SOCIOLOGY 4027, Section 001 – Fall 2021

Inequality, Democracy, and the Environment

Tu & Th 9:35-10:50

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Office: Ketchum 313

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**Office Hours**: Thursday, 10:50-11:30, via zoom, and by appointment

**\*\*\*IF YOU MISS ALL OR SIGNIFICANT CHUNKS OF TWO OF THE FIRST THREE CLASSES OF THE SEMESTER YOU WILL BE DROPPED FROM THE COURSE\*\*\***

**\*\*\*\*\*IF YOU MISS ANY CLASSES DURING WEEK 16 (the last week of classes), YOU WILL LOSE A FULL LETTER GRADE OFF YOUR FINAL GRADE\*\*\*\*\***

**\*\*\*I EXPECT YOUR ZOOM VIDEO FEED TO BE ON THROUGHOUT CLASS. If IT IS NOT ON, WE WILL DROP YOU FROM THAT DAY’S CLASS\*\*\***

**\*\*\*PLEASE KEEP YOUR ZOOM AUDIO MUTED EXEPT WHEN YOU ARE TALKING TO ME\*\*\***

**Course description:** I developed this course because I believe it is important for students to understand the relationship between inequality, democracy, and the environment. In order to develop such an understanding, this course examines the relationship between the following factors:

* Inequality and democratic decision making in the United States (political and economic decision making);
* Undemocratic decision making and U.S. and corporate food and energy policy;
* Food and energy policy on the one hand and global environmental degradation and war on the other;
* Undemocratic corporate and U.S. decision making on the one hand and developing nation democracy and state failure on the other;
* The International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization on the one hand and developing nation poverty and oppression on the other.

In addition to covering these topics, I would like to spend some time addressing the following questions. What kind of society would you like to live in? How can such a society be created? How can we overcome or drastically reduce the serious environmental problems we face? Are the types of solutions proposed by mainstream environmentalists likely to succeed? If not, why not and what should be done instead?

This is clearly a lot of ground to cover and as a result we will be doing a lot of reading this semester. Some of this reading will be drawn from environmental studies and environmental sociology, but much of it will be drawn from other sociological subfields, including economic sociology, rural sociology, the sociology of development, and political sociology. It is my contention that we cannot understand environmental problems, nor develop solutions to these problems, without a firm grounding in these seemingly non-environmental sociological subfields.

**Finally, I am very excited about teaching this class and hope that we all have a great semester!!!**

**Required Readings:** The required readings are listed below. We will be reading 1 book (available at the book store) as well as on-line articles and book excerpts. You can find links to the articles and book excerpts on Canvas. **Some of the on-line reading files include more pages than you have to read.** So check the page numbers you are supposed to read before reading them.

**Canvas**

You can find on-line readings, an electronic copy of the syllabus, and important handouts on Canvas: <https://fedauth.colorado.edu/idp/profile/SAML2/Redirect/SSO?execution=e4s1>.

**Adobe Reader:** In order to read most of the on-line readings, you need to have Adobe Reader installed on your computer. If it is not installed, you can download it from: https://get.adobe.com/reader/.

**You have to purchase the following book at the UMC bookstore!**

Klare, Michael T. 2004. *Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America’s Growing Dependency on Imported Petroleum*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

**The following book can be found on-line at:** <http://www.natcap.org/sitepages/pid20.php>.

Hawken, Paul, Amory Lovins, and L. Hunter Lovins. *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution*.

After you get to the ‘Natural Capitalism’ website, click on the phrase ‘more info’ that is associated with the chapter you want to read. Then, on the new web page, click on the ‘download the entire chapter’ link. The chapter will download for you. You can then save it to a disk or to your computer by clicking on the ‘download’ icon. **Download and save the appropriate chapters immediately!!!**

**Your grade in this course will be based upon the following assignments (and attendance):**

Due Date Points Toward Final Grade

1. 4 take home exams

Exam 1 Sept. 21 18 points

Exam 2 Oct. 19 24 points

Exam 3 Nov. 11 24points

Exam 4 Dec. 9 24 points

2. Reading reactions

Reading reaction 1 Sept. 7 5 points

Reading reaction 2 Oct. 26 5 points

100 points

90-100 points = A- to A

80 - 90 points = B- to B+

70 - 80 points = C- to C+

60 - 70 points = D- to D+

0 - 60 points = F

**WE WILL NOT NEGOTIATE GRADES**

**\*\*\*\*All assignments MUST be turned in via Canvas before the beginning of the class on the day they are due\*\*\*\***

