and the places where they live. It is organized around a set of questions about how power structures the everyday lives of communities and about the possibilities for organizing everyday life differently. In it, we will explore how the processes we have come to call globalization are changing the way we live in communities and relate to our environment. This will lead us to tackle some of today’s most pressing social and environmental conflicts and crises both in the US and abroad. Some key questions that we will address are: “Is economic growth necessary for well-being?” “What does community mean in the current era of globalization?” and, “Can projects organized at the community level survive and thrive in a global economy?” A key theme of the course will be the interconnectedness of events and processes unfolding in different parts of the world, with a special focus on Latin America.

## Course Goals

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Course goals include gaining an understanding of a set of key concepts: community, place, development, growth, environment, sustainability, globalization, and neoliberalism; learning how these concepts are involved in contemporary debates about what is fair, just and desirable for the places where we live and the world as a whole; identifying important actors in processes affecting community and environment, including government, corporations, transnational institutions and social movements; and developing the ability to critically evaluate arguments about the impacts of global change on local places and processes. In order to accomplish these goals, the course is divided into two sections. In the first section, we will define our terms, explore the debates surrounding them, and develop a conceptual framework for moving forward. In the second, we will examine a series of issues marked by tension between the projects of communities and economic globalization, including: local economic integration, environmental justice, local food movements, food sovereignty and security, deindustrialization, migration, and resource control.

## Required Texts

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1. McKibbin, Bill. 2007. *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*. New York: Henry Holt. Available at the WKU Bookstore.
2. Course reserve readings. Electronic copies are available on our Blackboard website. I would highly recommend that you download and/or print these PDFs the first week of class to avoid mishaps down the road. Note that these articles can be printed without cost at the Glasgow Campus Resource Center. Other students have found it easiest to access Blackboard reserve readings through Safari (rather than through Firefox), but it is your responsibility to seek out technical assistance if you cannot open the document (contact Thomas Gaffin, 270-659-6969; his office is in Glasgow).

## Grading & Assignments

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There are **two midterm exams** (10/3 and 11/7, in class) and a **final, non-cumulative exam** (12/12, during exam week). These exams are based on material from the assigned readings, class lectures, discussions, and videos. All three exams consist of a combination of multiple choice questions and short essays.

Besides these exams, students will write **FIVE one-page response papers**. Each paper is worth 20 points, for a total of 100 points. Response papers are due in-class on the day assigned (9/12, 9/26, 10/17, 10/31, and 11/21). I will collect papers during the first five minutes of class. Late papers will not be accepted—unless it has a NOA coupon attached. This semester each student will receive ONE “No Questions Asked” coupon that will be handed out on the first day of class. With this coupon, you can turn in any one assignment up to two weeks late, and you will receive no point deductions, no questions asked. These coupons apply only to response papers. They cannot be used for exams or the final revised response paper (see below), so choose carefully, and hope you never have to use it! Note that the coupon expires on Wednesday, November 28<sup>th</sup> at 12 pm CST.

We will discuss how to write a good response paper in class during the second week of the semester. For individualized help with your writing, please schedule an in-person or online appointment with the WKU Writing Center. This is a FREE service and an invaluable resource for students who need to improve their writing. Call (270) 745-5719 or visit their website ([www.wku.edu/writingcenter](http://www.wku.edu/writingcenter)) for assistance.

You are also required to **revise and expand ONE of these responses** to turn in on 12/5. Choose your favorite response paper and do a modest amount of additional research; expand, improve, and clarify your

argument; polish your writing and turn in a **THREE-PAGE** version on 12/5 in class. This revised essay is worth an additional 50 points (above and beyond the first 10 you earned on the response paper).

Finally, you will receive a **participation grade**, which is worth 50 points. Participation means **ATTENDING** class, as well as keeping up with the readings and being able to **DISCUSS THEM THOUGHTFULLY** in class. I will not post lecture notes on-line, although I do post Powerpoint slides. You will need to be vigilant in taking notes during class lecture **AND** discussion, however, as these Powerpoints do not include a lot of important information. Note that the material covered in lecture is not the same as what you find in the readings. If you miss more than one week of class, you will start to lose points (five points per session missed).

