

**INT 133B: What's Wrong with the World?
What Can We Do about It?**

Part One: Perspectives and Pathways from the Social Sciences¹



Summer Session B 2020

Mondays and Tuesdays from 12:30 to 3:20 p.m.

Remote from Somewhere in the Cosmos

Zoom link for all classes and John's office hours:

<https://ucsb.zoom.us/j/2295905339>

*Do not be afraid to build castles in the sky,
That is where they belong.
But once the dreams are in place,
Your job is to build the foundation under them.*

Henry David Thoreau

John Foran, Instructor, Professor of Sociology and Environmental Studies
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Office Hours: John's office hours will be held on Mondays right after class from

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

3:30-4:30 p.m. and Tuesdays before class from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and by appointment (I'll also do lots of e-mail consultation)

Joslyn Fritz, Teaching Assistant

E-mail: fritz@bren.ucsb.edu

Office hours: Tuesday and Wednesday from 3:30-4:30pm

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

Note to Students for Summer 2020

You can find lots of resources to manage your remote experience this quarter here: <https://keeplearning.id.ucsb.edu/2020/03/22/student-services/>

So here we are. On the eve of Summer Session B. Anxiety, perhaps instead of excitement, would be understandable.

I can only imagine what you may have been going through personally, emotionally, financially, and in every respect that this virus is affecting so many lives and in so many ways.

My hope is that this course will be a healing experience for you, even though we will be talking about a variety of crises that we will be facing together in the coming months, years, and decades.

Why don't we commit to lifting the pressure off ourselves, relax in the realization that things will inevitably go wrong as we proceed, but decide to emerge from this experience as a real community, ready to take on the world and make it a little better.

Sound like a plan? I hope so, because that IS the plan!

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This brief century of ours is arguably the most significant one in the history of our Universe: the one when its meaningful future gets decided. I have no idea how we'll be thought of, but I'm sure that we won't be remembered as insignificant.

Physicist Max Tegmark, an advocate of the Many-Worlds Interpretation, in *The Mathematical Universe: My Quest for the Ultimate Nature of Reality*. (United Kingdom: Penguin Books, 2014)

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The disaster was not inevitable; every death must be accounted for.

Alfredo Saad-Filho, “Trump, Johnson, and Bolsonaro in the Swamp: How is the Pandemic Going for You?” (July 20, 2020)

This 8-unit course will be team taught by Ken Hiltner, Professor of English and Director of the [Environmental Humanities Center](#), and John Foran, Professor of Sociology and Environmental Studies and member and co-founder of the [UCSB Environmental and Climate Justice Hub](#). *What you are reading right now is John Foran’s half of the course, which will be taught on Mondays and Tuesdays.*

In this course, we will investigate the future, asking what might the world look like in the year 2030? 2040? 2050? Or how about 2020?? What will be the state of climate change? What will schools, cities, agriculture, jobs, nations, energy sources, technology, political systems, international relations, the global and local economy, and much more look like? How will people make sense and meaning of their world? What future worlds can we foresee from where we are now, ranging widely and wildly from the awful to the utopian? How will we get to the better worlds we hope to be living in?

Except...

We are now learning in the shadow of the corona crisis and the George Floyd rebellion and the resurgence of Black Lives Matter. So when we ask what’s wrong with the world and what we might do about it, we are standing in a very different place than we were a year ago in the summer of 2019....

The plan remains the same, however many crises get piled on top of one another and turn lives upside down.

Starting with the current political, economic, cultural, and climate crises of Earth and humanity, we will attempt to figure out what's wrong with the world.

Pivoting to our main topic quite quickly: the consideration of alternatives to the present system – sustainable ecovillages, *buen vivir* (roughly, “living in a better way”), Transition Towns, degrowth, the rights of Mother Earth, and ecosocialism/ecofeminism among them – and as we begin to imagine our roles in building what could possibly turn out to be a far better world by 2030, and if possible, *much sooner!*

This course will involve immersive, project-based work, with role playing, creative productions, individual and/or group projects, and more. This is not a multiple choice, mid-term and final class! Essential to these two courses that are one will be a collaborative model of discovering, curating, and analyzing material.

Statement of Purpose and Course Description – PLEASE READ THIS

Why is this class important? Because it's your (our) future we'll be trying to figure out how to fight for!

This special course opens upon 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 much scarier – climate crisis.

But this course is really focused on hope, imagination, and the roles all of us could play in building a far better world in our lifetimes.

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.”

This means we will need to *take action* to deal with the most pressing problem of the 21st century, the problem of climate change.