**The exams:** We are covering a lot of material this semester. So instead of asking you to take 2 or 3 big, in-class exams where you would have to remember 6-8 weeks’ worth of material, I am going to have you take 4 take-home exams. In these exams, I will ask you to answer several questions about the readings, lectures, and class discussions during the 4-6 weeks prior to the exam. For each exam, your answers should collectively add up to 6-8 pages (typed and double spaced). **Take home exams are not easier than in-class exams. If anything, they are harder. Because you have access to all your lecture notes and the readings, I expect you to be able to recall everything we have discussed in class. Many people do not do as well as they would like to do on the first exam, so take it seriously!!! On the first exam, many people do not do what I tell them to do. As a result, VERY GOOD students sometimes FAIL the first exam. I DO NOT want this to happen to you.**

**Reading Reactions:** Twice this semester you will need to write a well-reasoned 1-2 page reaction to a specific reading. I will tell you which reading I want you to write about and will ask you a specific question or questions about the reading.

**The exams and reading reactions must use one-inch margins at the top and bottom and 1-inch margins on the left and right. They must be double-spaced, using 12-point Times New Roman font**.

**All written work must be original.** In other words, do not use somebody else’s ideas without properly citing the source of those ideas (your references must be listed on a separate sheet). Keep direct quotes to an absolute minimum, but clearly cite direct quotes when you use them. **Remember, plagiarism is a serious offense that can result in you failing the class.**

Class Participation: You will not be graded on class participation. However, students tend to learn more when they participate in class discussions and when they ask questions about material that they find interesting or difficult to understand. **Do not hesitate to ask questions in class. If you do not ask questions about the course material, I will assume you understand it.**

**I will not post powerpoint slides from lecture or recordings of lectures on-line. So you need to attend class.**

**If you miss a class** it is your responsibility to get lecture and discussion notes, as well as other course information, from another student. If you still have questions after talking with another student, please contact me.

**Your grades** will be based on your mastery of the course material **as indicated by the substantive quality of your work**. **In other words, you have to demonstrate not only that you know the different elements of the arguments and evidence you are writing about, but also how these different elements fit together.** Work has to be handed in on time.

**\*\*\*I will not accept late exams\*\*\***

**\*\*\*There will be no make-up exams\*\*\***

**The only times I will make exceptions to my late assignment, exam, and attendance policies are if you provide me with written proof of a death in your family, a medical emergency (this does not include having a cold or the flu), a court date, a religious conflict, or your participation in a university-supported activity. FOR A DEATH IN THE FAMILY OR MEDICAL EMERGENCY, YOU MUST PROVIDE THIS PROOF WITHIN 1 WEEK OF THE MISSED CLASS, EXAM, OR ASSIGNMENT. FOR THE OTHER EXCEPTIONS, YOU NEED TO PROVIDE PROOF AT LEAST TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE MISSED CLASS, EXAM, OR ASSIGNMENT.**

**Finally, treat the zoom lectures as if you are attending an in-person class. This means you should be dressed appropriately and should refrain from activities that you would not normally engage in during a class. During zoom sessions, the same rules apply as in in-person classes. Raise your hand, be respectful if you disagree with a comment, and if you have questions that pertain mostly to your individual situation, raise them with me after class, in office hours, or by email.**

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**Weekly Topics and Readings**

**Week 1: Environmental Degradation**

# **Readings:**

Aug. 24: No Reading

Aug. 26: On-line: Speth, pages (pp.) 13-36 and 43-62

On-line: Foster et al. 2010, pp. 13-19

(**Optional**) Magdoff and Foster. 2011, pp. 3-9 if you want to know more about ecological rifts

(**Optional**) Mingle, Jonathon. 2020. “A World Without Ice.”

**Week 2: Inequality / Natural Capitalism**

# **Readings:**

Aug. 31: On-line: Hawken et al. pp. 144-159 <http://www.natcap.org/sitepages/pid20.php>

On-line: Downey, pp. 115-123 from book chapter on Agriculture

On-line: Kerbo, pp. 20-34 & 473-483

On-line: Alvaredo et al. 2017, pp. 8-16.

(**Optional)** On-line: The Kassandra Report, **Spend 5-10 minutes skimming** pp. 54-60.

