



Course Description

The purpose of this course is to familiarize you with the theories behind systems thinking and the practical methods of synthesis and analysis that have developed alongside systems thinking's theoretical constructions. The course is designed as an online seminar with a praxeological case study component. In the course you will develop case studies based on systems methods of investigation. You also will be engaging in reading, in-depth discussion, and writing on the nature of systems thinking, its orientation, range of applicability, and worldview.

The primary goal of the course is for you to learn the tools of system analysis and apply your skills to real world systemic problems to promote genuine, lasting change.

Required Text (available in the UNCG Bookstore)

David Peter Stroh. *Systems Thinking for Social Change*. White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing. 2015.

Additional Readings

Additional readings are noted in the weekly assignments and are available on the course Canvas site or on e-reserve.

Requirements for the Course

Because this course is a seminar, active substantive participation in the discussions and other group activities is crucial. Some of you may be hesitant to post on discussion boards. This is your chance to overcome your hesitations. Others of you may feel that discussion boards can be used in a free-form manner. In this course's discussions, you will be graded on the manner of your direct, constructively critical engagement with the course readings as well as with the posts of others. The course has a reasonable but not light reading load. You are required to have the reading done by the beginning of each week. The case study project is the major but not sole task of the course. As you can see by the distribution of points towards your final grade, all the tasks of the course are integral.

The case study project is a multi-week, multi-step research project. You will choose a "case" to study. The case is to be drawn from some aspect of your life or work and should involve a specific problem that you will attempt to resolve through a systems approach. In the course, you will be presented with several models or approaches to guide your research (Stream 1: Stroh's Social Change; Stream 2: Health Promotion Systems; Stream 3: Marketing Management). For those of you interested in a case study involving a "social change" (very broadly defined) problem, you will follow the steps outlined in the "Stroh" stream. For anyone interested in a marketing management case, you will follow the "Marketing Management" stream. And for anyone interested in a health promotion systems case, you will follow the "Health Promotion Systems" stream. Careful selection of an appropriately "sized" case is crucial. You will work with me individually to craft your cases.

Grading for the Course

Grading for the course is by points, with a possible maximum total of 220 points. At the end of the course, points will be converted to percentages and then to grades. The grading scale is as follows:

93%–100%: A

90%–92.9%: A-

88%–89.9%: B+

83%–87.99%: B

80%–82.99%: B-

78%–79.99%: C+

73%–77.99%: C

70%–72.99%: C-

All grades below 70% will be considered failing.
