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Seeing the interconnections. Knowing “what’s hitched to what,” Asking the question, what then? This is, broadly speaking, our course objective, our shared mission: to explore our global human ecology via global climate change. Our exploration will vividly highlight the interrelatedness of human society and the environment.

The promise of sociology is that of a sociological imagination, the ability to see the link between the individual and society and thus, grasp the role of social forces in our lives. It is necessary and quite urgent that sociology recognize and begin to include in our analysis, the vital role of natural systems in which social systems are imbedded. The individual, the social, the ecological and the interconnections therein, this is our analytical framework. We will employ a systems approach to analyze these interlinked social and natural systems. This approach encourages a quality of mind that: understands the earth’s vital signs, is aware of the speed and extent of the crises, comprehends interrelationships, understands the dynamics of global capitalism, and, leads to attitudes and behaviors of care and stewardship.

There is no way to live in twenty-first century America without producing an environmental impact, often a pretty big one. Making careful choices can reduce that impact. Nowhere is this more important than with regard to climate change and related water issues that confront the modern world. We will develop expertise in a “sociology of climate change,” addressing the confluence of socio-political concerns accompanying climate change such as growing social conflict, impact of global food production, the role neoliberal economic restructuring, human migration, as well as mitigation and adaptation strategies.

The four books I have chosen for this course were written and designed to facilitate your understanding of a broad range of social and ecological concerns. The authors have worked hard to make a number of complex ideas as understandable as possible. You must do a little work as well. You will be expected to have read and assimilated the required readings each week. The reading assignments should be done before the topic is discussed in class. There are two required texts for this course. They are available at the UMC Bookstore and the Bookstore on The Hill.

Thinking in Systems: A Primer by Donella Meadows

Eaarth by Bill McKibben

Usable Thoughts: Climate, Water and Weather in the Twenty-First Century Michael Glantz & Quin Ye

Climate Change and Global Sustainability: A Holistic Approach ed.A. Sumi

Exams and Grading: I expect lively and thoughtful participation by all members of this class. I expect you to read the appropriate material for each class meeting and come ready to talk, share, apply, refine, and/or challenge the topic at hand. I favor frequent and informed participation. I strongly encourage you to make every effort to become a “regular member” of this class. Please bring your book(s) to each class meeting. Your grade for this course will be based on the following criteria: class engagement / co-facilitation(10%)*, five exams

(15% each / 75% total), and a “hydro-sociology” research paper (15% each) In determining final grades I do use the “+, -” system.” If you are going to miss an exam, it is vital that you notify me prior to that exam.

* **Class Engagement (10%):** Your regular attendance and active participation in class discussions and activities is an essential component of this class. You are expected to engage in civil discourse on issues and readings relevant to each session. Each student is expected to co-facilitate one of our class meetings. Beyond two absences, your grade for engagement will be reduced by one-half letter grade for each subsequent absence, except in the case of high-holiday observance, family emergency or medical emergency.

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who qualify for academic accommodations must provide me notification from Disability Services and discuss specific needs with me, preferably during the first two weeks of class. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (303-492-8671, Willard Hall, room 322.)

Classroom Behavior Policy: Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set re limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender variance, and nationalities.

Student Honor Code: All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and nonacademic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion).

Policy on Discrimination and Harassment: The University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships applies to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550

Religious Observances: Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, please inform me as to any classes you expect to miss due to religious observance.

Schedule of Topics and Exams

Aug. 23 & 25: The Local and the Global (small group assignment)

Aug. 30, Sept 1, 6 & 8. **Thinking in Systems**

Sept. 13 Exam 1

Sept. 15, 20, 22, & 27. **Eaarth**

Sept. 29 Exam 2

Oct. 4, 6 11, 13, 18, & 20. **Usable Thoughts: Climate Change***

Oct. 25 Exam 3

Oct. 27, Nov. 1, 3, 8, 10, 15. **Climate Change and Global Sustainability***

Nov. 17 Exam 4

Nov. 29, Dec. 1, 6, 8:

Dec 10 Final Exam 7:30pm - 10:00pm

* To be read in conjunction with one another.