(**Optional)** On-line: UNHDP 1997, pp. 15-18; UNDHP 2001, pp. 9-16; UNHDP 2010 143-163

Sept. 2: On-line: Hawken et al., pp. 1-11, 22-29, 48-61 <http://www.natcap.org/sitepages/pid20.php>

**Week 3: Natural Capitalism and Ecological Economics**

# **Readings:**

Sept. 7: **Reading Reaction 1 Due**

On-line: Cobb et al.

On-line: Downey, selected pages from Chapter 2: Popular Explanations of the Environmental Crisis.

Sept. 9: On-line: Hawken et al., pp. 62-73, 82-94, 159-169 <http://www.natcap.org/sitepages/pid20.php>

(**Optional**) On-line: Boyce, pp. 1-11

**Week 4: Democracy and the News Media**

# **Readings:**

Sept. 14: On-line: Pateman, pp. 1-5, 22-27, 42-43

On-line: Croteau & Hoynes, pp. 7-26

Sept. 16: On-line: Croteau & Hoynes, pp. 26-37

(**Optional**) On-line: Hoynes, pp. 34-54

**Week 5: Democracy and the News Media / Economic and Political Sociology**

# **Readings:**

Sept. 21: **Exam 1 Due**

Sept. 23: On-line: Domhoff 1 (The Class Domination Theory of Power)

(**Optional**) On-line Sunstein, Roosevelt’s Second Bill of Rights, pp. 17-25

**Week 6: Economic and Political Sociology**

# **Readings:**

Sept. 28: On-line: Domhoff 2 (Power Elite, pp. 20-24, 37-40, 257-264)

Sept. 30: On-line: Domhoff 3 (Power Elite, pp. 107-125, 144-147)

(**Optional**) On-line Farrell 2015, Corporate Funding and Ideological Polarization about Climate Change

(**Optional**) On-line Lipton et al. 2016, Think Tank Scholar or Corporate Consultant

(**Optional**) On-line Lipton and Williamsaug 2016, How Think Tanks Amplify Corporate Influence

**Week7: Globalization, the World Bank, and the IMF**

# **Readings:**

Oct. 5: On-line: Bello, pp. 7-9, 18-35

On-line: Peet (on the World Bank, the IMF, and the WTO)

Oct. 7: On-line: Bello, pp. 51-71

On-line: 3 Downey handouts (**these handouts can be found with the Canvas readings**)

**Week 8: Globalization, the IMF, and the WTO**

# **Readings:**

Oct. 12: On-line: Stiglitz 2003a, pp. ix-xvi, 3-22 (provides an alternate view to Bello)

Oct. 14: On-line: Stiglitz 2003b, pp. 53-67, 73-75 (provides an alternate view to Bello)

On-line: Chang, pp. 19-23 and 40-60

(**Optional**) On-line: What is the WTO (According to the WTO)?

(**Optional**) On-line: Wallach 2004a, pp. 239-253

(**Optional**) On-line: IATP 2016: The Climate Cost of FREE TRADE (the TPP), pp. 1-11

**Week 9: The WTO, NAFTA, and Property Rights**

# **Readings:**

Oct. 19: **Exam 2 Due**

Oct. 21: On-line: Wallach 2004b, pp. 19-22, 25-26, 36-39, 41-47

On-line: Greider (The Right and U.S. Trade Law)

On-line: Public Citizen 2005 (NAFTA Report), pp. viii-xi (Don’t look at earlier pages)

On-line: **Quickly** **Skim This Reading:** Public Citizen 2010 (NAFTA Chapter 11 Cases)

**Week 10: NAFTA, Water, Privatization, and Agriculture**

# **Readings:**

Oct. 26: **Reading Reaction 2 Due**

On-line: Public Citizen 2015a (Prosperity Undermined), pp. 1, 8-12, and 19-20

On-line: Public Citizen 2015b (Investor State Attacks), read pg. 1 and skim 2 or 3 of the case studies

On-line: Barlow (Who Owns Water?)

