

Sociology 130SD: The World in 2050: Sustainable Development and Its Alternatives

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Broida 1640

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Office Hours: John's office hours will be held at the Coral Tree Cafe (near Cheadle Hall) for the first 90 minutes (12:30-2 p.m.) and in his office (SSMS 3417) for the second 90 minutes (2-3:30 p.m.). This will happen on Tuesdays, 12:30-3:30 p.m., and by appointment (I'll also do lots of e-mail consultation)

Feel free to discuss your work with John at class, by e-mail, or in office hours.

Corrie Grosse, Teaching Assistant

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Office hours: Tuesdays 12:45-2:45 in SSMS 3011

*Feel free to schedule meetings with Corrie outside of office hours for any reason.
Just send an email.*

Sections

Wednesdays, 5-5:50 p.m. in HSSB 1206

Wednesdays, 6-6:50 p.m. in HSSB 1210

Wednesdays, 7-7:50 p.m. in HSSB 1206

If you care about [children](#), [health](#), [poverty](#), [farmers](#), food, [hunger](#), or the economy, you really have no choice but to care about climate change. The reasons for acting may be somber, but the fight is a gift and an honor. What it will give you in return is meaning, purpose, hope, your best self, some really good company, and the satisfaction of being part of victories also to come. But what victory means needs to be imagined on a whole new scale as the news worsens....

This is, among other things, a war of the imagination: the carbon profiteers and their politicians are hoping you don't connect the dots, or imagine the various futures we could make or they could destroy, or grasp the remarkably beautiful and complex ways the natural world has worked to our benefit and is now being sabotaged, or discover your conscience and voice, or ever picture how different it could all be, how different it will need to be.

They are already at war against the wellbeing of our Earth. Their greed has no limits, their imagination nothing but limits. Fight back. You have the power. It's one of your gifts.

Rebecca Solnit, "[2013 as Year Zero for Us – and Our Planet](#)"

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We do not know how long we have, but we do know that the fight just can't wait. And we know that just fighting isn't enough: to succeed, we must simultaneously work for immediate changes *and* advance a vision of the world we want to build.

Ian Angus, *Facing the Anthropocene: Fossil Capitalism and the Crisis of the Earth System*

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“There is no more potent weapon in the battle against fossil fuels than the creation of real alternatives.”

Nomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*

Statement of Purpose and Course Description¹ – PLEASE READ THIS

Why is this class important? Because it's your future we'll be trying to figure out!

Visionary climate justice scholar-activist Naomi Klein has said: “There is no more potent weapon in the battle against fossil fuels than the creation of real alternatives.” For sociologist Constance Lever-Tracy: “We must ultimately aim for a thorough going de-carbonisation, a halt to all emissions, by a complete revolution in the way we produce and live.”

This special course starts with the current crisis of the Earth and humanity, marked by economic insecurity, a lack of faith in political parties, pervasive cultures of violence, and now, the wild card that makes them all scarier – climate change.

But this course is about hope, imagination, and the roles all of us could play in building a far better world by 2050.

This means we will need to *take action* to deal with the most pressing problem of the 21st century, the problem of climate change. Importantly, this means moving the world toward the most progressive possible global climate and development goals, contributing to the strongest possible global social justice movement participation, and through both of these channels helping to bring about the creation of a low-carbon, sustainable, equitable, and deeply democratic future. A simple working definition of sustainable development might be “a just and ecologically-based society”; the 1987 [Brundtland Report](#) – also known as *Our Common Future* – has given the most famous definition: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present

¹ If you have a learning or physical disability and require extended time to complete assignments, please contact John Foran in the first week of the course.

without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

I believe that if we are to pass on a world worth living in to the next generation (that's you!), this movement for climate justice – in the broadest sense of the term – must become the biggest (and most effective) the world has ever seen.

A growing international scientific consensus has emerged that there is now only a 50 percent chance that the official United Nations target of limiting the rise in average temperature to 2 degrees Celsius by the year 2050 would effectively avert irreversible climate change.

In 2012, climate activist and scholar Bill McKibben estimated the cap for maximum atmospheric CO₂ [carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas responsible for global warming] emissions at 565 gigatons as the upper limit for staying at or below a 2 degrees Celsius temperature rise. With annual global emissions currently running around 30 gigatons a year, this cap was then roughly equal to a fourteen-year supply – till about 2026 – if “business as usual” trends of economic production and growth continue. The terrifying part is that the estimate of the world’s already proven reserves of fossil fuels exceeds McKibben’s cap by five times. In other words, the richest corporations in the history of the world would have to forego four-fifths of their future earnings – by some estimates, an astronomical \$20 trillion. But instead, they are currently spending over \$600 billion a year trying to discover *new* sources of fossil fuels – fracking, tar sands, deep-water drilling, Arctic oil, mountain-top removal – while each year the amount we can afford to burn decreases.