The main focus of this course is to train our sociological and ecological imaginations to co-create the kind of society that might weather the climate maelstrom that is coming and actually come out on the other side (or more

realistically in the midst of it as it inexorably deepens) with societies far more suited to human well-being and thriving than the ones we presently have all around the world.

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

Background and Meaning of What We Are Going to Do Together

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC, is the world's most distinguished body of climate scientists and others who are mapping the extent of our climate crisis. Their most recent assessment concluded that our only viable option would require *massive (unspecified) social transformation*. In the [words](#) of activist journalist Dahr Jamal:

A landmark [UN report released in October](#) [2018] served as an imminent warning that if governments fail to act swiftly and dramatically (and within the next dozen years), droughts, flooding, and increasingly extreme heat waves will increase drastically.

In the Paris Climate Change Agreement, global governments pledged to try to keep warming within [a limit of 1.5°C](#) above pre-industrial levels, in order to prevent increasingly catastrophic impacts.

In the recent UN report, experts stated that without urgent and *unprecedented* changes, meeting the 1.5°C [the upper limit we can safely allow] would be impossible [italics and brackets added by JF].

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 social justice in all its senses.

Governments whose short-term interests and economic elites are not served by this vision 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?”

This emphasis on finding new narratives puts us firmly in the domain of the

environmental humanities and qualitative social sciences, the perspectives that inform this course. And it is an invitation to *you* – to *all* of us – to put our growing knowledge and imaginations to good purpose!

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

My Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

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 three [yes!] 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, improvised mini-lectures, films, interaction with guests, role playing, and ... *did I mention discussions?*

In these six short weeks, Ken Hiltner, Joslyn Fritz, and I will ask each of you to do *a lot* of reading, thinking, discussing, and writing; our pledge is that engagement with these materials should prove a rewarding – and, who knows? – possibly a life-changing experience.

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

Texts

There will be quite a bit of reading in this course considering that we will condense ten weeks' worth of material for two full ten-week 4-unit courses into six

weeks. My goal is to keep the core reading down to around 100 pages a week – sometimes more and sometimes less – this includes some exciting and inspiring materials you can't find elsewhere – or your money back!

All course readings – including several books – will be posted on our GauchoSpace for the class. What you might spend money on is printing out key texts, which I encourage you to do. Let me know if you have any problems accessing the readings.

Using GauchoSpace and Your UCSB E-mail

This summer we will make *extensive* use of UCSB's on-line course website at GauchoSpace. Please *check it out well before every class*. It is also the place where you will hand in all your work, and indeed your writing will constitute an important part of the class materials.

Please get in the habit of checking your UCSB e-mail on a regular basis for important announcements, valuable tips, and special opportunities!

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

This class *must* keep tuned in to what's happening around the world. Because of this, you will need to tap into the news, wherever it is found. Excellent resources, among many others, are:

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

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/>

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 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/>

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 KPFK 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/>

Some Important Messages from UCSB Student Services

(1) *Food and Housing security.* **If you are facing any challenges securing food or housing**, and believe this may affect your performance in the class, you are urged to meet with a Food Security Peer Advisor, who is aware of the broad variety of resources, including Calfresh, the AS Food Bank, and more that UCSB has to offer (see their drop-in hours at food.ucsb.edu). You are also urged to contact the professor if you are comfortable doing so.

(2) *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.

(3) *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](tel:805-893-4411) or visit <http://counseling.sa.ucsb.edu/>

(4) *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.

(5) *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 TA 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 [I think he even means the instructor].
- 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 already had the chance to speak in class that day, you make an effort to drop back, listen, and encourage others to speak (so, how we will operationalize this is: if you have spoken, don't raise your hand again until that option is offered). Step up means, if it's a challenge to speak in class or 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 with me 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 and Assignments

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

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 meetings and to prepare reading assignments in order to participate *fully* in discussions; we do 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 come prepared to participate at every meeting*. Have we mentioned this already?

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). Always

spellcheck your work and make sure it makes sense before you hand it in. You will upload papers as **Word** documents [*no pdf's please*] onto our class GauchoSpace.

This is the assignment structure for the class [this is for the 50 percent of the class that John is teaching]:

Attendance and Participation: Ten percent of your grade

Ethnographic Essay on an Eco Vista General Assembly: Ten percent of your grade

Reading Responses. Fifty percent of your grade

Group or Individual Action Project. Thirty percent of your grade

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Attendance and Participation

Ten percent of your grade

Attendance at all meetings is indispensable for making this course a success for all. Participation will be measured by attendance, participation in class discussions, and willingness to present on one or more of the assigned readings to the class. 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.***

Making a presentation. In a number of our sessions, a class member, or sometimes two or more students working together will make a two- or three-minute presentation on one of the readings. See “How to Make a Great Presentation” on our GauchoSpace.

