Sociology 4007-001                   Global Human Ecology                        Fall 2021

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Seeing the interconnections; knowing “what’s hitched to what; thinking holistically about the modern world; this is, broadly speaking, our course objective - to analyze and comprehend our global human ecology using a systems perspective. 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 young sociologists recognize and begin to include in our analysis, the vital role of natural systems in which all social systems are imbedded. Expanding the sociological gaze to consider even broader ecological systems provides social analysts a more complete, holistic understanding of the relationships between people and their environment.

Both social systems and ecosystems are self-organizing, complex, adaptive processes, sometimes in harmony, sometimes at odds with one another. Figuring out how to produce more of the former and less of the latter is critical in designing and implementing a social system for the long haul. This will require a motivated and informed constituency, and young, hands-on intellectuals well-versed in ecological thought. Ecological thinking encourages a quality of mind that: understands the earth’s vital signs, is aware of the speed and extent of the global ecological crises, comprehends interrelationships, understands the dynamics of global capitalism and, leads to attitudes and behaviors of care and stewardship. It is such a mindset that I hope to encourage in you. Guiding our ongoing effort to cultivate our ecological thinking is the concept of sustainable development, that is, social systems that meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is this larger objective of interacting with ecosystems in ways that allow them to maintain their functional integrity that motivates a sociology of human ecology.

We will begin by learning to think in systems terms. For this initial segment of the course we will read two foundational texts *Thinking in Systems* (2008) *by Donella Meadows*and *Human Ecology* (2001) *by Gerald Marten*. Together, these classics in the field of human ecology will provide us the language and imagery to move more comfortably between social and natural systems. We will highlight key system features – stocks, in-flows, out-flows; balancing loops, reinforcing loops, delays, sources of system stability and system growth and change; as well as system surprises, traps and leverage points. Some of the biggest problems facing the world today are essentially system failures, and they cannot be solved by fixing one system in isolation from other systems. It is my hope that through a series of rich presentations and shared readings you will have an opportunity to cultivate a new “systems thinking” through which to see the intersections of society and environment, social systems and natural systems.

With this new and improved capacity for systems thinking, we then we will turn our sights on learning about climate migration patterns. Climate change and consequent human migration is a closely related systems issue of great sociological import. Changing climate has long influenced human migration. The mass movement of human beings - perhaps 25-250,000 million by mid-century - is closely associated with the accelerating changes to our climate, as well as shifts in the neoliberal, global economy. *Climate and Human Migration*by Robert McLeman presents historic data on large-scale human migration in response to hydrological changes such as extreme weather events, river-valley flooding, drought, and mean sea-level rise (MSLR). Human migration, as we will see, is one form of climate adaptation, and is greatly patterned by specific changes in natural systems. Understanding these patterned flows of people in the past will allow us to better anticipate – and prepare for – future mass migration associated with anthropogenic climate change.

We will then conclude the semester with Lessons in Environmental Justice. This topic, like that of human migration, enables us to more clearly see the overlay of natural systems and social systems. In this segment of the course we will investigate the many intersections of race, health, and environment, including the the latest social research into the practice of targeting (vulnerable) communities of color for noxious and unhealthy facilities including hazardous waste site, incinerators, resource extraction sites, garbage dumps, etc.. This text will also introduce us to a new and vibrant wave of environmental justice scholarship, methods, and activism.

These four books were written and designed to facilitate your understanding of interconnected global systems via a rich array of chapter foci / readings. These texts are diverse in format and purpose. These four books are, I think, wonderfully valuable in conveying potent insight into our global human ecology, and the research / design / governance challenges that lie ahead. 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 for each class meeting. The four required texts for this course are available at the **UMC Bookstore** or can be readily bought on-line. *(these four texts are listed in order of classroom use)*

* ***Thinking in Systems: A Primer****by Donella Meadows*
* ***Human Ecology: Basic Concepts for Sustainable Development****by Gerald Marten*
* ***Climate and Human Migration****by Robert McLeman*
* ***Lessons in Environmental Justice***edited by M. Mascarenhas

**Exams and Grading**:

\*Four (4) exams (15% each / 60% of final grade): Each of these four 75 minute, mixed-format exams will cover both lecture and text material. **Exam Dates: 9/16; 10/5; 11/9; 12/10 at 4:30pm.**All exams will be conducted in-person on scheduled dates in ECLC E1B20.

\*Three (4) “social system- ecosystems” research projects. (10% each / 40% of final grade). Individual projects highlighting local /regional/global examples of social - ecological systems. Topics and project criteria to be discussed in class. **Due dates: 9/21; 10/21 & 11/18.**