Component	Points
Midterm 1	100 points
Midterm 2	100 points
Final	100 points
Response Papers	100 points
Revised Response Paper	50 points
Participation	50 points
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>500 points</b>

The sum of these components determines your final letter grade:

A = 450-500                      B = 400-449                      C = 350-399

D = 300-349                      F = below 300

## Course Calendar & Readings

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Week	Topic	Readings & Reading Questions	Key Dates
-1- Aug 29	Introduction to the course	What is the Sociology of Community, Environment, & Development? Course goals. How to do well in this course.	
<b>Part 1: Defining Key Terms and Debates</b>			
-2- Sept 5	Community/ Place	<p>McKibben, Ch. 1 &amp; half of Ch. 3</p> <p>How is the meaning of community changing? What kinds of community are there? Does it make sense to talk about community in the context of globalization and mass culture? What is the difference between space and place? How are the local and global connected?</p> <p>In class, read: de Tocqueville, "How the Americans Combat Individualism by the Principle of Self-Interest Rightly Understood."</p> <p>How have values of individualism shaped US culture? What is the tension, in our culture, between individualism and community? What kinds of activities do we organize communally? Are those activities threatened or thriving?</p>	Ungraded assignment: bring a definition of "community" to class

-3- Sept 12	Development / Growth	<p>McKibben, second half of Ch. 3 &amp; Ch. 4</p> <p>What are the advantages that McKibben sees in locally-integrated economies? What forces work against local integration? How can we achieve fairness and transparency when goods are traded over long distances?</p> <p>How is development conventionally measured? What are other ways to measure development? Is development the same thing as economic growth?</p>	<p><b>Response Paper #1 due:</b> Choose an example of what de Tocqueville called “self-interest rightly understood.” Explain how it arguably works to serve the individual’s interest and the greater good at the same time. Do you agree with this concept?</p>
-4- Sept 19	Environment / Sustainability	<p>McKibben, Ch. 5 &amp; afterward Waring, “A Woman’s Reckoning”</p> <p>How is the trade-off between growth and environmental sustainability different for poor countries than for rich ones? What kinds of conflict does this create? Are there ways to reduce poverty and improve the standard of living without adopting a “western” pattern of growth? How has the global recession affected the environment?</p> <p>How do our conventional economic measurements account for depletion of resources and environmental harm? What valuable resources do they fail to measure?</p> <p>Film clips in class: The Story of Stuff</p> <p>Guest lecture: TBA (BG Green Partnership for a Sustainable Community; Greentoppers: Students for Campus Sustainability)</p>	<p>Ungraded assignment: bring a definition of “sustainability” to class</p>
-5- Sept 26	Globalization / Neoliberalism	<p>Giddens, “Globalization” Dollars &amp; Sense Collective, “The ABC’s of the Global Economy” Pollin, “What’s Wrong with Neoliberalism?”</p> <p>Is globalization new? What does Giddens identify as the “skeptical” vs. “radical” positions on globalization? What does he see as the major risks associated with it? What is the Washington Consensus? What is the difference between neoliberalism and classical economic liberalism? What does Pollin mean by the “Keynes problem?” and the “Polanyi problem?”</p> <p>Film clips in class: Manufactured Landscapes</p> <p>In class: review for Exam #1</p>	<p><b>Response Paper #2 due:</b> Think of two activities you engage in that are valuable to you but that do not form part of the “market economy”—that is, that are not bought or sold or counted as part of our Gross Domestic Product. Explain why you (and others) engage in these activities and how they intersect with, and perhaps support, other activities that ARE measured in GDP.</p>
-6- Oct 3		<p>In-class film (after exam): Is Walmart Good for America?</p>	<p><b>Exam #1</b></p>
-7- Oct 10	Community & Economy: The Case of Walmart	<p>Collins, “The Age of Wal-Mart” Berstein &amp; Bivens, “The Walmart Debate: A False Choice between Prices and Wages”</p>	

