

## **Sociology 190A**

### **The Eco Vista Project**

#### **A Community-Based Participatory Research Practicum**

*Spring 2019*

Girvetz 2110

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Office Hours: John's office hours will be held on Tuesdays at Cafe Cafe (across the street from Embarcadero Hall in ~~Isla~~ Eco Vista) for the first 60 minutes (12:30-1:30 p.m.) and in his office (SSMS 3417) for the second 60 minutes (2-3 p.m.). You can also schedule other times by appointment (and I'll do lots of e-mail consultation).

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

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

Dalai Lama

#### **Statement of Purpose and Course Description**

This 4-unit class is a special offering, first-time course designed to focus our sociological imaginations on creating the kind of society that might weather the climate storm that is coming and actually come out on the other side (or more realistically in the midst of it as it deepens) with societies far more suited to human well-being and thriving than the ones we presently have all around the world.

We will ground our work together by participation in an exciting new UCSB-community project called Eco Vista, which refers to a transition of Isla Vista into a model eco-village over the next ten years.

The heart of the class will be group projects with relevant community partners in Isla Vista, either initiated by each member of the class or by joining an ongoing project in the community.

This will be accompanied by a set of readings that provide a historical context for our work, situate Eco Vista in the literature on eco-villages, and explore a variety of cutting edge theoretical and real-world systemic alternatives that will encourage creative thinking about the problems posed by the climate crisis.

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

### **Using GauchoSpace and Your UCSB E-mail**

Yes, we will use both – they are indispensable to our work, so check them regularly!

### **Course Requirements and Assignments<sup>1</sup>**

*OK, here's the creative part of the class process.* We will come up with ideas for one or more group projects in the first two weeks of the class. This could be you working with another class member, UCSB students not enrolled in the class, or people interested in a practical project that stems out of the Eco Vista process.

*Group Project Proposal. 25 percent of your grade [due April 30]*

Written project proposals will be due by the end of week two of the quarter and will count for 25 percent of your grade. Guidelines will be clarified at our first class meeting.

*Fieldwork Notes. 25 percent of your grade [due May 6 and May 20]*

During the quarter you will keep a journal of relevant fieldnotes that documents your activities on the project you have chosen. We will share these journals with each other at several points during the quarter.

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<sup>1</sup> **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). You will upload papers as Word documents onto our class GauchoSpace.

*Group Project Proposal and Final Presentation. 25 percent of your grade*

Ten- to fifteen-minute class presentations will be scheduled over the last two weeks of quarter and will count for 25 percent of your grade. These will take place on May 28 and June 4.

*Final Report. 25 percent of your grade [due June 10]*

You will be asked to write a 1,500-word essay due on Monday, June 10. This will be the place where you get to reflect deeply on what you have learned this quarter.

## **Course Meetings, Topics, Readings**

### **Tuesday, April 9. First meeting**

After an introduction to the course and to each other we will hear a presentation and invitation to Eco Vista, the vision and the goal of turning Isla Vista into an eco-village in the next ten years, to start a discussion of what the Eco Vista Project entails.

We will also begin to identify some of the projects each participant might want to work on this quarter.

Please take some time to explore this website before class:

[www.ecovistacommunity.com](http://www.ecovistacommunity.com)

### **Readings**

Jessica Alvarez Parfrey, “Eco Vista: An Origin Story and Vision Statement” (January 24, 2018)

Eco Vista Community Mission Statement, “Taking the Community of Isla Vista Into the Future” (February 2019), <https://ecovistacommunity.com/our-mission/>

“Project: Eco-Vista – Building Co-creative and Earth-Conscious Communities around College Campuses” (flyer, summer 2017)

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

George Thurlow, “Isla Vista: So Close to UCSB, So Far from Good” (Winter 2014),  
[http://www.ucsbalum.com/Coastlines/2014/Winter/feature\\_ivhi\\_story.html](http://www.ucsbalum.com/Coastlines/2014/Winter/feature_ivhi_story.html)

## **Tuesday, April 23. Early Project Reports and Readings on Eco-villages**

Today we will hear from each participant about their initial engagement with their project, discuss opportunities and obstacles, and offer advice to each other on how to meet them.

