

**What's Wrong with the World? How Do We Fix It?  
Perspectives and Solutions from the Environmental Humanities and Social  
Sciences<sup>1</sup>**

**INT 133B: The Social Sciences**

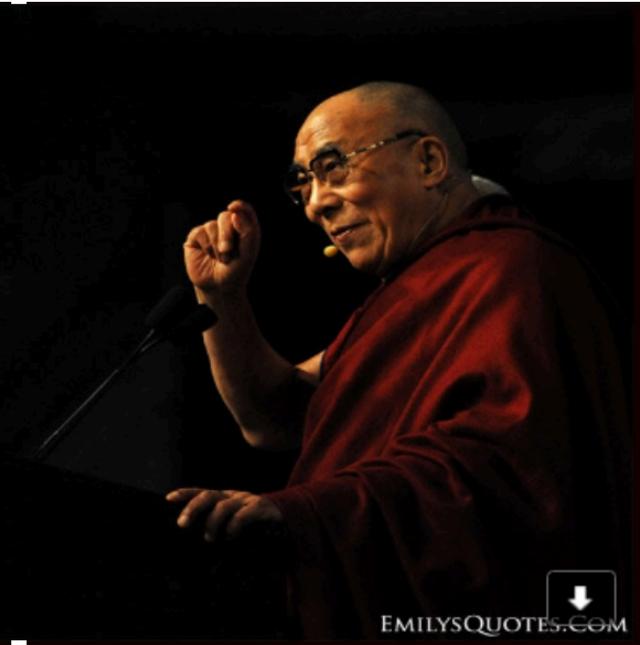
**Summer Session A 2018**

**Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays: 12:30-3:20 p.m.**

**Phelps 1160**

"We will never solve our problems simply by instituting new laws and regulations. Ultimately, the source of our problems lies at the level of the individual. If people lack moral values and integrity, no system of laws and regulations will be adequate. So long as people give priority to material values, then injustice, inequity, intolerance and greed -- all the outward manifestations of neglect of inner values -- will persist."

*~Dalai Lama*



John Foran, Instructor, Professor of Sociology

Office: 3417 Social Sciences Building

E-mail: [foran@soc.ucsb.edu](mailto:foran@soc.ucsb.edu)

Office Hours: John's office hours will be held after class at the Coral Tree Cafe (near Cheadle Hall) on Mondays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. and at the Library Cafe on Tuesdays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., and by appointment (I'll also do lots of e-mail consultation)

---

<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

Sarah Manski, Teaching Assistant

Office: TBA

E-mail: [smanski@ucsb.edu](mailto:smanski@ucsb.edu)

Office hours: TBA

If you care about children, health, poverty, farmers, food, hunger, or the economy, you really have no choice but to care about climate change. The reasons for acting may be somber, but the fight is a gift and an honor. What it will give you in return is meaning, purpose, hope, your best self, some really good company, and the satisfaction of being part of victories also to come. But what victory means needs to be imagined on a whole new scale as the news worsens....

This is, among other things, a war of the imagination: the carbon profiteers and their politicians are hoping you don't connect the dots, or imagine the various futures we could make or they could destroy, or grasp the remarkably beautiful and complex ways the natural world has worked to our benefit and is now being sabotaged, or discover your conscience and voice, or ever picture how different it could all be, how different it will need to be.

They are already at war against the wellbeing of our Earth. Their greed has no limits, their imagination nothing but limits. Fight back. You have the power. It's one of your gifts.

Rebecca Solnit, "[2013 as Year Zero for Us – and Our Planet](#)"

\*

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 co-founder of the [Climate Justice Project](#). *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 2050? 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?

Starting with the current political, economic, cultural, and climate crises of Earth and humanity, we consider alternatives to the present system – sustainable ecovillages, *buen vivir*, transition towns, degrowth, the rights of nature, and ecosocialism among them – and our roles in building what could possibly turn out to be a far better world by 2050. We will also consider the ways that climate change is being fiercely debated on the public stage through a careful look at the rhetoric of these debates.

This course will involve immersive, project-based work, with role playing, creative productions, individual and 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!

This special course starts with 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 change.

But this course is about 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.” For sociologist Constance Lever-Tracy: “We must ultimately aim for a thorough going de-carbonisation, a halt to all emissions, by a complete revolution in the way we produce and live.”