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Ethnographic Essay on an Eco Vista General Assembly

Ten percent of your grade

Due by Sunday, September 6

Here is how it works:

You must attend at least one of the three Friday General Assemblies of Eco Vista Summer, from noon to 2 p.m. [August 7 or 21, September 4], and post your

observations on it in a 500-600 word essay. Feel free to write informally. However, please spellcheck your work and make sure it makes sense. In our writing, we want to be respectful of other peoples' views and keep our minds open.

*

Reading Reflections and Replies

Fifty percent of your grade

[get at least the first two done by August 21]

*You will be asked to write five reading reflections this quarter, and post replies to any of your classmates' reflections on five occasions. Feel free to write informally. Remember: *In our writing, we want to be respectful of other peoples' views and keep our minds open.**

Note: you may substitute a website analysis or a film review for up to two of your Reading Reflection.

Each week for weeks 1-5, you will be expected to:

Post your reading response by 10 a.m. on Monday **or** Tuesday (see guidelines below).

Respond to one other person's online reading response (see guidelines below). This is due before class on Tuesday (except for week one when you can take an extra day).

Here is how it works:

Please post your reflections of about 350-500 words by 10 a.m. *on the day before the class they are assigned for* [that is, write about Monday's readings before Monday's class, and on Tuesday you can write about just Tuesday's readings or both Monday and Tuesday's].

Feel free to write them in any way you want – just a few of the many possibilities for engaging with the reading(s) might be: write about something you liked, and briefly explaining why; write about something you *didn't* agree with, or that confused you, briefly explaining why; engage with the main arguments of one or more readings, explain how the readings relate to each other, or reflect on how a reading relates to a previously discussed theme or reading, the current world situation, or your own life.

End your reflection with *one open-ended discussion* question for the class that emerges from the issues you raised in your response. Feel free to write informally or in the first person. You may include your emotions and feelings if you want. However, please spellcheck your work and make sure it makes sense. In our writing, we should be respectful of other peoples' views and keep our minds open.

*You are also asked to **reply** to someone else's reflection.* Your reply should contain at least three sentences and be addressed to the person to whom you are replying, so indicate their name.

Pick someone's reflection that interests you, provokes some thoughts, even disagreement, and/or enlightens a subject for you. It is fine if a few people reply to the same response.

Please add your reply to someone else to your reflection before you post it or add it later as a response to your own essay – please also post it as a reply to the person you are responding to, so they get to see it. Folks may continue to respond to each other's reflections and replies as much as they like!

Note: all your reading responses and replies will be available to read by class members, so if you have time after posting yours, see what your new classmates are talking about!

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Group or Individual Action Project

Thirty percent of your grade

[presentations for ten percent are on September 8, final written piece for twenty percent due September 12]

Everyone will choose a project, either individually or in a group of any size, on a topic of your choice that in some way addresses the title of the class: "What's Wrong with the World? What Can We Do about It?"

Formats for projects might take a variety of forms:

- A written report or blog post (with images if you like)
- A documentary video plus with an accompanying introduction
- A creative work: fictional video/short story/script/graphic narrative of a present or future scenario with an accompanying introduction

We can certainly devote some time in class to discussing these assignments and such questions as how long your project should be in words or minutes, how to carry it out, and so on, if you wish.

You will have three minutes [per person] to present your project to the class on Tuesday, September 8, and your final report and any accompanying materials is due on GauchoSpace by midnight on Saturday, September 12.

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.*

Please contact Jos and/or John if you are having any difficulties with assignments.

Course Topics and Reading Assignments

Part One: Connect the Dots

Only a crisis – actual or perceived – produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around. That, I believe, is our basic function: to develop alternatives to existing policies, to keep them alive and available until the politically impossible becomes the politically inevitable.

Milton Friedman

Week One: The Name of the Crisis is Climate Change

A crisis, says one dictionary, is “the point in the progress of a disease when a change takes place which is decisive of recovery or death; also, any marked or sudden change of symptoms, etc.” This crisis could be the death or the recovery of a more democratic, more inclusive, more generous America. Where we go from here is up to us.

[Rebecca Solnit](#), “Victories against Trump are mounting. Here’s how we deal the final blow” (June 2017)

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PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING TWO PIECES BEFORE OUR FIRST MEETING AND POST A HUNDRED WORDS OF YOUR THOUGHTS ON GAUCHOSPACE BEFORE CLASS!