Unfortunately, meanwhile, the recently agreed international climate treaty – the “Paris Agreement” – is not nearly adequate for the task, as the dominant parties to the climate negotiations continue to advance positions completely at odds with climate science, thus ignoring the terrible fact that humanity is on a collision course with nature that we cannot win.

The good news is that since at least 2007, a promising global climate justice movement has emerged behind the slogan “System change, not climate change!” and is making demands for a socially just, scientifically appropriate, and legally binding treaty. Governments who do not want to vote for it, or whose short-term interests and economic elites are not served by signing, will need to be persuaded or forced to do the right thing by their own citizens and Earth citizens everywhere – that is, *by us*. One major question addressed in this course has been posed by my friend Bill Barnes: “Can we create new, transformative narratives to inspire political movements able to force vigorous engagement with climate change?”

The main focus of this course is to focus our sociological and ecological imaginations on creating the kind of society that might weather the climate storm that is coming and actually come out on the other side (or more realistically in the midst of it as it deepens) with societies far more suited to human well-being and thriving than the ones we presently have all around the world.

Along the way we will encounter such ideas as sustainable development, degrowth, transition towns, resilience, ecosocialism, *buen vivir*, and a slew of other alternatives to the present system, and we will read some of the best writing on these and other topics by their inventors, critics, activists, and others, including essays, fiction, and films, with a startlingly innovative collective project that you will work on throughout the quarter!

This course is about gaining useful knowledge that will enable positive action to secure a better future. This course is for you, about you, and ultimately by you.

My Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

I consider teaching a radical act of the imagination ... and we will need lots of imagination to achieve the purposes laid out above!

Learning and teaching are complex, endlessly fascinating collaborations. I learn enormous amounts from the students in my classes, whom I consider companions on an intellectual, potentially life-changing journey. My goals for my classes and myself include honing our critical thinking skills, improving on the ways we write for each other and speak with each other in class, acquiring the ability to work collaboratively, learning the art of applying theoretical concepts to actual historical, contemporary, and *future* situations, and making connections between what we study and how we live.

In the course of more than two decades of university teaching I have come to value interaction, participation, and exchange – *discussion in its many forms* – as the best way to teach and learn. So we will teach and learn from each other.

We will do this through a variety of learning approaches, including discussions of many kinds, student-led presentations, sharing our writing, improvised mini-lectures, films, interaction with guests, role playing, short video clips, and ... *did I mention discussions?*

This quarter, Corrie and I will ask each of you to do a lot of reading, thinking, discussing, and writing; my pledge is that engagement with these materials should prove a rewarding – and, who knows? – possibly a life-changing experience.

Texts

There will be quite a bit of reading in this course. My goal is always to keep the core reading down to around 100 pages a week – sometimes more and sometimes less – plus the two novel, which hopefully you will find engaging, if not quick reads. This includes some exciting and inspiring materials you can't find elsewhere – or your money back! [No one's ever asked by the way ;)]

One book and a set of readings are required for this course. The book is:

Jonathon Porritt, *The World We Made: Alex McKay's Story from 2050*. New York: Phaedon Press. 2013.

This may be hard to find, and the UCEN bookstore doesn't have it. It can be purchased on Amazon, at: <http://www.amazon.com>, and we may have another very inexpensive option.

The other course readings are posted on our GauchoSpace for the class. Let me know if you have any problems accessing them.

Using GauchoSpace and Your UCSB E-mail

This quarter we will make *extensive* use of UCSB's on-line course website at Gaucho Space. You will all have access to the materials we post there – it is, in effect, the course reader. Please *check it out well before every class*, as it contains all the items that would normally have gone into a course reader. It is also the place where you will hand in all your work electronically. *Also*, please check your UCSB e-mail on a regular basis for important announcements, valuable tips, and special treats.

Following the News: Tracking Current Events in Global and International Climate and Environmental Issues

This class is about current events around the world. Because of this, you will need to tap into the news, wherever it is found. Excellent resources, among many others, are:

The New York Times (the paper of record in the U.S.): <http://www.nytimes.com/>

BBC News (England and U.K.'s TV/radio/webnews of choice): <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

The Guardian (England and U.K.'s best critical newspaper): <http://www.guardian.co.uk/>

Grist (“a source of intelligent, irreverent environmental news and commentary that’s been around since 1999, when the internet was made of rubber bands”): <http://grist.org/>

Resilience (website of the Post-Carbon Institute, which features longer than news analysis essays on topics of sustainable development, social movements, and the current crisis): www.resilience.org

