Sociology 265EC: Earth in Crisis

Fall 2019
Fridays, 9 a.m. till noon
SSMS 3017

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“It is easier to imagine the end of the world than it is to imagine the end of capitalism” – Fredrick Jameson, “Future City,” New Left Review 21 (May-June 2003)

Statement of Purpose and Course Description

This course will explore the causes, consequences, and possible outcomes of the climate crisis on a global scale, with attention to the social, political, economic, and cultural implications of the most recent science, the current and future impacts of climate change, climate governance and the global negotiations process, and climate justice activism.

Texts

There will be a relatively heavy amount of reading in this course, so you must decide what to read and how much to read. All course readings are posted on GauchoSpace.

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1 This course welcomes all interested students. Students with disabilities requiring accommodation to fully participate in course activities should speak to the Disabled Students Program, as well as the Instructor. We will do everything possible to accommodate your individual needs. For more information, go to http://dsp.sa.ucsb.edu/
Attendance and Participation

Attendance at all class meetings is indispensable for making this course a success for all of us. Class participation will be measured by attendance and participation in class, volunteering on multiple occasions for presenting a reading, and general engagement with the materials.

Writing Assignments

Let’s center this course on class discussion and an effort to co-create new knowledges through collective learning. The only writing assignment is to produce a brief critical essay on the reading before class each week to be circulated through GauchoSpace by 6 p.m. on Thursdays so that we can all read each other’s briefs before class meets. Your essay can take any form you like as long as it fits on two pages, double-spaced, with 1” margins all around and 12-point size. Shorter essays are fine.

Course Outline

Friday, September 27. Earth in Crisis

Readings:

“Welcome to u.lab”

Adam Sacks, “The fallacy of climate activism” (August 24, 2019),

Rob Brezsny’s Free Will Astrology column for September 18, 2019

Recommended background reading that can be done at any time for this class:


Friday, October 4. Grasping the moment

Reading:

Rupert Read and Samuel Alexander, This Civilization is Finished:
Conversations on the End of Empire - and what lies beyond  
(Melbourne: Simplicity Institute, 2019).

Friday, October 11. Climate Governance and the UNFCCC

Readings:


John Foran, “What is Climate X?” Unpublished ms.


In-class screening of Climate Deadline Paris (Richard Widick, 2015, 68 minutes).

Friday, October 18. Climate Justice Movements

Readings:

Naomi Klein, This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate (Simon and Schuster, 2014).

Richard Gilman-Opalsky and Stevphen Shukaitis, Riotous Epistemology: Imaginary Power, Art, and Insurrection.

John Foran, “The Varieties of Hope” (June 2018),  

Paul Abela, “Could climate strikes lead to a global revolution?” September


Friday, October 25. Transition Towns and Eco Vista

Readings:


Rob Hopkins, an interview with Drew Dellinger, “If We had More Imagination, We could have Less Capitalism” (July 11, 2018), https://www.resilience.org/stories/2018-07-11/if-we-had-more-imagination-we-could-have-less-capitalism/


John Foran, “From Isla Vista to Eco Vista: A Design Project in Community Resilience” – grant proposal (March 2018).

Daniel Berchenko, “Building Eco Vista: a Prefigurative Praxis with Historical Grounding” (June 2019).

Websites:

Transition United States – http://www.transitionus.org/about-us
Friday, November 1. Green New Deals


Text of the Resolution (February 5, 2019),

Bernie Sanders and the Green New deal packet.

Possibly other readings.

Friday, November 8. Systemic alternatives

Readings:


Friday, November 15. Alternative perspectives

Readings:


Friday, November 22. Back to the Anthropocene and some “final” thoughts

Readings:

Friday, November 29 [Thanksgiving break]: no class

Friday, December 6. Zoom from COP 25 [if possible], a film of alternatives, and farewells

Today we will screen the French film *Demain/Tomorrow* (Elle Driver, 2016, 115 minutes). And, if possible, John will Zoom in from COP 25 in Santiago, Chile.

*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](https://www.demain-lefilm.com/en/film)