Alfredo Saad-Filho, “Trump, Johnson, and Bolsonaro in the Swamp: How is the Pandemic Going for You?” (July 20, 2020), <https://socialistproject.ca/2020/07/trump-johnson-bolsonaro-the-swamp/>

Emily Kawano and Julie Matthaei, “System Change: A Basic Primer to the Solidarity Economy” (July 28, 2020), <https://countercurrents.org/2020/07/system-change-a-basic-primer-to-the-solidarity-economy/>

Monday, August 3: Welcome to the Perfect Storm!

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 through a look at the nature of the intersecting crises humanity faces.

Readings: **See above for the reading to do before class!**

An optional video on the deep background to the crisis that you can watch any time you like is *Capitalism Is The Crisis: Radical Politics in the Age of Austerity* (directed by Michael Truscello, 2011, 99 minutes), a radical documentary that examines the roots of the Great Recession of 2008-9 and shows a variety of paths out of the current crisis, including that of the global justice movement, <http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/capitalism-is-the-crisis/>

Tuesday, August 4: How we feel about living in the shadow of catastrophe (and confronting the crisis with our collective class work!)

Today we will explore some of our feelings about living at this crucial moment in history, and discuss the class project options together.

Reading

Please try to read the course syllabus so you can better understand the big picture of our work together!

The common reading is the following chapters of Rupert Read and Samuel Alexander, *This Civilization is Finished: Conversations on the End of Empire - and what lies beyond* (Melbourne: Simplicity Institute, 2019):

- 1: “Gazing into the abyss”
- 7: “Civil disobedience and the Extinction Rebellion”
- 8: “Politics and spirituality”
- 13: “Crisis as opportunity”
- 16: “Culture and Political Economy”
- 17: “The beginning is near”

Note: we will need volunteers to make short (2-3 minute) presentations on the remaining chapters in the book!

Week Two: Eco Vista, Transition Towns, and local alternatives

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

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

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Readings

“Eco Vista in the Quintuple Crisis.” Pp. 284-291 in *Interface: A Journal for and about Social Movements*. Volume 12. Issue 1 (July 2020). <https://www.interfacejournal.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Foran.pdf>

Vikalp Sangam Core Group, “Extraordinary Work of ‘Ordinary’ People – Beyond Pandemics and Lockdowns” (Pune, India, May

2020), <http://vikalpsangam.org/article/extraordinary-work-of-ordinary-people-beyond-pandemics-and-lockdowns/#.XxiF9-d7mUk>

Websites to study

Eco Vista –
<https://ecovistacommunity.com/>

Vikalp Sangam –
<http://vikalpsangam.org/about/>

Transition United States –
<http://www.transitionus.org/about-us>

Global Ecovillage Network –
<http://gen.ecovillage.org/en/article/what-ecovillage>

Optional reading which explains my whole approach to the issues

John Foran, “Finding Pathways to a Better Future: A proposal that our movements confront the issue of Political Power, finding new ways to take and use it,” *Radical Ecological Democracy* (December 16, 2017), <http://www.radicalecologicaldemocracy.org/finding-pathways-to-a-better-future/>

Part Two: Learn to Love

“Aren’t we privileged to live in a time when everything is at stake, and when our efforts make a difference in the eternal contest between the forces of light and shadow, between togetherness and division, between justice and exploitation?”

Oh, be joyful that you are a warrior in this great time!

“Will we rise to this battle? If so, we cannot lose, for rising up to it is our victory. If we represent love in the world, you see, we have already won.”

Doris “Granny D” Haddock, political activist

Week Three: Interlude -- Demain and Quantum Social Theory

The scientific paradigm that has identified climate change as a problem is inadequate when it comes to motivating the individual and collective actions needed to respond to a world in crisis. For if there is one thing that emerges from this inquiry, it is that we may actually be underestimating our collective capacity for social change....

Will the risks and dangers associated with today's global crises push us far enough out of our comfort zones to explore whether "social reality is not what it seems"? Given the seriousness of climate change, it would be tragic if we failed to do so, because the potential to transform exists here and now. Every moment provides an opportunity to take actions that generate transformative change. If our beliefs influence the future, believing in our capacity to create an equitable and thriving world matters more than we think.