This means we will need to *take action* to deal with the most pressing

problem of the 21st century, the problem of climate change. Importantly, this means moving the world toward the most progressive possible global climate and development goals, contributing to the strongest possible global social justice movement participation, and through both of these channels helping to bring about the creation of a low-carbon, sustainable, equitable, and deeply democratic future. A simple working definition of sustainable development might be “a just and ecologically-based society”; the 1987 [Brundtland Report](#) – also known as *Our Common Future* – has given the most famous definition: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

*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 climate justice – in the broadest sense of the term – must become the biggest (and most effective) the world has ever seen.*

A growing international scientific consensus has emerged that there is now only a 50 percent chance that the official United Nations target of limiting the rise in average temperature to 2 degrees Celsius by the year 2050 would effectively avert irreversible climate change (and recent reports indicate that there is just a five percent chance of actually staying below two degrees).

In 2012, climate activist and scholar Bill McKibben estimated the cap for maximum atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> [carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas responsible for global warming] emissions at 565 gigatons as the upper limit for staying at or below a 2 degrees Celsius temperature rise. With annual global emissions currently running around 30 gigatons a year, this cap was then roughly equal to a fourteen-year supply – till about 2026 – if “business as usual” trends of economic production and growth continue. The terrifying part is that the estimate of the world’s already proven reserves of fossil fuels exceeds McKibben’s cap by five times. In other words, the richest corporations in the history of the world would have to forego four-fifths of their future earnings – by some estimates, an astronomical \$20 trillion. But instead, they are currently spending over \$600 billion a year trying to discover *new* sources of fossil fuels – fracking, tar sands, deep-water drilling, Arctic oil, mountain-top removal – while each year the amount we can afford to burn decreases.

Unfortunately, meanwhile, the recently agreed international climate treaty – the December 2015 “Paris Agreement” – is not nearly adequate for the task, since if every one of its *non*-binding country pledges are met, we are still headed for around three degrees of warming. The dominant parties to the climate negotiations

continue to advance positions completely at odds with climate science, thus ignoring the terrible fact that humanity is on a collision course with nature that we cannot win.

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 socially just, scientifically informed, and legally binding treaty. Governments who do not want to vote for it, or whose short-term interests and economic elites are not served by signing, 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!

The main focus of this course is to focus our sociological and ecological imaginations on creating 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 deepens) with societies far more suited to human well-being and thriving than the ones we presently have all around the world.

Along the way we will encounter such ideas as sustainable development, transition towns, resilience, ecosocialism, *buen vivir*, and a slew of other alternatives to the present system, and we will read some of the best writing on these and other topics by their inventors, critics, activists, academics, and others, including the genres of the essay and blog post, fiction, and film, with a startlingly innovative collective project that you will work on throughout the term!

*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 will be driven by you.*

## **My Philosophy of Teaching and Learning**

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

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 two 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, making short videos, and ... *did I mention discussions?*

This quarter, Ken Hiltner, Sarah Manski, August Lack, and I will ask each of you to do *a lot* of reading, thinking, discussing, and writing; my pledge is that engagement with these materials should prove a rewarding – and, who knows? – possibly a life-changing experience.

## **Texts**

There will be quite a bit of reading in this course (which has to contain the full ten weeks' worth of material for a full quarter 4-unit course). 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 – are 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 Gaucho Space. You will all have access to the materials we post there – it is, in effect, the course reader. Please *check it out well before every class*, as it contains

all the items that would normally have gone into a course reader. It is also the place where you will hand in all your work electronically. *In addition*, please check your UCSB e-mail on a regular basis for important announcements, valuable tips, and special treats.

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

This class is about current events around the world. Because of this, it is valuable to tap into the news, wherever you find it. Excellent resources, among many others, are:

*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/>

*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/>

*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](http://www.resilience.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 Real News Network* (“daily television news that reports with ordinary people’s interests in mind. The Real News is ... the missing link in the global media landscape”), at <http://therealnews.com/t2/about-us/mission>

*Al-Jazeera*, world news in English with a critical point of view:  
<http://english.aljazeera.net/>

*RT News* – sometimes seen as Russia-biased news by its critics, “creates news with an edge for viewers who want to Question More. RT covers stories overlooked by the mainstream media, provides alternative perspectives on

current affairs, and acquaints international audiences with a Russian viewpoint on major global events”: <https://www.rt.com/news/>

