

CGLST 4400
**SENIOR CAPSTONE SEMINAR:
GLOBAL SOCIAL CHANGE**

Lesley University
Political Science
Wednesdays, 4-6:30 pm
Uhall 4-040

Professor Sarah Romano
E-mail: sromano2@lesley.edu
Office: University Hall 2-097
Office phone: 617-349-8469
Office Hours: Mondays, 1-2 pm *and*
by appt. (please email)

Course Description

This senior capstone seminar is designed to advance your knowledge of the evolving features of major global issues while also given you tools and frameworks to effect change. Towards these ends, the course is divided into two main parts: in part one, the course is tailored to give you some of the *conceptual tools*, as well as *practical skills*, to understand, think about, and effect social change. This includes an introduction to “systems thinking” and a case study application of systems thinking to the urgent transnational issue of climate change.

In the second part of the course, you will read and analyze current scholarship in the social sciences, natural sciences, and humanities that focus on unfolding issues that will give shape to the new century. The readings in this section adopt primarily a macro or “bird’s eye view” perspective; this may stand in contrast to micro-level or case study approaches to issues common throughout other courses at Lesley. Particular attention will be paid to systems’ complexity, including the way systems *embed* major issues that may be familiar (like trade, education, LGBT social policy, etc.). Part of the rationale for this approach to reading selection is to apply systems thinking to dynamics of global social change. That is, how can we better understand the complexity of urgent social, political, and economic problems towards envisioning solutions and proposing change?

Woven throughout the course are assignments to help scaffold the development of a final systems thinking research paper on a topic of your choosing. The practical tools and frameworks you will practice are applicable to a range of careers in private, governmental, and nongovernmental spheres. **For our purposes, you must decide:** *What issue or problem do you want to understand better at this point in your professional career and given your career goals?* The realm of potential topics is vast: global economy (e.g. states, transnational corporations, global financial institutions), the environment (e.g. land use, climate change, water, soil), identity politics (e.g. gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality politics), social policy and/or related issues (e.g. immigration, education, marriage, healthcare, domestic violence, transportation, urban development), etc.

A Note on Course Content and Structure:

As a senior capstone seminar, this course has expectations of you that may make it different from other classes. While the reading load may not be heavier than other upper division courses you

have taken, the course has several assignments throughout the semester (e.g. reading reflections, course facilitation, and mini-assignments) that will require excellent time and schedule management. The final research paper for this course should reflect your very best work. This paper could become a piece of writing you use as a writing sample for graduate school or potential employers; it could also be a point of departure for writing about substantive issues in cover letters, or proposals for further research/study as a part of graduate or law school applications.

Learning Objectives:

- To understand how “systems” thinking is different from “conventional” thinking on social problems and social change;
- To apply a systems thinking approach to pressing local and global social science issues and problems, including through finding and interpreting scholarly and other kinds of information;
- To have a deeper understanding of new and evolving features of major social, political, and economic issues in local and global perspectives;
- To better understand how local and global social change occurs over time;
- To gain familiarity and practice with systems thinking tools like the iceberg model, systems analysis diagramming, vision statements, and problem statements;
- To strengthen critical thinking, public speaking, presentation, and facilitation skills.

Required Text:*

- **Stroh, David Peter. 2015. *Systems Thinking for Social Change: A Practical Guide to Solving Complex Problems, Avoiding Unintended Consequences, and Achieving Lasting Results*. Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing.**
 - This book is available as an e-book through the library: <https://tinyurl.com/qucqqkaz>. There is only a 3-user license for this book, which means only three users will be able to access the book at the same time. For this reason, please either acquire your own copy or manage your time in a way that gives you adequate advance access before class.

*All books are available for purchase at the Lesley bookstore at the Porter Campus and may also be purchased online through Amazon, Abe Books, etc. ♦ *Purchasing or renting the course texts is a course requirement*. You must talk to me the first week of class if you foresee difficulties with obtaining them. ♦ All other readings for the class included on the syllabus or assigned during class will be posted on Blackboard (BB) in the Course Content folder.

