

Sociology 265EC: Earth in Crisis

Fall 2019

Fridays, 9 a.m. till noon

SSMS 3017

John Foran, Instructor, Professor of Sociology

Office: 3417 Social Sciences Building

Phone: 805 722-0496

e-mail: foran@soc.ucsb.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12:45 - 1:45 p.m., Fridays, noon to 1 p.m. and by appointment

“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 Description¹

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.

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),
<https://grist.org/article/2009-08-23-the-fallacy-of-climate-activism/>

Rob Breznsny's *Free Will Astrology* column for September 18, 2019

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

Danny Chivers, *The Non-Nonsense Guide to Climate Change* (New Internationalist, 2011).

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 and Richard Widick, “Whose Utopia? – Our Utopia! Competing Visions of the Future at the UN Climate Talks.” *Nature and Culture*, “Socialities of Nature Beyond Utopia” 11 (3) (2016): 296-321.

“Not Yet the End of the World: Political Cultures of Opposition and Creation in the Global Youth Climate Justice Movement.” With Corrie Ellis and Summer Gray. Pp. 353-379 in *Interface: A Journal for and about Social Movements*. Volume 9. Issue 2. November/December 2017.

<http://www.interfacejournal.net/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Interface-9-2-Foran-Gray-Grosse.pdf>

John Foran, “What is Climate X?” Unpublished ms.

NXTerra website: <http://live-nxterra-ucop-edu-v01.pantheonsite.io/topic-global-climate-governance/>

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),
<https://www.resilience.org/stories/2018-07-02/the-varieties-of-hope/>

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

22, 2019, <https://medium.com/@abelapaul1/could-climate-strikes-lead-to-a-global-revolution-98d9141e772d>

Laurence Cox, “Dear XR, why not be more honest with your participants? Or, why thinking about social movements actually matters” (October 2019), <https://whysocialmovementsmatter.com/news/2019/10/3/dear-xr-why-not-be-more-honest-with-your-participants>

NXTerra website: <http://live-nxterra-ucop-edu-v01.pantheonsite.io/topic-climate-justice-movements/>

Friday, October 25. Transition Towns and Eco Vista

Readings:

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/>

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/>

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

Transition Network Team, *The Essential Guide to Doing Transition: Getting Transition started in your street, community, town or organization* (Totnes Transition Network, 2016).

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>

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

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

Friday, November 1. Green New Deals

Selections from Naomi Klein, selections from *On Fire: The (Burning) Case for a Green New Deal* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2019).

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

Bernie Sanders and the Green New deal packet.

Possibly other readings.

Friday, November 8. Systemic alternatives

Readings:

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

Friday, November 15. Alternative perspectives

Readings:

Selected readings in Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Priya Kurian, and Debashish Munshi, editors, *Climate Futures: Re-imagining Global Climate Justice* (London: Zed Press, 2019).

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

Readings:

TJ Demos, *Against the Anthropocene: Visual Culture and Environment Today* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2017).

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>

Rob Hopkins, "The unstoppable rise of 'Demain'" (February 5, 2016), <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2016-02-05/the-unstoppable-rise-of-demain>