*TomDispatch* – the weblog of U.S. historian and writer Tom Engelhardt may be the world’s best English-language website for critical analysis of U.S. foreign and domestic policy and the multiple crises of contemporary capitalist globalization: [www.tomdispatch.com](http://www.tomdispatch.com)

*The Dawn News* – covering “popular struggles around the world”: <http://www.thedawn-news.org/>

*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 KPFB 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/>

*Dissident Voice* – “an internet newsletter dedicated to challenging the distortions and lies of the corporate press and the privileged classes it serves. The goal of *Dissident Voice* is to provide hard hitting, thought provoking and even entertaining news and commentaries on politics and culture that can serve as ammunition in struggles for peace and social justice”: <https://dissidentvoice.org/about/>

### **Some Important Messages from UCSB Student Services**

(1) *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.

(2) *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 or visit <http://counseling.sa.ucsb.edu/>

(3) *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.

(4) *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 Zack King, UCSB scholar-activist, for one of his classes]**

- 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.
- 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 six 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 had the chance to speak a great deal, you make an effort to drop back, listen, and encourage others to speak. Step up means, if 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 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

**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 *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 be 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). You will upload papers as Word or pdf documents onto our class GauchoSpace. No hard copy is needed for any paper.

***Four Reading Responses and Four Comments on Others' Reading Responses*** (ten percent of your grade, combined with attendance and overall participation)

Once a week, on either Monday or Tuesday, you will be expected to:

Paste your reading response by 10 a.m. (see guidelines below).

Respond to one (1) other person's online reading response (see guidelines below). This is due before the class start time.

You have **two passes**, which means that in two of our six weeks (including week one) you do not have to turn in a response. Please respond to the group thread with the word "Pass" (no need to explain why) so we know you are selecting to pass.

*Your online reading response* should be about 250-300 words. It should begin with your name, the date, and the number of words in your memo; address at least one required reading; engage the readings via one or more of the following prompts. You may include quotations that are useful for you, but do not include in word count. Do one or more of the following: write about something you didn't agree with, or that confused you and briefly explain why; list the main arguments of the reading(s); reflect on how one or more of the readings relates to a previously discussed theme or reading(s); connect the readings to a lecture; and/or explain how the readings relate to each other;

End your memo with one open-ended discussion question for the class related to the issues you raised in your response. Feel free to write informally. 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.

*Your reply to a peer's reading response* should contain at least three sentences and no more than three paragraphs or central points, and be addressed to the person to whom you are replying, so indicate his or her name. Pick someone's response that interests, provokes thoughts, even disagreement, and/or enlightens a subject for you. It is fine if a few people reply to the same response. End with your name.

*Attendance at all meetings is indispensable for making this course a success for all of us.* Participation will be measured by attendance and participation in class, volunteering to present on one or more of the assigned readings, and the reading briefs you will post before class each week on Monday or Tuesday [see below]. 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 Class Presentation*

In some of our sessions, a class member, or sometimes two or more students working in pairs will make a 2-5 minute (and sometimes longer) presentation on one of the readings. See “How to Make a Great Presentation” on our GauchoSpace.

*Two film reviews. Twenty percent of your grade (ten percent each)*

You will be asked to write a two-spaced double spaced review of two of the six films assigned for this class. *Do not* use your space to summarize the film. Instead, develop an argument or discuss an issue from your “reading” of the film. Be sure to state the reasons for your views, and back them up with evidence. *If you plagiarize a film review, you will receive an “F” for the course.*

Pick any two of the following and post your review on GauchoSpace by midnight on Saturday of the week we screen it: for *Capitalism is the Crisis*, by midnight on June 30; for *Zapatista!* by midnight on July 7; for *This is What Democracy Looks Like*, by midnight on July 7; or *Demain*; by midnight on July 14, for *Where to Invade Next?* by midnight on July 21; for *Occupy Love*, by midnight on July 28.

*Midsummer essay: Twenty percent of your grade*

For this essay, take up to four double-spaced pages to evaluate their potential for fixing the world by comparing and contrasting any two solutions suggested by the first four weeks of the course, including the Zapatistas, the global justice movement, Transition Towns, degrowth, ecosocialism, or the global climate justice movement. Your write-up will be due by midnight on Sunday, July 22.