Course Grade Components:

- 1) **Attendance (5%).** Attendance for this class is mandatory to support you getting the most of out of class - and - to contribute to engaging and productive class sessions. Consider one absence (note: this is one full week of class) to be *fully excused* for those unavoidable circumstances when you get sick or have an emergency (you are free to inform me, but no notes required). If you arrive more than 10 minutes late to class, you will receive half credit;

please note that if you arrive more than 20 minutes late you will not receive attendance credit. *Please talk to me as early as possible if particularly unique circumstances unfold that affect your attendance during the semester.* After counting the first absence, attendance grades will be assigned in accordance with the following rubric:

Number of absences → attendance grade:

0 – 100	2 – 80	4 – 60	6 – 40
1 – 90	3 – 70	5 – 50	7 – 0

- 2) **Preparation and engagement [P&E] (10%).** Coming to class is one thing, and being a prepared, respectful, and engaged participant is another. This course component will be based upon your participation in-class discussions and activities; and your demonstrated thoughtfulness, respect for your peers, and evidence that you have completed the readings prior to coming to class. Bring the readings to each class—we will use them! **Important:** As part of a small, upper-division seminar, you will be working with your peers often. Graded in-class exercises (or the occasional quiz) cannot be made up or submitted late if you miss class, hence why attendance is important for this grade component.
- 3) **Weekly reading reflections (RR) (10%).** The purpose of the 11 weekly reading reflections (wks. 2-12) is to engage with and think critically about the course texts in advance of coming to class. This work will support you being fully prepared for our discussions and work in class. Any “guiding questions” I have posted on BB will be important to consult as you read and as you write your reflections. Particularly in cases where I have asked you to think about how “X” applies to an issue of interest to you – or the one you will research over the duration of the semester – please include this thinking in your reflection. **Note: Each reflection will be due the day before our class (Tuesday) by 7 pm to BB. Class sessions with RRs due have an asterisk next to them on the course schedule, below.** I will review your reflections before each class as time permits. Only a select (random) few will be graded for content; the remainder will receive completion grades. Further instructions will be posted on BB.
- 4) **Class presentation and facilitation (10%).** Once during the semester, you will give a short presentation on the day’s readings and facilitate some discussion for our class session based upon questions you have generated. The purpose of this assignment is 1) to practice close readings and analyses of articles/texts; 2) to have the opportunity to shape in-class discussions in line with themes and aspects of the readings of most interest to you; and 3) to gain experience presenting and facilitating discussions—tasks that for some of you will be part of your future work after graduating. **Note: you do not have to submit a RR the day you present and facilitate. Please sign up on BB by the second week of class (January 29).**
- 5) **Systems Thinking Research Project Mini-assignments (30%).** This course component includes your completion of and performance on several mini-assignments based on the course readings and materials throughout the semester. These assignments, which have take-home and in-class components, will support your completion of the final Systems Thinking Research Paper. Mini-assignments will be due prior to the start of class (please don’t be late!) and most will be shared/presented in class. Due dates are listed on the syllabus and full details will be provided on BB. *Please note that assignments and due dates are subject to change with plenty of lead time in class and on BB.*

Mini-assignment	Due date
1) Iceberg system model with sources connected to data	Feb. 5
2) Vision statement	Feb. 19
3) Systems analysis diagram (“causal feedback loop diagram”) and explanation with sources connected to data	March 4
4) Draft systemic problem statement	March 18
5) [Optional] Revised systemic problem statement	March 25
6) Draft research paper	April 15

- 6) **Systems Thinking Final Research Paper (25%) and Presentation (10%).** Your final systems thinking research paper will have several substantive threads, building upon the completed mini-assignments: 1) *What is “the problem” and how can it be understood as part of a system of moving parts?* 2) *What is a compelling vision for change?* 3) *What leverage point(s) in the system could promote and/or create productive change and how?* Research papers will be presented the last day of class, and final papers will be due during finals week.

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Grading Scale:*

A = 93-100	C+ = 77-79	D- = 60-62
A- = 90-92	C = 73-76	F = 0-59
B+ = 87-89	C- = 70-72	I = Incomplete**
B = 83-86	D+ = 67-69	W = Withdrawal
B- = 80-82	D = 63-66	

*Grade rounding occurs at the discretion of the instructor. It should not be expected.

** In exceptional cases, students who have successfully completed 75% of course requirements, but unanticipated experience an event beyond their control that interferes with their ability to complete the course requirements before the end of the term or semester, may be granted a temporary letter grade of "I" (Incomplete) at the instructor's discretion. Incomplete grades are not automatic nor guaranteed. The student and instructor must complete and sign a Contract for the Completion of Incomplete Work form. Contracted work not completed by the deadline is recorded “I/F” (Failing).

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEKS 1-2:

SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE VALUE OF SYSTEMS THINKING

What is a capstone seminar? What is “systems thinking” and how is it different from “conventional thinking” and mental models? How might think systems thinking might apply to your work—or career interests or goals?