EcoWatch (“a leading news website reporting on environmental issues and news that helps transform the ability of individuals to learn about them and take action”): <http://ecowatch.com/>

The Real News Network (“daily television news that reports with ordinary people’s interests in mind. The Real News is ... the missing link in the global media landscape”), at <http://therealnews.com/t2/about-us/mission>

Democracy Now! with Amy Goodman, perhaps the best source of critical global political journalism in the U.S., broadcast daily on KCSB 91.9 FM and on KPFB 98.7 FM, along with much other excellent political reporting, with transcripts archived (you can receive a daily summary by e-mail), at <http://www.democracynow.org/>

National Public Radio, another excellent radio station, found at <http://www.npr.org/> and can be listened to at: KCLU 1340 AM or KSBX 89.5 FM

Some Important Messages from UCSB Student Services

(1) *Disabled Students Program: accommodations for exams.* Students with disabilities may request academic accommodations for exams online through the UCSB **Disabled Students Program** at <http://dsp.sa.ucsb.edu/>. Please make your requests for exam accommodations through the online system as early in the quarter as possible to ensure **proper** arrangement.

(2) *Managing stress / Supporting distressed students.* Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationships, depression, cultural differences, can interfere with your ability to succeed and thrive. For helpful resources, please contact UCSB **Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS)** at 805-893-4411 or visit <http://counseling.sa.ucsb.edu/>

(3) *Responsible scholarship.* Honesty and integrity in all academic work is essential for a valuable educational experience. **The Office of Judicial Affairs** has policies, tips, and resources for proper citation use, recognizing actions considered to be cheating or other forms of academic theft, and students' responsibilities, available on their website: <http://judicialaffairs.sa.ucsb.edu>. Students are responsible for educating themselves on the policies and to abide by them.

(4) *Academic support.* For general **academic support** visit **Campus Learning Assistance Services (CLAS)** early and often. CLAS offers instructional groups, drop-in tutoring, writing and ESL services, skills workshops and one-on-one consultations. CLAS is located on the third floor of the Student Resource Building, or visit <http://clas.sa.ucsb.edu>

Five Rules for Best Participation [this section was written by Zack King, UCSB scholar-activist]

“1. Think critically and work hard. We’re confronting dire problems faced by humanity. Your critical thinking needs to be turned on – ask questions, be curious, do outside research, question all authority.

2. Don’t just do the reading. Engage with it. Read it, question it, think about it, write on it, talk to your friends and family about it, take it out to dinner, dream about it, whatever you need to do. It’s an important part of these ten weeks and it matters.

3. We’re a community. Be as polite, open-minded, friendly and understanding as you can be. Don’t do anyone’s work for them, but do help them figure out how to do it themselves. Try to make some friends.

4. Everybody talks and everybody listens. One of the most important skills you’ll learn in college is engaging, out loud, with other people whom you may not know, on the most important issues we as a species face. You need to learn these skills to change the world. There’s something in activist circles called “step up, step back.” The step back part means, if you’ve had the chance to speak a great deal, you make an effort to drop back, listen, and encourage others to speak. Step up means, if you’re having trouble engaging, you push yourself to speak up and engage.

5. If we’re going to make the most of our time together, you’ll need to be actively engaged in class. This means that I’d like you to sit toward the front if there is any room. It also means

you need to be taking care of yourself - get enough sleep, get enough to eat and drink. Stay healthy. If you're gonna fall asleep, you're better off staying home and catching up later."

[John: it's actually ok to sleep in class if you have to, and I would advise you never to skip class to finish a paper – it's better to finish it after attending class that day.]

Course Requirements

Policy on Plagiarism (we agree with the following quote from the syllabus of Dr. LeeAnn G. Kryder, for Writing 109AC). "Plagiarism is stealing. It is the copying of a part, or the whole, of another person's work while promoting the text as if you created it. Avoid plagiarism by acknowledging the author or source of that idea or text. Plagiarism may jeopardize a student's entire career." If we detect plagiarism on any assignment (be aware that internet plagiarism is among the easiest to detect), neither you nor we will be happy because you will receive an F for the assignment, and quite possibly for the course, as well as face potential disciplinary action from the University.

Now for the fun stuff! Everyone is expected to attend **all** class and section meetings and to prepare reading assignments in order to participate *fully* in discussions – we *know* that speaking in class is difficult for some – perhaps many – students, and we will work together to ease the burden of this. For help, see "On talking in class" on our GauchoSpace. Participants will be asked for on many occasions to volunteer to facilitate the discussion in various ways, which we will work out together in class. We will conduct the class in a discussion-based way much of the time, so *you must be prepared to participate at every meeting*. Have we mentioned this already?