**Sociology 4007 - Schedule of readings and exams**

Aug. 24 Course introduction and overview

Aug. 26 *Thinking in Systems ch.1 / Human Ecology ch. 1*

Aug. 31 Thinking in Systems ch. 2

Sept. 2 *Thinking in Systems ch’s. 3*

Sept. 7 *Human Ecology ch’s 2-5*

Sept. 9 *Thinking in Systems ch’s 4 & 5****(project #1 due****)*

Sept. 14 *Human Ecology ch’s 6 & 7*

Sept 16 **Exam 1**

Sept. 21 *Human Ecology ch’s 8 & 9*

Sept. 23 *Human Ecology ch’s 10*

Sept. 28 *Human Ecology ch’s 11-12*

Sept. 30 *Thinking in Systems ch 6*

*Oct. 5 Thinking in Systems ch. 7*

**Oct. 7 Exam 2**

Oct. 12 *Climate and Human Migration ch’s 1*

Oct. 14 *Climate and Human Migration ch’s 2*

Oct. 19 *Climate and Human Migration ch. 3*

Oct. 21*Climate and Human Migration ch. 4****(project #2 due)***

Oct. 26 *Climate and Human Migration ch. 5*

Oct. 28 *Climate and Human Migration ch. 6*

Nov. 2 *Climate and Human Migration ch. 7*

Nov. 4 *Climate and Human Migration ch. 8*

Nov. 9  **Exam 3**

Nov. 11 *Lessons in Environmental Justice - Part 1: Understanding Environmental Justice*

Nov. 16 *Lessons in Environmental Justice - Part 2: Environmental Justice Methodology*

Nov. 18 open**(project #3 due)**

Nov. 23 & 25 no class

Nov. 30 *Lessons in Environmental Justice - Part 3: Policy and Environmental Protection*

Dec. 2 *Lessons in Environmental Justice - Part 4: Environments of Injustice and Activism*

Dec. 7 *Lessons in Environmental Justice - Part 5: New Frontiers and Old Questions*

Dec. 9 course & topic summary

Dec. 11-15  **Final Exam 4 (final exam date and time to be announced)**

**Important University Policies and Procedures**

**Classroom Behavior**

Both students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote or online. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy.  For more information, see the policies on [classroom behaviorLinks to an external site.](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-classroom-and-course-related-behavior) and the [Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution policiesLinks to an external site.](https://www.colorado.edu/sccr/student-conduct).

**Requirements for COVID-19**

As a matter of public health and safety due to the pandemic, all members of the CU Boulder community and all visitors to campus must follow university, department and building requirements and all public health orders in place to reduce the risk of spreading infectious disease. Students who fail to adhere to these requirements will be asked to leave class, and students who do not leave class when asked or who refuse to comply with these requirements will be referred to[Links to an external site.Student Conduct and Conflict ResolutionLinks to an external site.](https://www.colorado.edu/sccr/). For more information, see the policy on[Links to an external site.](https://www.colorado.edu/policies/covid-19-health-and-safety-policy)[classroom behaviorLinks to an external site.](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-classroom-and-course-related-behavior) and the[Links to an external site.Student Code of ConductLinks to an external site.](http://www.colorado.edu/osccr/). If you require accommodation because a disability prevents you from fulfilling these safety measures, please follow the steps in the “Accommodation for Disabilities” statement on this syllabus.

As of Aug. 13, 2021, CU Boulder has returned to requiring masks in classrooms and laboratories regardless of vaccination status. This requirement is a temporary precaution during the delta surge to supplement CU Boulder’s COVID-19 vaccine requirement. Exemptions include individuals who cannot medically tolerate a face covering, as well as those who are hearing-impaired or otherwise disabled or who are communicating with someone who is hearing-impaired or otherwise disabled and where the ability to see the mouth is essential to communication. If you qualify for a mask-related accommodation, please follow the steps in the “Accommodation for Disabilities” statement on this syllabus. In addition, vaccinated instructional faculty who are engaged in an indoor instructional activity and are separated by at least 6 feet from the nearest person are exempt from wearing masks if they so choose.

Students who have tested positive for COVID-19, have symptoms of COVID-19, or have had close contact with someone who has tested positive for or had symptoms of COVID-19 must stay home. In this class, if you are sick or quarantined, please notify me so that alternatives can be implemented.

**Accommodation for Disabilities**

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed.  Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment.  Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services websiteLinks to an external site.](https://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or [dsinfo@colorado.edu](mailto:dsinfo@colorado.edu) for further assistance.  If you have a temporary medical condition, see [Temporary Medical ConditionsLinks to an external site.](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students/temporary-medical-conditions) on the Disability Services website.

**Preferred Student Names and Pronouns**

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

**Honor Code**

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code academic integrity policy. Violations of the Honor Code may include, but are not limited to: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu)); 303-492-5550). Students found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found on the [Honor Code websiteLinks to an external site.](https://www.colorado.edu/osccr/honor-code).

**Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation**

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, or protected-class discrimination or harassment by or against members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or email [cureport@colorado.edu](mailto:cureport@colorado.edu). Information about OIEC, university policies, [reporting optionsLinks to an external site.](https://www.colorado.edu/oiec/reporting-resolutions/making-report), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC websiteLinks to an external site.](http://www.colorado.edu/institutionalequity/).

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, dating and domestic violence, stalking, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about their rights, support resources, and reporting options.

**Religious Holidays**

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance.  In this class, please notify me in advance of missed classes and alternative accommodations will be made.

See the [campus policy regarding religious observancesLinks to an external site.](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/observance-religious-holidays-and-absences-classes-andor-exams) for full details.