Week 1: Wed, Jan. 22

- **Read:** Stroh, *Systems Thinking for Social Change*, Introduction and Chapter 1

***Week 2: Wed, Jan. 29**

- **Read:** Stroh, *Systems Thinking for Social Change*, Chapters 2 and 3
- **Read:** Laubepin, “How to Read (and Understand) a Social Sciences Journal Article”
- **Explore (also on BB):**
 - <https://systemspractitioner.com/>
 - <https://commonsandsystems.tumblr.com/STforCommunityGroups>
 - <https://thesystemsthinker.com/%EF%BB%BFa-new-path-to-understanding-systems-thinking/>

WEEKS 3-6:

CASE STUDY: UNDERSTANDING CLIMATE (IN)ACTION LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY

What is the role of systems thinking in pursuing or achieving social change? What “stories” are told about climate change—including what’s do be done about it? What do purported solutions tell us about an (underlying) understanding of a problem? What are examples of “fixes that backfire,” “shifting the burden,” and other common stories (or archetypes) that explain what inhibits productive/positive change? What are “reinforcing” and “balancing” feedback?

***Week 3: Wed, Feb. 5**

- **Read:** Stroh, *Systems Thinking for Social Change*, Chapter 4
- **DUE:** Iceberg system model with sources

***Week 4: Wed, Feb. 12**

- **Read:** Stroh, *Systems Thinking for Social Change*, Chapters 5 and 6
- **Read:** Maniates, “Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World?” in *Global Environmental Politics*

***Week 5: Wed, Feb. 19**

- **Read:** Stroh, *Systems Thinking for Social Change*, Chapter 7
- **Read:** Herring, “Confronting Jevons’ Paradox: Does Promoting Energy Efficiency Save Energy?” International Association for Energy Economics
- **Read:** Birkenholtz, “Assessing India’s drip irrigation boom: efficiency, climate change and groundwater policy,” in *Water International*
- **DUE:** Vision Statement

***Week 6: Wed, Feb. 26**

- **Read:** Overland and Sovacool, “The misallocation of climate change research funding,” in *Energy Research and Social Science*
- **Read:** Ballew et al., “Systems thinking as a pathway to global warming beliefs and attitudes through an ecological worldview,” in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*
- **In-class:** Systems Analysis panel

Weeks 7-10: Global Social Change in Comparative Perspective: Education, Migration, Trade, and Identity Politics

What does it mean to talk about “global social change”? What are evolving features of pressing political, economic, social issues in global perspective? How does systems thinking apply to the examination and understanding of these contemporary issues?

***Week 7: Wed, March. 4**

- **Read:** Robertson and Komljenovic, “Non-state actors and the advance of frontier higher education markets in the global south,” in *Oxford Review of Education*
- **Read:** Languille, “‘Affordable’ private schools in South Africa. Affordable for whom?” in *Oxford Review of Education*
- **DUE:** Systems Analysis diagram

Wed, March 11 **SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES**

***Week 8: Wed, March 18**

- **Read:** Castles, “Understanding Global Migration: A Social Transformation Perspective,” in *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*
- **DUE:** Draft Problem Statement – Bring a hard copy to class and upload to BB before class

***Week 9: Wed, March 25**

- **Read:** Majeed, “Economic growth, inequality, and trade in developing countries,” in *International Journal of Development Issues*
- **Read:** Pianta, “Slowing Trade: Global Activism Against Trade Liberalization,” in *Global Policy*
- **[Optional] DUE:** Revised Problem Statement – Hard copy in class

***Week 10: Wed, April 1**

- **Read:** Moreau, “Trump in Transnational Perspective: Insights from Global LGBT Politics,” in *Politics and Gender*
- **In-class guest (4-5 pm):** Alice Diamond, Associate Dean for Career and Community Service

Thurs, April 2 *Community of Scholars Day*

Tuesday, April 7 *Career and Internship Fair*

Weeks 11-14: Visioning the Future and Taking Action

What are individual and collective approaches to seeking change that align with a systems thinking approach? What are “leverage points” in a system, and how can these be identified?