Attendance and Participation: Ten percent of your grade

Attendance at all meetings is indispensable for making this course a success for all of us. Participation will be measured by attendance and participation in class and section, volunteering to present an assigned reading, contributing to class projects, and all-around engagement with the course materials and activities. You may ask for the occasional excused absence but we will have to see the reason for it within 24 hours of the missed class, if not in advance, in order to honor your request. ***It is always greatly to your advantage to attend class.*** Perfect attendance [a maximum of one excused absence out of thirty meetings in all] in both will earn you the full ten percent!

Making a Class Presentation

In some of our sessions, two or more students working in pairs will make a 2-5 minute (and sometimes longer) presentation on one of the readings. See "How to Make a Great Presentation" on our GauchoSpace.

The Written Assignments: Ninety percent of your grade

Please note: The format guidelines for all papers in this course are 1” margins all around, 12 point size, and double spacing (not 1.5 lines). You will upload papers as Word or pdf documents onto our class GauchoSpace AND hand in a double-sided hard copy to Corrie. Hard copies are due at the beginning of lecture on the Tuesday following each paper deadline. No hard copy is needed for the final paper.

Two critical reading briefs. Twenty percent of your grade (ten percent each)

Please write two short papers of up to but no more than two double-spaced pages each on a class reading. These should cover one of the *issues* raised for you by the course materials or class topics, whether analytic or emotional. Though there is no single formula or set format for these papers, often a good way to proceed is to identify an issue, idea, controversy, etc., then state *your* point of view, backing it up with reasons and evidence. We want to know what *you* think, so please *do not waste valuable space in summarizing texts!* The first one should be completed and posted on GauchoSpace before midnight on Monday, April 10, and the second should be completed and posted on GauchoSpace by midnight on Monday, May 22.

Two book reviews. Twenty percent of your grade (ten percent each)

You will be asked to write short reviews of two books assigned for this class. *Do not* use your space to summarize the book. Instead, develop an argument or discuss an issue from your reading of the book. Be sure to state the reasons for your views, and back them up with evidence, quotations, and reference to specific page numbers. *If you plagiarize your review, you will receive an “F” for the course.*

- A two-page essay on Jonathon Porritt’s *The World We Made*, to be posted on GauchoSpace by midnight on Monday, May 1. This essay will count for ten percent of your grade.
- A two-page essay on Paul Raskin’s *Journey to Earthland*, to be posted on GauchoSpace by midnight on Monday, May 15. This essay will count for ten percent of your grade.

One film review. Ten percent of your grade

You will be asked to write a two-page double-spaced essay on either *Demain/Tomorrow* or *Cowspiracy*. *Do not* use your space to summarize what the film is about. Instead, develop an argument or discuss an issue from your consideration of the film. This assignment must be completed and posted on GauchoSpace by midnight on Monday, April 17 for *Demain* OR by midnight on Monday, May 29 for *Cowspiracy*.

Final paper. Twenty percent of your grade

You will be asked to write a four-page double-spaced essay due on GauchoSpace by 12 noon on Monday, June 12. This exciting final assignment will be the place where you get to reflect deeply on what you have learned about our topic this quarter. The questions can be found at the end of the syllabus – you might even be able to make up your own!

Group project. Twenty percent of your grade

OK, here's the creative part of the class process, in more ways than one. We have come up with a very special idea for the group projects, which will be introduced in the first two weeks of the class. Groups will be formed shortly after that, and group presentations are scheduled over the last two weeks of class. It will be a blast!

Thus, to some degree, you can choose the topics and schedule your own work this term and focus on the issues that *you* find most interesting. *Your job is to manage these assignments; you are advised to do all of them as best you can rather than to miss any*, which will affect your grade more than doing a poor job on one or two of them.

With this comes the responsibility for careful planning and organization of your assignments, needless to say. You may also devote some time in section to discussing these assignments and how to prepare for them.

PLEASE READ THESE TWO PIECES BEFORE OUR FIRST CLASS MEETING:

Bill McKibben, "Global Warming's Terrifying New Math: Three simple numbers that add up to global catastrophe - and that make clear who the real enemy is," 1-12, <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/global-warmings-terrifying-new-math-20120719?page=5>

Paul Raskin, *Journey to Earthland*, "Epilogue," 109-113 [find on Gauchospace or download the book at: <http://www.greattransition.org/publication/journey-to-earthland>]

Course Topics and Reading Assignments

Part One: Entering the Anthropocene: The Future is Tomorrow

Tuesday, April 4. First meeting: A Beginner's Guide to the Future

After an introduction to the course and to each other we will start a discussion of the world situation today, and begin to identify some of the questions we may want to ask this quarter.