On-line: Public Citizen 2019 (Comparing Pre- and Post-Trump NAFTA

On-line: Seized! (**You can skip the boxed text, or boxes, in the reading)**

(**Optional**) On-line: Barlow 2010 (Our Right to Water), pp. 4-14 and 21-22

(**Optional**) On-line: Seized! Annex (data on land purchases)

(**Optional**) On-line: Shiva & Holla-Bhar

Oct. 28: On-line: Downey (pp. 115-123 from book chapter on Agriculture)

On-line: Downey (The Social Consequences of Industrial Agriculture)

On-line: Gurian-Sherman, pp. 1-7, 41-65, and 67-68 (**lots of photos and graphs, so read on-line**)

**Week 11: Agriculture**

# **Readings:**

Nov. 2: On-line: Carolan, pp. 57-66 from *The Real Cost of Cheap Food*

(**Optional**)On-line: Downey, pp. 123-164 from book chapter on Agriculture

Nov. 4: On-line: Wallach 2004c, pp. 189-198, 204-5, 208-211

On-line: IATP (NAFTA and Agricultural Concentration)

**Week 12: Militarism and the Environment**

# **Readings:**

Nov. 9: On-line: Downey, “The Environmental and Social Consequences of War and Oil”

On-line: Johnson, pp. 3-bottom of 15, 34-36 & 43-53

On-line: Clark, pp. 59-69

Nov. 11: **Exam 3 Due**

**Week 13: War and Oil**

# **Readings:**

Nov. 16: Klare (from the book you purchased), Preface and chapter 1

Nov. 18: Klare, Chapters 2 & 3

**Week 14: THANSKGIVING & FALL BREAK – NO CLASSES**

**Week 15: Oil, Natural Resources, and War**

# **Readings (from the book you purchased):**

Nov. 30: Klare, Chapter 4 & pp. 180-187

Dec. 2: On-line: Resource Wars, pp. 190-226

On-line: Biden’s Plan for Central America Is a Smokescreen

**Week 16: Social, Political and Economic Change**

# **Readings:**

Dec. 7: I MAY ADD A READING FOR TODAY

Dec. 9: **Exam 4 Due**

**Guidelines for grading were developed several years ago by the sociology department’s undergraduate committee. I have modified them slightly and listed them below:**

|  |
| --- |
| Grade Descriptions (Assuming Your Assignment is Well-Written) |
| A = Technically flawless and exhibiting both substantially greater-than-usual understanding of, and insight into, class readings and startling originality of analysis. |
| B = The grade you get when you satisfactorily complete all of the required elements of an assignment, no more, no less. |
| C = The work fails to fulfill all required elements, but fulfills most of them. |
| D = The work fulfills more than 1/2 of the required elements, but does not fulfill enough of the elements to receive a ‘C.’ |
| F = The work fails to fulfill 1/2 or more of the required elements. |
| ***+'s and –‘s are for gradations in between*** |

**Writing Quality:**

Writing well is an important skill and an important component of your grade. Your grade will not be affected if you make a few spelling mistakes or grammatical errors. However, poor editing, poor sentence and paragraph structure, and poorly organized essays and answers can drop your grade anywhere from a third-of-a-grade to a full letter grade or two (depending upon the severity of the problem). In extreme cases, poor writing can result in a failing grade (for example, you will receive an ‘F’ if it is impossible to follow your argument).

**Summarizing arguments:**

When summarizing an argument you must not only clearly describe all the elements and main points in the argument, you must also clearly explain how those elements and points are connected to each other.

Professor Downey’s Expectations

1. Attend class every day.
2. Arrive in class on time every day.
3. Your zoom feed must be turned on during class.
4. Don’t move away from your zoom feed for any reason.
5. Do not talk to anyone else or surf the web during class.
6. Class begins on time.
7. Take complete and thorough lecture notes.
8. If you miss class, get lecture notes from another student (then talk to me if you do not understand the notes).
9. Treat everyone in the class with respect.
10. Participate in class discussions.
11. DO ALL THE ASSIGNED READINGS BEFORE THE CLASS ON WHICH THEY ARE DUE.

**University Policies**

# **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 behavior](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-classroom-and-course-related-behavior) and the [Student Code of Conduct](https://www.colorado.edu/sccr/sites/default/files/attached-files/2019-2020_student_code_of_conduct_0.pdf).

# **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 website](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 Conditions](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. Violations of the policy may include: 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 at the [Honor Code Office website](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 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 [cureport@colorado.edu](mailto:cureport@colorado.edu). Information about the OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](https://cuboulder.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0PnqVK4kkIJIZnf), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](http://www.colorado.edu/institutionalequity/).

Please know that faculty and 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 options for reporting and support resources.

# **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. Y**ou need to let Professor Downey know of religious obligations that interfere with exams and assignments at least two weeks before the exam or assignment is due.** See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/observance-religious-holidays-and-absences-classes-andor-exams) for full details.