*Eco Vista Project. Twenty percent of your grade*

*OK, here’s the creative part of the class process, in more ways than one. We have come up with a very special idea for the class project, and it will be a blast!*

Eco Vista refers to a transition to a sustainable Isla Vista project that is actually being carried out and which will be introduced by UCSB scholar-activist and Eco Vista project co-founder Jessica Alvarez on Tuesday, July 10. You can see readings about it in a special section on GauchoSpace. Topics can be chosen by you as long as they are relevant to the themes of the class. What we are looking

for are creative and practical envisionings of a better future right in our UCSB back yard!

Please choose one of the following options:

- 1) As an individual or in a group of two people, write a short story of up to five or six double-spaced pages on the theme of Eco Vista. For example, what is life like for fictional characters in the Eco Vista of the future? How did they get from Isla Vista to Eco Vista? What sorts of actions, movements, creativity were involved?
- 2) As an individual, or in a group of up to five people, make a video of about two to three minutes per person about life in a future Eco Vista. See the suggestions in option 1 above.
- 3) In a group of up to six people, put on a play/skit/performance in class of up to ten minutes about life in a future Eco Vista. See the suggestions in option 1 above.

Final product – short story, link to video, or performance script – is due on GauchoSpace by Saturday, August 4.

*Final essay. Thirty percent of your grade*

You will be asked to write a five-page double-spaced essay due on GauchoSpace by midnight on Monday, August 6. This exciting final assignment will be the place where you get to reflect deeply on what you have learned about our topic this quarter. A few of the possible questions can be found at the end of the syllabus – you might even be able to make up your own!

\*\*\*

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.

With this comes the responsibility for careful planning and organization of your assignments, needless to say. We may certainly devote some time in class to discussing these assignments and how to prepare for them, if you wish.

## Course Topics and Reading Assignments

### *Week One: The Current Situation: Crisis and Opportunity*

“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,

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jun/18/resistance-victories-trump-mounting-final-blow>

\*

### ***PLEASE READ THESE TWO PIECES BEFORE OUR FIRST CLASS MEETING:***

Angus Hervey, “99 Reasons 2017 Was a Great Year” (December 6, 2017), <https://medium.com/future-crunch/99-reasons-2017-was-a-good-year-d119d0c32d19>

John W. Whitehead, “Apocalypse Now: 2017 Was Another Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Year” (December 28, 2017), <https://dissidentvoice.org/2017/12/apocalypse-now-2017-was-another-terrible-horrible-no-good-very-bad-year/>

### **Monday, June 25: Introduction to the Crisis**

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, along with an examination of our feelings about living at this crucial moment in history.

*Readings:* See above for two readings to do *before* class!

We will also begin to screen the video: *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, June 26: Introduction to the Resistance**

Yet where there is crisis, there is resistance, and here we survey the world scene in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century, as seen by one of the leading scholar-activists in these struggles (jk! 😊).

### *Readings:*

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/>

Richard Eskow “50 Years After 1968, Can the Young Change Politics? A Striking New Poll Says Yes” (June 6, 2018), <https://portside.org/2018-06-06/50-years-after-1968-can-young-change-politics-striking-new-poll-says-yes>

Kristine Mattis, “We Are Barely Even Trying” (April 13, 2017), <https://www.counterpunch.org/2017/04/13/we-are-barely-even-trying/>

### ***Week Two: The Name of the Crisis is Climate Change***

“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*

\*

## **Monday, July 2: Chivers's *No-Nonsense Guide to Climate Change* and the Zapatistas' no-nonsense guide to a better future**

Today we will try to wrap our heads around the climate crisis by discussing one of the best short books on the topic, *The No-Nonsense Guide to Climate Change*, by Danny Chivers.

### *Readings:*

Danny Chivers. *The No-Nonsense Guide to Climate Change* (Oxford: New Internationalist, 2010), *entire book*.

We will also look at the indigenous uprising in Chiapas, Mexico, on New Year's Eve of 1994, the moment when the NAFTA free trade agreement took effect, by screening and discussing the film *Zapatista!* (1998, produced by Benjamin Eichert et al., Big Noise Films, 54 minutes).