We will also ground our work in readings about the practical and theoretical issues involved in constructing eco-villages and learn about the Transition Towns movement.

### **Websites of interest**

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

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

Common Transition Primer website:  
<https://primer.commontransition.org/>

### **Readings**

Leila Dregger, “The Power of Community,” pp. 28-39 in *Ecovillage – 1001 Ways to Heal the Planet*, edited by Kosha Joubert and Leila Dregger (Devon, UK: Triarchy Press, 2015)

Diana Leaf Christian, “Starting a Successful Urban Ecovillage,” *Hopedance Magazine* #51 (August 2009),  
<http://www.hopedance.org/home/housing-news/1218-941>

Ester Alloun and Samuel Alexander, “The Transition Movement: Questions of Diversity, Power, and Affluence,”

Simplicity Institute (August 2014),  
<http://www.resilience.org/stories/2014-08-18/the-transition-movement-questions-of-diversity-power-and-affluence/>.

Naresh Giangrande, “Seven Lessons on Starting a Worldwide Movement for Change” (February 9, 2018),  
<http://www.resilience.org/stories/2018-02-09/seven-lessons-on-starting-a-worldwide-movement-for-change/>

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/>

**NOTE: Fieldwork notes [journal] should be posted on Gauchospace by Tuesday, April 30 at midnight!**

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**NOTE: Project Proposals should be posted on Gauchospace by Monday, May 6, at midnight!**

## **Tuesday, May 7. Mid-Project Reports and Readings on Systemic Alternatives**

Today we will share project reports and work on solving problems we are experiencing in the work.

We will also discuss a set of readings on some of the visionary systemic alternatives being proposed and debated by scholars and community activists, including degrowth, *buen vivir*, and intersectional ecosocialism.

### **Websites of interest**

The Degrowth Movement,  
<https://www.degrowth.de/en/dim/degrowth-in-movements/>

The Pachamama Alliance –  
<http://www.pachamama.org/about/mission>

System Change Not Climate Change,  
<http://www.systemchangenotclimatechange.org/>

### Readings

“Degrowth,” from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 1-11,  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Degrowth>

Pablo Solón, chapter on “Buen Vivir,” pp. 13-58 in *Systemic Alternatives: Vivir Bien, Degrowth, Commons, Ecofeminism, Rights of Mother Earth, and Deglobalisation*, compiled by Pablo Solón, (La Paz: Focus on the Global South, Attac, Fundación Solón, 2017), [www.systemicalternatives.org](http://www.systemicalternatives.org)

Wayne Price, “A Green New Deal vs. Revolutionary Ecosocialism” (January 4, 2019),  
<https://blackrosefed.org/green-new-deal-ecosocialism/>

**NOTE: Fieldwork notes [journal] should be posted on GauchoSpace by Monday, May 20 at midnight!**

### **Tuesday, May 21. Roundtable Discussion of Project Progress**

Today each participant will make a brief presentation, answer questions, and solicit feedback from class members. We will also discuss the art of making an engaging professional presentation.

### **Tuesday, May 28. Project Presentations I**

Today we will hear the first set of formal group project presentations, hopefully with some of the community and UCSB participants in each group present for the discussion.

### **Tuesday, June 4. Project Presentations II and Final Reflections**

Today we will hear the final set of formal group project presentations, again hopefully with some of the community and UCSB participants in each group present for the discussion.

We will also celebrate our work by sharing reflections on the course and discuss possibilities for continuing to be involved in the Eco Vista Project.

**NOTE: Final Reports should be posted on Gauchospace by Monday, June 10 at midnight!**

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We need to engage in whatever actions appeal to us. There is no act too small, no act too bold. The history of social change is the history of millions of actions, small and large, coming together at certain points in history and creating a power which governments cannot suppress.

Howard Zinn, "An Occupied Country" (2002),  
<http://www.progressive.org/oct03/zinn1003.html>