***Week 11: Wed, Apr. 8**

- **Read:** Stroh, *Systems Thinking for Social Change*, Chapters 9 and 10
- **In-class:** Identifying leverage points

Week 12: Wed, April 15

- **DUE**: Draft Systems Thinking Research Paper – Bring a hard copy to class and upload to BB before class

Week 13: Wed, April 22

- **Read**: Hegler, “Feel Something, Learn Something, Do Something: A Care Package for Climate Grief,” available at: <https://tinyurl.com/t4c8221>
- **Read**: Miller-McDonald, “What must we do to live”? available at: <https://tinyurl.com/syhl8fk>
- **Read**: Solnit, “When the Hero is the Problem,” available at: <https://tinyurl.com/sw9mqcd>

Week 14: Wed, April 29

- **DUE**: In-class presentations of research papers + peer/instructor feedback

Wed, May 6 [Final exam period] – Final Systems Thinking Research Paper due

COURSE POLICIES AND UNIVERSITY RESOURCES/SERVICES:

What do I call my instructor? Across your classes at Lesley University, the most respectful way to address to your instructor in class, over email, or in other interactions is as “Professor _____” or “Dr. _____.” This is because most of your instructors have earned their doctorates, or PhDs, in their fields. Some faculty may have Masters (MA) degrees and are working on completing their PhDs. If you are unsure if your instructor has a PhD, “Professor” is a safe bet! If your instructor invites you to call them by their first name, then of course you may do so.

Make-up Policy: *Assignment and exam make-ups are not guaranteed—please talk to me to discuss approval and rescheduling in advance of the due date.* Please note the date of class exams on your calendar and talk to me ASAP in the semester if you foresee a problem with an exam date. Dates of final exams are determined by the University and cannot be adjusted. All other policies related to late work are included in the Course Grade Components section, above.

Academic Integrity: Any violation of academic integrity standards (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) will be addressed in accordance with Lesley University policy. Unless prior approval is granted by the instructor, all work submitted for this course is to be your own original work completed specifically for this course and not previously or concurrently submitted to any other instructor. Please see the Student Handbook or Lesley’s Academic Integrity Statement online if you need to learn more about these policies. The academic integrity policy details students' roles and responsibilities and provides examples of violations, which include information about failing to document sources, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication or falsification of data, multiple submissions of work, abuse of academic materials, complicity/unauthorized assistance, and lying/tampering/theft.

Classroom Etiquette and Technology Policies: We have a relatively short amount of time together each week in class. As your professor, I want you to get the most out of our course time,

and to be respectful of your instructor and peers during this time. Disruptive or inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated and can result in being asked to leave the class. Respect is demonstrated by not using headphones in class and keeping phones off or silenced and in your bag -- not on your desk -- for the entire class period. Laptop use is **only** permitted to access course readings during discussion or in-class activities. Because research has demonstrated that taking notes by hand increases learning and retention, please talk to me in person or by email if you need to take notes on your laptop or other device. If a computer or device is being used for activity other than note-taking or accessing course texts during class, you will be asked to put it away.

Important: *Not adhering to classroom technology policies or exhibiting a pattern of disruption in class puts you at risk failing the Prep and Engagement component of your grade.*

Academic Support: Lesley University offers peer tutoring—such as assistance with writing, reading comprehension, research, and study skills—to students through the Center for Academic Achievement (CAA). All students enrolled in degree granting programs, including students with learning differences and students whose first language is other than English, are eligible for support. Lesley also provides online tutoring services to students enrolled in Lesley off-campus, online, and low residency degree-granting programs. Tutorial sessions are by appointment only. Visit the CAA office or call 617-349-8459 to schedule a session. If you have questions about services available at the Center for Academic Achievement, call 617-349-8459 during office hours or send an email to caa@lesley.edu. If you have questions about the online tutoring service, please call 617-349-8299 or send an email to amulla@lesley.edu. Address of the Center for Academic Achievement, 30 Mellen Street (Doble Hall), 2nd floor (phone: 617-349-8459). Please also visit www.lesley.edu/caa to access these support services.

Computer Support Services

University Information Technology (IT) assists Lesley students, faculty, and staff with technology-related questions. More information about IT's mission and list of computer classes can be found on the IT webpage (<https://lesley.edu/technology-support>) or via phone (617-349-8770) or email (it@lesley.edu). For MyLesley technical support: 1-888-myLesley.

Library Services

The myLibrary tab on Blackboard provides access to multiple services and authoritative resources for academic research including books, articles, tests, visual media, and teaching resources. The Lesley University Library encourages students and faculty to use these academic resources for their assignments. You may find help with library research through the Ask-A-Librarian service, as well as online guides to APA and MLA citation formats.