Please read these pieces **before** class:

Bill McKibben, "Global Warming's Terrifying New Math: Three simple numbers that add up to global catastrophe - and that make clear who the real enemy is," 1-12, <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/global-warmings-terrifying-new-math-20120719?page=5>

Paul Raskin, *Journey to Earthland*, “Epilogue,” 109-113 [find on Gauchospace or download the book at:

<http://www.greattransition.org/publication/journey-to-earthland>]

Thursday, April 6. Face to Face with ... Ourselves

Today we will try to wrap our heads around the fact that we have entered a dangerous new geological era, the Anthropocene, and what that means for those of us who may be around in 2050. Then we will start discussing how our feelings, emotions, and bodies are part of the picture the future we will paint.

Readings

Ian Angus on the Anthropocene, “A compilation of his work,” with an introduction by John Foran, 1-44

Clifford Dean Scholz, “How Many Standing Rocks Do You See?” (February 27, 2017), <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2017-02-27/how-many-standing-rocks-do-you-see/>

*****NOTE:** *Critical reading brief 1 must be posted on Gauchospace by midnight on Monday, April 10.*

Tuesday, April 11. From Today to Tomorrow

Today we will start to screen *Demain/Tomorrow*, a French film from 2016 (Elle Driver, 96 minutes).

Reading

Have a look at the movie’s website, which is rich in content, solutions, and ideas for this class: <https://www.demain-lefilm.com/en/film>

Rob Hopkins, “The unstoppable rise of ‘Demain’” (February 5, 2016), <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2016-02-05/the-unstoppable-rise-of-demain>

You may want to start reading Jonathan Porritt’s book, *The World We Made...*

Thursday, April 13. Tomorrow is Now

Today we will complete *Demain*.

Reading

Go look at the movie's website again: <http://www.timetochoose.com/>

You should *definitely* start reading Jonathan Porritt's book, *The World We Made...*

*****NOTE:** *Your movie review on Demain must be posted on GauchoSpace by midnight on Monday, April 17 – if you have chosen to make this the film you review (you also have the option of reviewing Cowspiracy instead, due on May 29).*

Part Two: The World We Might Make

Tuesday, April 18. Jonathon Porritt, *The World We Made* – part 1

Today we begin our exploration of Jonathon Porritt's future world, *The World We Made*. There will be multiple student presentations on the book for this and the next two sessions!

Reading to be discussed

The World We Made, 1-86

Thursday, April 20. Jonathon Porritt, *The World We Made* – part 2

Today we continue our exploration of Jonathon Porritt's future world, *The World We Made*, with more student presentations!

Reading to be discussed

The World We Made, 87-200

Tuesday, April 25. Jonathon Porritt, *The World We Made* – part 3

Today we complete our exploration of Jonathon Porritt's future world, *The World We Made*, with multiple student presentations!

Reading to be discussed

The World We Made, p. 200-276

*****NOTE:** *Your book review of *The World We Made* must be posted on GauchoSpace by midnight on Monday, May 1*

Part Three: Visions and Movements for the Future

Thursday, April 27. The Sustainable Development Goals and [Enlightened] Business as Usual [BAU]

Today we'll consider a bold pledge from the nations of the world – The Sustainable Development Goals, approved by the UN in September 2015.

To be marked present for attendance purposes, please bring a signed written question or comment about the Sustainable Development Goals!

Readings

Skim:

United Nations, “Draft outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda” (August 12, 2015), 1-35,

http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/sites/default/files/documents/docs/A_69_L.85_EN.pdf

Read at least two of the following:

Tim McDonnell, “Here are 17 things we need to do to fix the world” (September 25, 2015), 1-4, http://grist.org/climate-energy/here-are-17-things-we-need-to-do-to-fix-the-world/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily-horizon

Nafeez Ahmed, “UN plan to save Earth is ‘fig leaf’ for Big Business insiders; Why the new Sustainable Development agenda is ‘fundamentally compromised’ by corporate interests” (September 15, 2015), 1-12, <http://ecology.iww.org/node/1301>

Fionuala Cregan, “Igniting the Communal Fire: What the SDGs Could Learn from Indigenous Peoples” (September 25, 2015), 1-4, <http://www.commondreams.org/views/2015/09/25/igniting-communal-fire-what-sdgs-could-learn-indigenous-peoples>

Andrea Germanos, “To Achieve Highly-Touted Development Goals, End Business-as-Usual, Groups Say” (September 25, 2015), 1-3, <http://www.commondreams.org/news/2015/09/25/achieve-highly-touted-development-goals-end-business-usual-groups-say>

John Foran, “The Insanity of the COP: We Must Adopt a Different Vision” (December 8, 2015), <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2015-12-08/the-insanity-of-the-cop-we-must-adopt-a-different-vision>