### *Readings:*

Wikipedia, "Zapatista Army of National Liberation," 1-15

John Holloway, "Break," part I of *Crack Capitalism*, 1-10

## **Tuesday, July 3: The Global Justice Movement: Dress Rehearsal for a Global Revolution, Part One**

Today we will we will examine the global movement that sprang up around the same time as the Zapatistas and brought us one of the biggest acts of successful civil disobedience in the United States, in Seattle in 1998. We will do this by reading selections from the best book on the topic, Amory Starr's *Global Revolt*, and looking at the film *This is What Democracy Looks Like* (2000, Big Noise, 69 minutes).

### *Readings:*

Amory Starr, *Global Revolt: A Guide to the Movements against Globalization* (London, Zed Press, 2005). Just read as much as you can of the parts that most interest you – we will divide this up for presentations.

***Week Three: Just Transitions: The Transition Towns Movement and Eco Vista***

Eco Vista is perhaps the most exciting project for social transformation to come out of Isla Vista ever! Whether it flowers into its full potential depends on everyone who answers the call. I hope to walk by your sides. Let's change the world, step by step, with urgency, passion, fun, and love!

JF, *Once Upon a Time in Isla Vista*

\*

**Monday, July 9: Transition Towns from Totnes to Toledo**

Today we will introduce the concept of a Just Transition and explore one set of alternative models for the future: the local visions of sustainable transition towns and resilient eco-villages found all over the world.

Please take at least 10-15 minutes to explore these websites:

Transition United States –

<http://www.transitionus.org/about-us>

Common Transition Primer website:

<https://primer.commontransition.org/>

Global Ecovillage Network –

<http://gen.ecovillage.org/en/article/what-ecovillage>

*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/>

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 and Ted Trainer, “Always the Same, Always Different” (June 14, 2018), <https://www.resilience.org/stories/2018-06-14/always-the-same-always-different-a-response-to-ted-trainer/>

Stephanie Van Hook, “What is Transition?” (March 14, 2017), <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2017-03-14/what-is-transition/>

Today we will also begin to screen and discuss *Demain/Tomorrow*, a French film from 2016 (Elle Driver, 96 minutes).

Please take at least 10-15 minutes to explore the movie’s website, which is rich in content, solutions, and ideas for this class:

<https://www.demain-lefilm.com/en/film>

*Readings:*

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

**Tuesday, July 10: What if Isla Vista became Eco Vista?**

Our journey begins at home... Today, Eco Vista activist Jessica Alvarez will share her vision of Eco Vista with us, and we will begin to visualize some research projects with her help.

Please take at least 10-15 minutes to explore the website:

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

*Readings:*

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

“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)

Website: <https://medium.com/human-parts/isla-vista-history-and-hope-1deb3b3bdf7b>

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

*Assignment due on Friday, July 13: Film review essay on Demain – if chosen as one of your two film reviews – is due by midnight.*

### **Week Four: Systematic Alternatives in the Global North: Degrowth and Ecosocialism**

“We do not know how long we have, but we do know that the fight just can’t wait. And we know that just fighting isn’t enough: to succeed, we must simultaneously work for immediate changes *and* advance a vision of the world we want to build.”

Ian Angus, *Facing the Anthropocene: Fossil Capitalism and the Crisis of the Earth System*

\*

### **Monday, July 16: What is Degrowth???**

Today we will entertain the notion that *less* economic production could lead to a vastly better world, especially in the wealthy countries of the global North.

#### *Readings:*

Giacomo D’Alisa, Federico Demaria and Giorgos Kallis, editors, “Introduction: Degrowth,” pp. 24-39 in *Degrowth: Vocabulary for a New Era* (2015)

Giorgos Kallis, “The Degrowth Alternative,” pp. 19-26 in *In Defense of Degrowth: Opinions and Manifestos*. Creative Commons. March 2017.

Riccardo Mastini, “Work in a World without Growth” (June 6, 2018), <https://www.resilience.org/stories/2018-06-06/work-in-a-world-without-growth/>

Arturo Escobar, “Degrowth, Postdevelopment, and Transitions: A Preliminary Conversation.” *Sustainability Science* 10 (2015): 451-462.

Jonathan Rutherford, “How Do You Degrow an Economy, Without Causing Chaos?” (May 15, 2017), <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2017-05-15/how-do-you-degrow-an-economy-without-causing-chaos/>

David Schwartzman, “A Critique of Degrowth and Its Politics.” *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 23 (1) (March 29 2012): 119-25.

