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Instructor: Dr. J. Varghese

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Course Description and Approach:

Calendar Description: “This course will be offered as a structured seminar on various topics depending upon the interests of the faculty member teaching the course. Topics will be announced, and course outlines will be available at course selection. Prerequisite(s): 10.00 credits including (1 of SOAN*2112, SOC*2080, SOC*2700), SOAN*2120)”

Course Overview: This seminar-based course is designed to provide students with an opportunity to explore the sociology of water through both Indigenous and Western social science lenses. In this course, we will focus on the complexity of anthropogenic aspects of water issues, drawing on Indigenous worldviews and the role of social sciences in understanding and addressing water issues. We will cover concepts such as knowledge systems, sense of place, water rights, conservation, water governance, ecological democracy, water justice/security, water-food-energy nexus, by drawing on examples within Turtle Island (including areas currently known as Canada) and international examples.

The seminar approach¹ is intended to facilitate the development of critical thinking skills and active engagement in learning. As such, students are expected to read assigned readings in preparation for each class, attend, and actively engage in class discussions. The format of seminars will include opportunities for both small and large group discussions of water issues, to draw on both Western and Indigenous pedagogies and for the critical exploration of concepts to appreciate the complexity of these issues. Within the broader topics for the course, the specific focus for selected weekly seminar & circle discussions will be determined based on student interests prior to the second week of class.

Course Learning Outcomes:

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Examine hydro-social cycle issues at local, national, and global levels using sociological theories and concepts to understand the intricate dynamics of water-related issues.
2. Engage with Indigenous and Western (science) knowledge systems, including the sociology of emotions in understanding and addressing contemporary water issues.
3. Critique and synthesize course materials by exploring multiple ways of articulating knowledge and values learned.
4. Enhance oral communication, collaboration, and facilitation skills through actively participating and leading seminars and circles.
5. Mobilize multiple ways of knowing creatively and collaboratively within seminar and circle leads.
6. Demonstrate mastery of time management, personal accountability and proactive learning through all aspects of the course.

Course Readings:

Course materials will be accessible on Perusall accessible via CourseLink a week in advance (for Prep Assignment) and will be available via ARES Course Reserves System through the library website (for a head-start on Seminar & Circle Leads).

Assessments²:

| Course Elements | Percentage Weight |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Seminar Preparation and Participation | 30 |
| 2. “Ideas” Seminar Lead related to Weekly Topic and Learning Outcome 1 | 20 |
| 3. “Connections/Extensions” Circle Lead related to Learning Outcome 2 | 20 |
| 4. Cumulative Take-Home Assessment | 30 |
| Total | 100 |

¹ Please note that the seminar will be offered weekly via face-to-face delivery with some asynchronous material and activities available through CourseLink throughout the semester.

² Assessment breakdown and elements may change prior to the release of the official syllabus in September 2024.