Tuesday, May 2. Trump It All

Today we'll try to wrap our heads around the Trump administration's efforts and plans for a *new* alt-right **Business as Usual** [NBAU]

Please take at least 10-15 minutes to explore these websites

To be determined

N. D. B. Connolly and Keisha N. Blain, Trump Syllabus 2.0,
<http://www.publicbooks.org/feature/trump-syllabus-20>

Readings:

Chris Hedges, "The Elites Won't Save Us" (February 12, 2017),
http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/the_elites_wont_save_us_20170212

Jeremy Lent, "Towards the Tipping Point: Understanding Trump in a larger historical context" (December 20, 2016),
<https://patternsofmeaning.com/2016/12/20/towards-the-tipping-point-understanding-trump-in-a-larger-historical-context/>

Michel Bauwens, "Ten Theses on Trump" (April 4, 2017),
<http://www.resilience.org/stories/2017-04-04/ten-theses-trump/>

Timothy Snyder, "20 Lessons from the 20th Century on How to Survive in Trump's America" (November 21, 2016),
<http://inthesetimes.com/article/19658/20-lessons-from-the-20th-century-on-how-to-survive-in-trumps-america>

Thursday, May 4. Buen Vivir and the Universal Declaration of Mother Earth

Today we'll consider the indigenous concept of *Buen Vivir/Sawmaq Kawsay* – a perspective on the future from the Global South and of the most radical documents ever written, the "Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth," adopted by the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, on April 27, 2010 in Cochabamba, Bolivia, and subsequently submitted by the Bolivian government to the United Nations for consideration.

To be marked present for attendance purposes, please bring a signed written question or comment about the Buen Vivir reading!

Please take at least 10-15 minutes to explore these websites:

The Pachamama Alliance – <http://www.pachamama.org/about/mission>

The Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature –
<http://therightsofnature.org/>

Readings (*read the Universal Declaration very closely before coming to class*)

World People’s Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth “Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth,” Cochabamba, Bolivia (April 27, 2010), 1-3,
<http://climateandcapitalism.com/?p=2268>

Pablo Solón, “Is *Vivir Bien* possible? Candid Thoughts about Systemic Alternatives” (August 2016), <http://lifeonleft.blogspot.com/2016/09/vivir-bien-going-beyond-capitalism.html>

Tuesday, May 9 and Thursday, May 11. Alternative Futures: *Journey to Earthland*

This week we’ll read about several alternative futures and evaluate them along with the ways of achieving them.

*To be marked present for attendance purposes on May 9, please bring a signed written question or comment about *Journey to Earthland*!*

To be marked present for attendance purposes on May 11, please bring a signed written question or comment on the “Comments” reading below!

Please take at least 10-15 minutes to explore this website:

The Great Transition Initiative: <http://greattransition.org/>

Readings

Read Paul Raskin, *Journey to Earthland*, entire: download the pdf at
<http://www.greattransition.org/publication/journey-to-earthland>

Read also some of the 100-plus page “Comments” on this book posted as a single document on GauchoSpace.

*****NOTE:** *Your book review of *Journey to Earthland* must be posted on GauchoSpace by midnight on Monday, May 15*

Tuesday, May 16. Transition Towns, Degrowth, and Resilience: Moving Beyond Capitalism?

Today we will explore the meaning of the concept and movement for “degrowth.” “**Degrowth** (in French: décroissance, in Spanish: decrecimiento, in Italian: decrescita) is a

political, economic, and social movement based on ecological economics, anti-consumerist and anti-capitalist ideas” (*Wikipedia*).

We will also see how the Transition Towns movement is putting this into practice.

Please take some time to explore this website:

<http://gen.ecovillage.org/en/article/what-ecovillage>

Readings on Transition Towns

Stephanie Van Hook, “What is Transition?” (March 14, 2017), <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2017-03-14/what-is-transition/>

Wikipedia, “Transition Town,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transition_town

Tom Henfrey and Justin Kenrick, “The Transition Movement in Global Perspective” (February 2, 2016), 1-28, http://climatesecurityagenda.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/018138c_TNI_Climate-Commons-Hope.pdf

Optional: Post-Carbon Institute, *Six Foundations for Building Community Resilience* (2015), 1-40, <http://www.postcarbon.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Six-Foundations-for-Building-Community-Resilience.pdf>

Please take some time to explore this website:

<https://www.degrowth.de/en/dim/degrowth-in-movements/>

Readings on Degrowth

“Degrowth,” from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 1-11, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Degrowth>

Tadzio Müller, “Climate Justice and Degrowth: a tale of two movements” (March 13, 2015), 1-5, <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2015-03-13/climate-justice-and-degrowth-a-tale-of-two-movements>