Helen Jarvis, “Degrowth and Christiania” (July 5, 2018), <https://www.resilience.org/stories/2018-07-05/degrowth-and-christiania/>

Today we will also begin to screen Michael Moore’s *Where to Invade Next* (2015, 120 minutes).

Website for *Where to Invade Next*:  
<http://wheretoinvadenext.com/>

*Reading for film review:*

Stephen Kinzer, “Make America More Like New Zealand, Costa Rica and Ethiopia” (July 10, 2018), <https://portside.org/2018-07-10/make-america-more-new-zealand-costa-rica-and-ethiopia>

*Film review essay on Where to Invade Next – if chosen as one of your two film reviews – is due by midnight on Sunday, July 22.*

## **Tuesday, July 17: Ecosocialism**

Today we’ll consider ecosocialism as an alternative to capitalism, and ask: what if the answer is Marxism plus democracy plus ecology plus feminism plus...?

*Readings:*

System Change Not Climate Change, “What is Ecosocialism?”  
(September 2014), 1-14

NOTE: READ ANY *ONE* OF THE THREE CHAPTERS:  
Fred Magdoff and Chris Williams, “Characteristics of an  
Ecological Society,” chapters 10-12 of *Creating an Ecological  
Society: Toward a Revolutionary Transformation* (New York:  
Monthly Review Press, 2016), pp. 233-310.

Ian Angus, “Ecosocialism and Human Solidarity,” pp. 132-145  
in *Facing the Anthropocene: Fossil Capitalism and the Crisis  
of the Earth System* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2017)

### **Week Five: Systematic Alternatives in the Global South: Buen Vivir and the Rights of Nature**

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

Dalai Lama

\*

#### **Monday, July 23: The Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth**

Today we will consider the global South’s leading two alternative models  
for a better future, including 1) the indigenous concept of *Buen Vivir/Sawmaq  
Kawsay* (whose meaning is roughly “living better”) – a perspective on the future  
from the Global South taken together with one of the most radical documents ever  
written, the “Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth,”

Please take at least 10-15 minutes to explore these websites:

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

The Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature –  
<http://therightsofnature.org/>

*Readings (please read the Universal Declaration very closely before coming to class):*

World People’s Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth “Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth,” Cochabamba, Bolivia (April 27, 2010), 1-3,  
<http://climateandcapitalism.com/?p=2268>

Dalai Lama, “Universal Responsibility and the Climate Emergency” (December 5, 2009),  
<https://shambhalatimes.org/2009/12/05/universal-responsibility-and-the-climate-emergency/>

Andreas Weber and Hildegard Kurt, “Towards Cultures of Aliveness: Politics and Poetics in a Postdualistic Age, an Anthropocene Manifesto.” Originally published by The Solutions Journal (December 17, 2015),  
<http://www.resilience.org/stories/2015-12-17/towards-cultures-of-aliveness-politics-and-poetics-in-a-postdualistic-age-an-anthropocene-manifesto#>

“Understanding the Native Roots of the Constitutions of Bolivia and Ecuador: The 25 Principles of Good Living.” Source: Vibromancia / The Dawn News / November 11, 2015,  
<http://www.thedawn-news.org/2017/09/15/understanding-the-native-roots-of-the-constitutions-of-bolivia-and-ecuador-the-25-principles-of-good-living/>

Dan O’Neill, “Is it Possible for Everyone to Live a Good Life within our Planet’s Limits?” (February 8, 2018),  
<http://www.resilience.org/stories/2018-02-08/is-it-possible-for-everyone-to-live-a-good-life-within-our-planets-limits/> Also published in a more scholarly version in Nature Sustainability (1) (February 2018): 88-95, at  
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41893-018-0021-4>

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/>

Today we will also take a look at a film that embodies the global spirit of Occupy...

### *Film*

*Occupy Love* (directed by Velcrow Ripper, Fierce Love Films, 86 minutes, 2013), <http://occupylove.org/>

### *Readings*

*Occupy Love* materials, 1-54

## **Tuesday, July 24: Buen Vivir**

Today we will consider what is perhaps the global South's most exciting alternative model for a better future, the indigenous concept of *Buen Vivir/Sawmaq Kawsay* (whose meaning is roughly "living better").

