

Sociology 4007-001

Global Human Ecology

Fall 2009

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Welcome to a new and vital sociology course – Global Human Ecology. The objective of this course is to encourage in you new, ecological literacy skills. Knowing “what’s hitched to what, and how” is central to the development of a more sustainable and humane future for us all. I have chosen the topic of water to explore the relationship between social and natural systems, economy and ecology, human communities and place. Water is central to human affairs and serves as a useful mechanism by which to examine the dynamic interlay of the human and natural worlds.. This timely course, part of our department’s environmental sociology program, will push each of you to develop / fine-tune your ecological literacy skills (which includes the ability to ask; what then?) and critical reasoning skills (the ability to determine the truthfulness and validity of statements about social life). It is my hope that such a “hydrosociology” will enable us to become more attuned to these many critical linkages and interchanges and more clearly grasp the sociological dimension of our global human ecology.

As pioneers in the sociology of water, we have the unique opportunity to analyze social life and ecosystems, human practices and finite resources, in light of each other. So I invite you down this watery path (a slippery slope?) where socio-economics and hydrological cycles collide. Race, class, gender, region, religion are all central elements of dam construction, bottled water, instream flows, desalination efforts, floods and droughts, the privatization of water, interstate water conflicts, and of course, global climate disruption (a crises mediated by water). Through our treatment of current water issues we will also address related matters of appropriate scale, ecological design, limits to growth, food and water security, national sovereignty and social conflict.

It is my belief that any effort to understand the global necessitates an understanding of the local. Global water issues are manifest and reflected locally. These are not just issues happening to someone else, in some other place. These issues impact each of us, everywhere, always. Thus a working understanding of own watershed and water-use must coincide with any broader “global” treatments. The local and the global are ultimately intertwined.

I expect lively and thoughtful participation by all members of this class. I expect you to read the appropriate material before every class meeting and come prepared to talk, share, apply, refine, and/ or challenge the topic at hand. I favor frequent and informed participation. I strongly encourage you to become a regular member of this class. Please bring your books with you to each class meeting. Your grade for this course will be based on the following criteria: class engagement / participation (20%) three exams (60%) and a small group research project / presentation (20%). In determining final grades I do use the +/- system. If you are going to miss an exam it is vital that you notify me prior to the exam. The three required texts for this course are available at both the UMC and Hill bookstores.

The World’s Water 2008-2009 by Peter Gleick

Blue Covenant: The Global Water Crises and the Coming Battle For the Right to Water.

by Maude Barlow

Water Wars: Privatization, Pollution, and Profit by Vandana Shiva

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).

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 a religious observance.

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 discussions and to get reasonable 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 nationalities.

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 up on 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.