Aaron Vansintjan, “Let’s Define Degrowth before we Dismiss it” (December 28, 2015), 1-7, <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2015-12-28/a-growing-confusion-on-the-left>

Degrowth.de Staff, “Agrowth – Should we Better be Agnostic about Growth?” (March 13, 2017), <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2017-03-13/agrowth-better-agnostic-growth/>

DEBATE:

Kate Raworth, “Why Degrowth has out-grown its own name” (December 1, 2015), <http://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/why-degrowth-has-out-grown-its-own-name-guest-post-by-kate-raworth/>

Giogos Kallis, “You’re wrong Kate. Degrowth is a compelling word” (December 2, 2015), <http://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/youre-wrong-kate-degrowth-is-a-compelling-word/>

Tim Jackson, “How to Kick the Growth Addiction,” interview by Allen White, *Great Transition Initiative* (April 2017), <http://www.greattransition.org/publication/how-to-kick-the-growth-addiction>

Thursday, May 18. 21st-Century Ecosocialism: A Movement for Total Liberation?

Today, we’ll explore another radical strand of climate justice thinking by looking at some of the basic ideas of “ecosocialism,” which combines a critique of capitalism as the cause of the crisis of planet Earth with an alternative model for a future that would be ecologically advanced, economically just, and politically democratic.

Please take at least 10-15 minutes to explore the website:

System Change Not Climate Change –
<http://systemchangenotclimatechange.org/>

Readings: read one or both of these

Fred Magdoff and Chris Williams, “Characteristics of an Ecological Society,” pp. 267-288 in *Creating an Ecological Society: Toward a Revolutionary Transformation* [New York: Monthly Review Press, forthcoming]

Ian Angus, “Ecosocialism and Human Solidarity,” pp. 132-145 in *Facing the Anthropocene: Fossil Capitalism and the Crisis of the Earth System* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2017)

Readings: read any two from this list

Belem Ecosocialist Declaration, prepared by a committee elected at the Paris Ecosocialist Conference of 2007 (Ian Angus, Joel Kovel, Michael Löwy, <http://climateandcapitalism.com/2008/12/16/belem-ecosocialist-declaration-a-call-for-signatures/>

System Change Not Climate Change, “What is Ecosocialism?” (September 2014), 1-14

Chris Williams, “How Will We Reach an Ecological Civilization and Who Will Build It?” (October 31, 2015), <http://www.truth->

out.org/opinion/item/33439-how-will-we-reach-an-ecological-civilization-and-who-will-build-it

Gemma Weedall, “Capitalism is Failing the Planet” (November 20, 2014), <https://www.greenleft.org.au/node/57834>

Joel Kovel and Michael Löwy, “The EcoSocialist Manifesto” (2001-2008), two versions

*****NOTE:** *Critical reading brief 2 must be posted on GauchoSpace by midnight on Monday, May 22.*

Part Four: Personal Actions CAN Make a Difference

Tuesday, May 23 and Thursday, May 25. What we eat and how we live: *Can we make a difference as individuals? Cowspiracy!*

On these two days we’ll watch and discuss the controversial documentary, *Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret* (directed by Kip Andersen and Keegan Kuhn, A.U.M. films, 2014, 91 minutes). We’ll take stock of what we have learned about the question of our own responsibility for making climate justice personal and practical, and ask impossible questions, such as should we have children in the Anthropocene?

Readings for these two days

Please take at least 10-15 minutes to explore the website, especially the sections “About,” “Facts,” and “Take Action”:

<http://www.cowspiracy.com/about/>

Danny Chivers, “Cowspiracy: stampeding in the wrong direction?” (February 9, 2016), <http://newint.org/blog/2016/02/10/cowspiracy-stampeding-in-the-wrong-direction/>

Sunita Narain, “Why I would not advocate vegetarianism” (May 28, 2017), <http://www.ecologise.in/2017/03/28/sunita-narain-why-i-would-not-advocate-vegetarianism/>

“Contributor,” “Meat-eating and the environment: An open letter to Sunita Narain” (April 5, 2017), <http://www.ecologise.in/2017/04/05/meat-eating-and-the-environment-an-open-letter-to-sunita-narain/>

Chris Goodall, “How to reduce your carbon footprint” (January 19, 2017), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jan/19/how-to-reduce-carbon-footprint>

Madeline Ostrander, “How Do You Decide to Have a Baby When Climate Change Is Remaking Life on Earth?” (March 24, 2016), <http://www.thenation.com/article/how-do-you-decide-to-have-a-baby-when-climate-change-is-remaking-life-on-earth/>

Kamalamani, “Other than Mother? The Parenthood Decision with Resilience in Mind” (April 17, 2017), <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2017-04-17/other-than-mother-the-parenthood-decision-with-resilience-in-mind/>