*Last lines of Karen O'Brien, *You Matter More than You Think: Quantum Social Science in Response to a World in Crisis**

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Monday, August 17 and Tuesday, August 18: : *Demain*, Quantum Social Theory, and 2040

On each of these two days, we will screen and discuss a film: for Monday, it's *Demain/Tomorrow* (Elle Driver, 2016, 116 minutes), and for Tuesday it's *2040* (Damon Gameau, 2019, 92 minutes).

We will also go on a "field trip" with a new book on quantum social theory, perhaps the cutting edge [or at least the outer fringe] of the sociology of the climate crisis!

Reading

Karen O'Brien, *You Matter More than You Think: Quantum Social Science in Response to a World in Crisis*. Unpublished manuscript circulated for feedback in June 2020, AdaptationCONNECTS, University of Oslo, Norway

Have a look at *Demain'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>

And here is *2040*’s website:

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7150512/>

Luke Buckmaster, “2040 review – an idealist's vision of a healthy Earth” (April 3, 2019),

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/apr/04/2040-review-an-idealists-vision-of-a-healthy-earth>

Week Four: *The Pluriverse of Systemic Alternatives*

There is no doubt that after decades of what has been called ‘development’, the world is in crisis – systemic, multiple, and asymmetrical; long in the making, it now extends across all continents. Never before did so many crucial aspects of life fail simultaneously, and people’s expectations for their own and children’s futures look so uncertain. Crisis manifestations are felt across all domains: environmental, economic, social, political, ethical, cultural, spiritual, and embodied....

What has been missing is a broad transcultural compilation of concrete concepts, worldviews, and practices from around the world, challenging the modernist ontology of universalism in favour of a multiplicity of possible worlds. This is what it means to call for a Pluriverse...

From the introduction to *Pluriverse*

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Monday, August 24 and Tuesday, August 25: Meet the Pluriverse

This week’s meetings will be a plunge into to the amazing array of alternative ideas, practices, and experiments from all over the world. Our text is the new book, *Pluriverse*. We will work out how to accomplish this feat together...

Reading

Alberto Acosta, Federico Demaria, Arturo Escobar, Ashish Kothari, Ariel Salleh, *Pluriverse: A Post-Development Dictionary* (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2019), selected chapters.

Part Three: Act, Together

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

Dalai Lama

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Week Five: A Taste of the Greatest Social Movement of All Time



Students take part in a climate rally in Parliament Square on May 24, 2019 in London. ([Photo](#): Dan Kitwood/Getty Images)

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Monday, August 31: Extinction Rebellion and the Power of Disruption

Today’s class will introduce us to Extinction Rebellion, one of the most exciting new organizations on the global climate justice scene.

Reading

John Foran, “Finding Pathways to a Better Future: A proposal that our movements confront the issue of Political Power, finding new ways to take and use it,” *Radical Ecological Democracy* (December 16, 2017), <http://www.radicalecologicaldemocracy.org/finding-pathways-to-a-better-future/>

Please also read selected chapters from Rupert Read, *Extinction Rebellion: Essays from the Inside*, with an introduction by Samuel Alexander (Simplicity Institute: 2020).

Tuesday, September 1. Isla Vista Green New Deal House Party!

We devote today’s class will be a role play as groups of concerned neighbors living in Isla Vista trying to figure out what we want for our world.

Website

Study the Eco Vista Green New Deal:
<https://ecovistacommunity.com/eco-vista-green-new-deal/>

Readings

Text of the Original Green New Deal Resolution (February 5, 2019), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/109/text>

Skim one of the following [each represents a distinct version of the Green New Deal]:

- 1) [An Ecosocialist Green New Deal](#)
- 2) [A Feminist Green New Deal](#)
- 3) [Howie Hawkins/Green Party Green New Deal](#)
- 4) [The Red New Deal](#)
- 5) [Jeremy Brecher, “A Green New Deal for Workers”](#)
- 6) [Bernie Sanders Green New Deal](#)

Week Six: What We Found Out -- The Future will be Made by Us

NO CLASS Monday, September 7: A Labor Day to Work on Our Projects!

Tuesday, September 8: Presentations, Presentations ... and Celebration!

Today we will present our class projects to each other.

We will conclude our work in a variety of ways and there will be surprises! This will also be a final brainstorming session about everything we've all learned and for those who are interested, some discussion of how we might get more involved in hands-on changing the world for the better.

Optional Reading

[John Foran](https://www.resilience.org/stories/2018-07-02/the-varieties-of-hope/), "Cracks in the Concrete: The Varieties of Hope" (June 2018), <https://www.resilience.org/stories/2018-07-02/the-varieties-of-hope/>

Final projects are due on Saturday, September 12 by midnight.

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