

Sociology 4007- 001

Global Human Ecology

Spring 2016

Instructor: Dr. Mike Haffey

Department of Sociology

mhaffey@colorado.edu

Office hrs. Mon.2-5pm & Tues. 5-6pm 163 Ketchum Hall

office phone 303.492.8838

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 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 social systems are imbedded. The individual, the social, the ecological and the interconnections therein, this is our analytical framework.

Our objective this semester to is to enhance our sociological imaginations and develop even more potent ecological imaginations, that is to say, to include the central role of natural systems in our emergent sociological analyses. I have designed this course with an emphasis on the nexus concerns of energy, consumerism, climate change, human migration and inequality. I believe these foci to be of critical importance and perhaps the most vital topics confronting humanity in this “age of globalization.”

We will begin by learning to think in systems terms. Systems 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. There is no way to live in twenty-first century America without producing an environmental impact, often a pretty big one. Making careful choices, informed by systems thinking, can reduce that impact. It is my hope that through a series of rich discussions 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.

We will develop expertise in the sociology of climate change including driving forces, impacts, mitigation and adaptation, as well as a range of issues reflecting the socio-political dimensions of current efforts to deal with the reality of a disrupted climate system.

The three books I have chosen for this course were written and designed to facilitate your understanding of the “system dimensions” of both the social and natural worlds. These texts are diverse in format and purpose. These three 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 three required texts for this course include:

- **Thinking in Systems: A Primer** by D. Meadows
- **Climate and Human Migration: Past Experiences, Future Challengers** by R. McLeman
- **Climate Change and Society** by R. Dunlap and R. Brulle

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 (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, as well as help co-facilitate our class discussion. We all have a responsibility to make a small seminar-style class such as this work well. 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.

*Seven (7) exams (10% each/ 70% of final grade) covering lecture and text material.
Exam dates: 1/28; 2/11; 2/25; 3/10; 4/7; 4/21 & 5/5 (cumulative final exam) @1:30pm.

*One "sociology of climate change" research paper (20% of final grade) the focus of and criteria for to be assigned in class.

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 nationality.

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.