Ophélie Véron, “Vegetarians of the world, go vegan!” 1-2

Heather Smith, “Want to fight climate change? Here are the 7 critical life changes you should make” (February 19, 2016), http://grist.org/climate-energy/want-to-fight-climate-change-here-are-the-7-critical-life-changes-you-should-make/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=climate-newsletter&utm_campaign=round-2-image

Reynard Loki, “3 Most Environmentally Damaging Habits You Might Be Able to Change” (April 17, 2016), 1-6, <http://ecowatch.com/2016/04/17/environmentally-damaging-habits/>

Nathanael Johnson, “Can we actually make a difference by changing the way we eat?” (April 20, 2016), 1-5, http://grist.org/food/can-we-actually-make-a-difference-by-changing-the-way-we-eat/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily-horizon

*****NOTE:** *Your movie review on Cowspiracy must be posted on GauchoSpace by midnight on Monday, May 29 – if you have already done your review on Demain you don’t have to review Cowspiracy).*

Part Five: The Worlds YOU Will Make

Tuesday, May 30. Final Projects 1

Today, we will host the first courageous presentations of your final projects. This class is not to be missed!

Thursday, June 1. Final Projects 2

Today will be packed with your excellent group presentations – a class you will *not* want to miss!

Tuesday, June 6. Final Projects 3

Today will be packed with outstanding group presentations – it will be a class you will *not* want to fall asleep in!

Thursday, June 8. Final Projects 4. Toward a Better Future

Today will conclude your amazing group presentations – plus many surprises! This will also be a final brainstorming session about everything we’ve all learned and for those who are interested, some ideas on how to get more involved.

*****NOTE:** *Final papers should be posted on Gauchospace by 12 noon on Monday, June 12*

* * *

We need to engage in whatever actions appeal to us. There is no act too small, no act too bold. The history of social change is the history of millions of actions, small and large, coming together at certain points in history and creating a power which governments cannot suppress.

Howard Zinn, “An Occupied Country”
(2002),
<http://www.progressive.org/oct03/zinn1003.html>

* * *

This fight, as it took me too long to figure out, was never going to be settled on the grounds of justice or reason. We won the argument, but that didn’t matter: like most fights it was, and is, about power.

Bill McKibben

* * *

In order to carry a positive action we must develop here a positive vision.

Dalai Lama

* * *

Essay Question Options

Please write an essay of up to four double-spaced pages due as a Word document or pdf on GauchoSpace by 12 noon on Monday, June 12. No hardcopy is needed. This exciting final assignment is the place where you get to reflect deeply on what you have learned this quarter.

The format guidelines for all papers in this course are 1" margins all around, 12 point size, and double spacing (not 1.5 lines).

Topics to Choose From

Beyond Capitalism

Do you think capitalism can be *reformed and made sustainable*, or should it be *radically transformed and/or abolished*? Make an argument for either position. If you think capitalism must be transformed or abolished, make sure you analyze 1) the reasons you think this system is undesirable or ineffective in the pursuit of sustainable development, or whatever other fatal flaws you identify, 2) a working idea of alternative systems that would better address the global crisis and 3) a working idea of how this transformation can actually be attained, informed by historical example and informed predictions. If you think capitalism can or should be reformed and made sustainable, try to address roughly the same 3 questions of reasoning, the reformed model to be attained, and how it would be achieved.

The World in 2050 [a very original question]

What is the *best* world you think is possible to achieve by 2050? What world do you imagine is the *most likely* that we will be living in?

Drawing on all of the course materials you wish, give us all your best ideas about getting the first and avoiding the second. Note: if your two worlds are the same, just tell us how we get there!

What role would you like to play, or see yourself playing, in getting this world?

Culture, Nature, and Building a Better World

In this essay, first discuss any connections you see between the environmental issues of our time (climate change, obstacles to sustainable development, the coming of the Anthropocene, etc.) and our cultural attitudes about concepts like "nature." Feel free to bring in materials from the class project and relate them to readings, films, and any other relevant material from lecture. Oh, and don't forget your imagination!

If we are going to build a more equal, more sustainable and environmentally friendly future world, how might we have to change our cultural relationship to nature? What sort of cultural production (video, fiction, spoken word, art, music, etc.) do you think could play a role? Be as specific as you can.

What sort of social movement might bring all this about?

Write your own question!

We invite you to write your own question/topic for an essay, and after approval by the instructors, you may write your essay on the agreed upon topic. You should obtain this green light by Thursday, June 1, with a one-page proposal.

Abolish grades.

Abolish email.

Abolish borders.

Abolish prisons.

Create love, beauty, and justice instead.

The beginnings of my platform.

(And the government is run by cats, natural anarchists.)

■ Molly Talcott