### *Readings*

Pablo Solón, "Is *Vivir Bien* possible? Candid Thoughts about Systemic Alternatives" (August 2016), <http://lifeonleft.blogspot.com/2016/09/vivir-bien-going-beyond-capitalism.html>

Pablo Solón, "Vivir Bien: Old Cosmovisions and New Paradigms" (February 20, 2018), <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2018-02-20/vivir-bien-old-cosmovisions-and-new-paradigms/>

"Roundtable on Vivir Bien." *An exchange on Vivir Bien: Old Cosmovisions and New Paradigms* (February 18, 2018), <http://www.greattransition.org/publication/roundtable-vivir-bien>

Bob Thomson, "Pachakuti: Indigenous perspectives, *bien vivir*, *sumaq kawsay* and degrowth," *Development* 54 (4) (2011): 448-54

David Korten, “Three Questions to Lead Us Away from Self-Extinction” (July 3, 2018), <https://davidkorten.org/three-questions-to-lead-us-away-from-self-extinction/>

## **Week Six: Bringing It All Together: The Future is Ours to Make**

“This fight, as it took me too long to figure out, was never going to be settled on the grounds of justice or reason. We won the argument, but that didn’t matter: like most fights it was, and is, about power.”

Bill McKibben

\*

### **Monday, July 30: Presentations I**

#### *Reading*

Terry Patten, “It’s Not Too Late, and It Never Will Be,” pp. 327-349 in *A New Republic of the Heart: An Ethos for Revolutionaries* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2018)

### **Tuesday, July 31: Presentations II**

Today we will continue our class presentations of final projects.

#### *Reading*

John Foran, “Cracks in the Concrete: Toward a Hope that Works” (June 2018)

### **Wednesday, August 1: Presentations III**

Today we will finish any remaining presentations of class projects in the first part of the class, then ...

### **Thursday, August 2: Final class events and celebration**

Today we will conclude our work in a variety of ways, and there may be surprises! This will also be a final brainstorming session about everything we've all learned and for those who are interested, some ideas on how to get more involved in fixing the world for the better.

*IV Projects are due on Saturday, August 4 by midnight.*

\*

“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>

*Final Assignment [30 percent]: Final 5-page Essay [due Monday, August 6]*

### **Essay Question Options**

Please write an essay of up to five double-spaced pages due as a Word document or pdf on GauchoSpace by midnight on Monday, August 6. No hardcopy is needed. This exciting final assignment is the place where you get to reflect deeply on what you have learned this quarter.

The format guidelines for all papers in this course are 1” margins all around, 12 point size, and double spacing (not 1.5 lines).

### **Possible Topics to Choose From**

*Beyond Capitalism*

Do you think capitalism can be *reformed and made sustainable*, or should it be *radically transformed and/or abolished*? Make an argument for either position. If

you think capitalism must be transformed or abolished, make sure you analyze 1) the reasons you think this system is undesirable or ineffective in the pursuit of a sustainable world, or whatever other fatal flaws you identify, 2) a working idea of an alternative system that would better address the global crises and 3) a working idea of how this transformation can actually be attained, drawing on examples from this class and informed predictions. If you think capitalism can or should be reformed and made sustainable, try to address roughly the same three questions of your reasons, the reformed model to be attained, and how it would be achieved.

### *The World in 2050*

What is the *best* world you think it will be possible to achieve by 2050? What world do you imagine is the *most likely* that we will be living in?

Drawing on all of the course materials you wish, give us all your best ideas about getting the first and avoiding the second. Note: if your two worlds are the same, just tell us how we get there!

What role would you like to play, or see yourself playing, in getting this world?

### *Culture, Social Movements, and Building a Better World*

If we are going to build a more equal, more sustainable and environmentally friendly future world, how might we have to change our cultural relationship to nature and social life as we live it every day? What sort of cultural production (video, fiction, spoken word, art, music, etc.) do you think could play a role? Be as specific as you can.

What sort of social movement might bring all this about?

Feel free to bring in materials from the class project and relate them to readings, films, and any other relevant material from lecture. Oh, and don't forget your imagination!

*or*

*Write your own question!*

We invite you to write your own question/topic for an essay, and after approval by the instructors, you may write your essay on the agreed upon topic. You should obtain this green light by Monday, July 30, with a one-page proposal.

\*\*\*\*\*

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