		<p>How does Wal-Mart differ, as a template for business, from the model provided by General Motors at mid-20<sup>th</sup> century? What key innovations have given Wal-Mart its market power? Does Wal-Mart affect communities and workers of the global North and South in the same way? How is Wal-Mart's growth strategy linked to poverty? How do state and local governments subsidize Wal-Mart and other low-wage employers? Why do some communities oppose the building of Wal-Mart stores in their community?</p>	
-8- Oct 17	Communities and Their Environments: Resource Debates	<p>Finnegan, "Leasing the Rain" Barlow, "Our Commons Future is Already Here"</p> <p>Why are struggles over access to water especially contentious? What are the major forces behind the privatization of water resources? Is water a human right? How have social movements resisted water privatization?</p> <p>In-class film: Flow</p>	<p><b>Response Paper #3 due:</b> Write a short essay in which you describe all the consumer purchases you have made in the past week. Where did you purchase these items? Where did the items come from? What kinds of local/global connections are entailed in your consumer practices?</p>
-9- Oct 24	Communities & Their Environments: Environmental Injustice	<p>Wright, "Living and Dying in Louisiana's Cancer Alley" Pellow &amp; Park, "The Political Economy of Work &amp; Health in Silicon Valley" Holzman, "Mountain Removal Mining: Digging Into Community Health Concerns"</p> <p>Why is exposure to pollution and other environmental risks unequally distributed by race and class? How does "growth machine politics" influence environmental risk? How is the struggle for environmental justice at work different from the movement to protect community living spaces?</p> <p>In-class film clips: Unnatural Causes</p>	<p>Ungraded assignment: Go to <a href="http://scorecard.goodguide.com">scorecard.goodguide.com</a>. Plug in the zip code you grew up in. Come in ready to report on something you learned, something that surprised you. Then go to: <a href="http://ilovemountains.org/my-connection">http://ilovemountains.org/my-connection</a> and enter your zip code. What else did you discover?</p>
-10- Oct 31	Communities & Their Environments: Environmental Justice Movement	<p>Grossman, "Unlikely Alliances: Treaty Conflicts and Environmental Cooperation Between Native American and Rural White Communities" Silver, "Combating the Poisoning of Dayhoit, Harlan County" Gipe, "Unsuitable: The Fight to Save Black Mountain"</p> <p>Guest lecture: TBA (Kentucky Water Watch, KY Council of Churches Programs on Local Economies &amp; the Environment, KFTC)</p> <p>How have some local groups overcome a NIMBY [Not In My Back Yard] mentality to form regional cross-race/class alliances against environmental harms? How are some groups working to overcome the environmental preservation vs. economic development dichotomy?</p>	<p><b>Response Paper #4 due:</b> Choose a case study we discussed (Wright, Pellow &amp; Park, Holzman) or another case you know about and explain how race, gender, or class/poverty affected the distribution of environmental harms and the prospects for organizing.</p>



-11- Nov 7		In-class film (after exam): Urban Roots	<b>Exam 2</b>
-12- Nov 14	Food & Community: Eating Locally?	<p>McKibben, Ch. 2 Kloppenburger et al, "Tasting Food, Tasting Sustainability"</p> <p>What is a food system? How can we characterize the dominant "food system" in the US today? What is a commodity chain? How transparent is our current food system? What are some of the costs of long-distance procurement of food? According to McKibben and Kloppenburger et al, what are some benefits of sourcing food locally?</p> <p>In-class film clips: King Corn</p> <p>Guest lecture: TBA (Sustainable Glasgow, Green Market Cooperative)</p>	
-13- Nov 21	Food & Community: Food Sovereignty / Security	<p>Bello, "Manufacturing a Food Crisis" "Nyeleni Declaration on Food Sovereignty" Lappe, "The Food Movement: Its Power &amp; Possibilities"</p> <p>Are famines natural or social disasters? What are the most important factors undermining community food security today? What does "food sovereignty" mean?</p>	<b>Response Paper #5 due:</b> Keep a personal food diary for 2 days. Record what you eat, where you eat, how much you eat, cost of what you eat, quality of what you eat. Comment on the healthfulness (for your own body and the environment) of your consumption pattern. What do you like about it, what would you change?
-14- Nov 28	Work & Community: Deindustrialization / Joblessness	<p>Moberg, "Maytag Moves to Mexico" Collins, "Deterritorialization and Workplace Culture" Van Jones, "The Green New Deal"</p> <p>What does the "race to the bottom" mean? What is "deterritorialization?" How does deterritorialization make it more difficult for workers to organize? How does globalization affect service sector jobs differently from those in manufacturing?</p> <p>How is joblessness different from unemployment? How does Van Jones' "Green New Deal" propose to link environmental goals with job creation?</p>	
-15- Dec 5	Work & Community: Migration	<p>Koser, "Why Migration Matters" Bacon, "How US Policies Fueled Mexico's Great Migration"</p> <p>How are global migration patterns changing? How did the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) affect migration from Mexico to the US? How are immigrant workers being incorporated into the Kentucky agricultural sector?</p>	<b>Revised Response Paper due</b>