- Sherrill Library, the main university library, Brattle Campus, 617-349-8850
- Moriarty Library, the arts library, Porter Campus, 617-349-8070
- Library hours and directions: <http://research.lesley.edu/about/hours>
- Library study room reservations: <http://research.lesley.edu/spaces/study>

Lesley University Learning Community Statement: Faculty, staff and students are all responsible for advancing a campus and classroom climate that creates and values a diversity of ideas, perspectives, experiences and identities. As such, we aspire to engage together in a community where each person is respected and empowered to express themselves and be heard. We commit to creating an environment and developing course content that recognizes the learning experience of every student with dignity and respect, regardless of differences that include, but are

not limited to: race, socio-economic status, ethnicity, indigenous background, immigration status, nationality, gender identity/expression, language, abilities and accommodations, religion/spirituality, sexual orientation, veteran status or membership in uniformed services, political views, age and physical appearance. Lesley University's Mission Statement states that "Lesley prepares socially responsible graduates with the knowledge, skills, understanding and ethical judgment to be catalysts shaping a more just, humane, and sustainable world." Among many experts in the field, Diane Goodman has described the following competencies: (1) Building self-awareness, (2) Understanding and valuing others, (3) Knowledge of societal inequities, (4) Interacting effectively with a diversity of people in different contexts, and (5) Fostering equity and inclusion. Our mission and these competencies are embedded in our curricula and our classrooms. They provide a foundation for transformative teaching and learning, and approaches to social justice.

Disability Accommodations: All qualified students with disabilities are eligible for accommodations and support services. It is the student's responsibility to initiate the accommodation process with Disability Services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a documented disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and must provide documentation of the disability. To initiate the accommodation process, or if you are unsure if you qualify for accommodations, please contact the appropriate administrator:

Learning Disabilities, Attention Disorders, and Autism Spectrum Disorders/Asperger Syndrome
Kimberly Johnson, Director of the LD/ADD Academic Support Program
30 Mellen Street, Doble Hall, 2nd floor, Cambridge, MA 02138
617.349.8462 kjohnso7@lesley.edu Fax: 617.349.8324

Physical, Sensory, and Psychiatric Disabilities
Daniel Newman, Lesley University ADA/504 Coordinator
30 Mellen Street, 2nd Floor. Phone: 617.349.8572; Fax: 617.349.8324, dnewman@lesley.edu

Equal Opportunity and Inclusion Policy

Lesley University does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, national origin or ancestry, age, physical or mental disability, pregnancy or parental status, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, veteran or military status, membership in Uniformed Services, and all other categories protected by applicable state and federal laws in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its programs and activities. Inquiries regarding this Equal Opportunity and Inclusion Policy may be directed to Human Resources, hr@lesley.edu or 617-349-8787.

Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Violence

Discrimination is defined as unwelcome verbal and/or physical conduct that shows bias, favoritism, prejudice, unfairness, inequity, bigotry or intolerance for another person because of his/her protected status, i.e., race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, veteran status, disability, or sexual orientation. Harassment is defined as the use of derogatory comments or acts directed toward an individual's race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, age, veteran status, disability, or sexual orientation that is designed to: Humiliate or intimidate an individual; and/or Impede or interfere with academic status, academic performance, work performance, or create an intimidating, hostile, offensive classroom or work

environment, cyber environment; and/ or Interfere with University life. Title IX, part of federal law, makes it clear that discrimination, violence, and harassment based on sex, gender, race, ethnicity, etc. are Civil Rights offenses. Lesley University prohibits and will not tolerate discrimination, sexual misconduct, or gender-based discrimination of any kind.

Complaints of discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment may be done in writing or orally and can be made to anyone in a managerial position (e.g. Chair, Assistant Dean, Associate Dean, Dean, Division Director, Department Head, Director, or Vice President) or specifically to the Director of Equal Opportunity and Inclusion, the Director of Human Resources, or the Dean of Student Life and Academic Development. **To learn more about sexual misconduct or report an incident, visit Sexual Assault Prevention and Services:** <https://lesley.edu/students/health-wellness-safety/sexual-assault-prevention-services>. To obtain the complete Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Harassment Policy, please refer to the Student Handbook (<http://lesley.smartcatalogiq.com/>). Policies contained in this statement may also be found online at: <https://www.lesley.edu/students/policies/academic-policies>. **Other resources include:** Know Your Title IX (<http://knowyourix.org/>); End Rape on Campus (<http://endrapeoncampus.org/>); SurvJustice (<http://survjustice.org/>).