-16- Dec 12			<b>Final Exam</b>

## Course Policies & Expectations

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What I expect of you:

- (1) Come to class. If you unable to attend for some reason, please let me know immediately and make arrangements with another classmate to pick up your handouts. Note that repeated absences will negatively affect your participation grade.
- (2) Read all the assigned readings and give yourself adequate time to digest and consider the material. I would ask that you also bring a copy of the readings to class so that we can refer to specific passages.
- (3) Complete your assignments with creativity and care. I urge you to do excellent work, because there are too many average students trying to get jobs for you to bother with anything less than excellence.
- (4) Provide me with your assignments on time and in the medium I ask.
- (5) Do your own work. Cheating of any kind is grounds for failure. Copying of phrases, sentences, or paragraphs without proper and appropriate citations, or copying of the overall presentation structure from textbooks, journal articles, newspaper articles, or the World Wide Web will be considered plagiarism and is grounds for removal from the class and/or University. You should note that all written work is checked by plagiarism detection software.
- (6) Arrive on time. If you are late or must leave early, please enter or exit the room quietly.
- (7) Be attentive and avoid classroom distractions. Cell phones should be turned off and laptops may only be used for note-taking.
- (8) Conduct yourself in ways suitable to your class colleagues and myself. Treat everyone in this class, including me, with respect. Name-calling, excessive interrupting, personal attacks, and domination of discussion are not appropriate and I will communicate with you privately if I think you have crossed the line.
- (9) Practice good email and Blackboard etiquette. You should check your email and the course website (Sociology 346 on Blackboard) every day since these are the primary vehicles through which I communicate with the class. I often send out reminders about assignments and due dates, and you are responsible for knowing everything communicated through email. **Email is also the best way to reach me, but remember to check the course website and handouts first to make sure that you cannot answer the question yourself.** Also please remember that I respond to emails as quickly as I can, yet seldom after 5 pm or on weekends. In the event of something serious, you may call my cell phone. Finally, please address all email correspondences to “Dr. Breazeale” or “Professor Breazeale” and sign your name. It is highly unprofessional to send an email without an appropriate greeting or signature.
- (10) Come see me! I am happy to help in any way that I can, but I can’t be of assistance if I’m out of the loop. I welcome you to come by my office hours or schedule an appointment to see me. Just to reiterate: it is absolutely crucial that you contact me at the very first sign of any problem.
- (11) Know who else to turn to:
  - For academic assistance, computers & printing, see: the Glasgow Campus Resource Center (contact: Thomas Gaffin; 270-659-6969; [Thomas.gaffin@wku.edu](mailto:Thomas.gaffin@wku.edu); Center hours: M-Th: 8 am-6:45 pm; Fri 8 am-4:30 pm)

- For help with Blackboard or other computer-related issues, call the IT Helpdesk at 270-745-7000.
- For counseling services, please contact the WKU Counseling Center (270-745-3159). Even though they are based out of main campus, a counselor will come to see you in Glasgow if you need help.

What you can expect from me:

- (1) Accommodate persons with documented disabilities. According to University policy, “students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in Downing University Center A-200. The phone number is 270-745-5004; TTY is 270-745-3030. Per university policy, please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the OFSDS.”
- (2) Make accommodations for make-up exams or provide additional assignment extensions in cases of severe (documented) illness, jury duty, or serious family emergencies. Please note that students who are not excused from a missed quiz or exam will receive an F on that assignment. If you have an emergency, you must contact me as soon as possible.
- (3) Provide prompt and constructive feedback on all your work, including regularly updating the online grade book so that you can monitor your own progress. Please note that I am not permitted to discuss your grades via email without your written signature.
- (4) Be fair and transparent in my grading procedures.
- (5) Be responsive to your questions and concerns.
- (6) Adopt an approach to teaching that is flexible, adaptable, and student-led. As such, I reserve the right to change the course around a bit as we proceed. You will have the opportunity to complete a midterm evaluation, which I take extremely seriously. If you have any additional input, please let me know.
- (7) Be respectful of all opinions. My goal is to teach you *how* to think about sociology, not *what* to think.
- (8) Provide a balance of lecture, discussion, group work, and videos to mix it up and keep the class energized on a weekly basis.
- (9) Share my passion and enthusiasm for the discipline of sociology.