

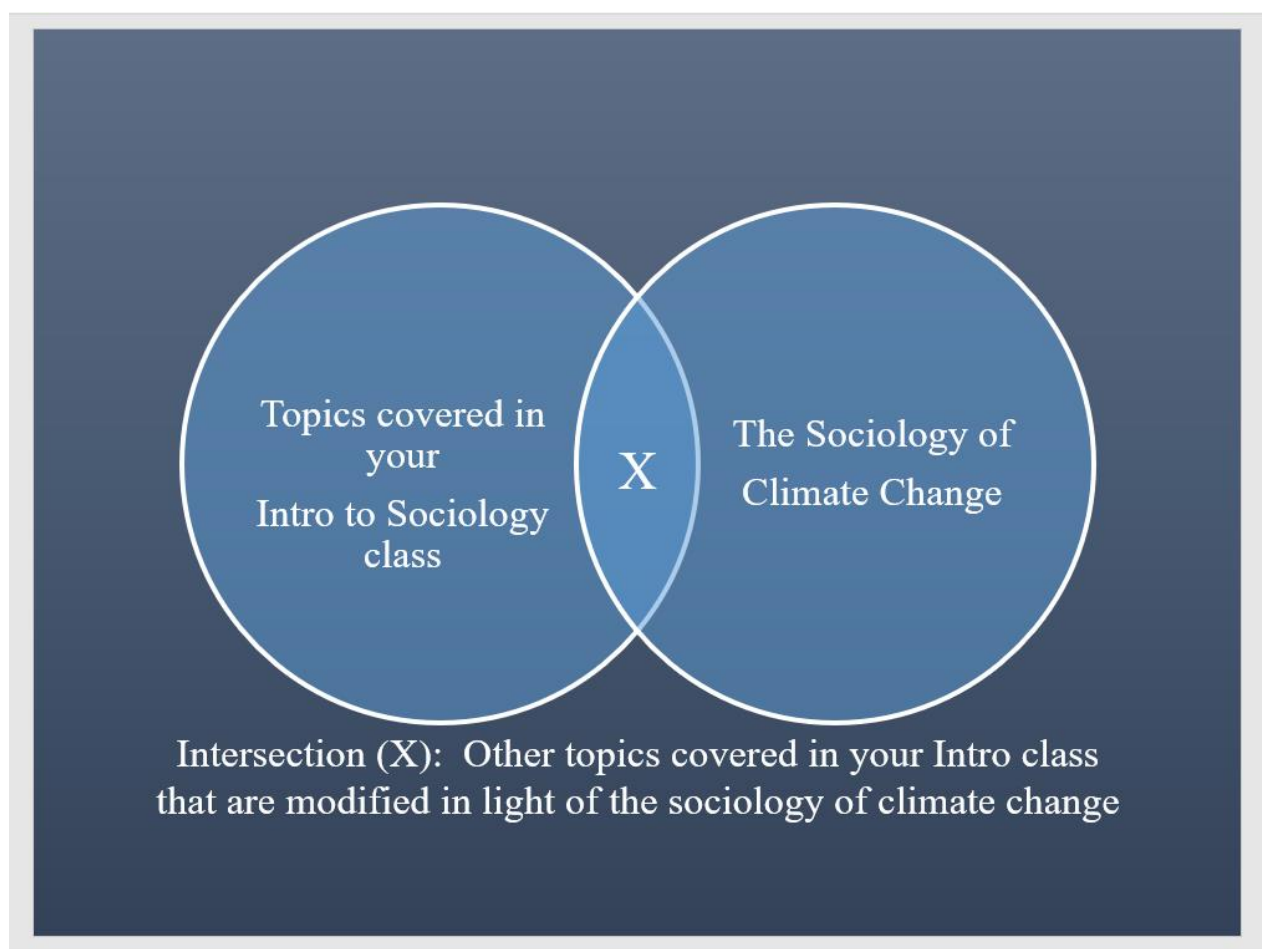
Some suggestions for class discussion at the end of the module

Suggestion # 1: The personal relevance discussion:

- What does climate change mean to me? How will it impact my life?
- What can I/we do?

Suggestion # 2: The “how does sociology of climate change relate to other topics we cover in this course?” discussion:

One could organize such a discussion around a display of this Venn diagram:



The Venn diagram illustrates three possibilities:

- topics in the Intro course that are [mostly?] unaffected by climate change
- topics whose analyses are likely to be significantly affected
- aspects of climate change that fall outside the scope of the typical Intro course

An example of such an analysis

Consider one of the bestselling Intro textbooks in the U.S., Conley's You May Ask Yourself. Here is that textbook's Table of Contents:

BRIEF CONTENTS ←		
PART I		
<u>USING YOUR SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION</u>		1
Chapter 1	The Sociological Imagination: An Introduction	3
Chapter 2	Methods	45
Chapter 3	Culture and Media	77
Chapter 4	Socialization and the Construction of Reality	117
Chapter 5	Groups and Networks	153
Chapter 6	Social Control and Deviance	189
PART II		
<u>FAULT LINES ... SOCIAL DIVISION AND INEQUALITY</u>		237
Chapter 7	Stratification	239
Chapter 8	Gender	279
Chapter 9	Race	325
Chapter 10	Poverty	375
Chapter 11	Health and Society	411
PART III		
<u>BUILDING BLOCKS: INSTITUTIONS OF SOCIETY</u>		451
Chapter 12	Family	453
Chapter 13	Education	497
Chapter 14	Capitalism and the Economy	539
Chapter 15	Authority and the State	575
Chapter 16	Religion	615
Chapter 17	Science, the Environment, and Society	663
Chapter 18	Collective Action, Social Movements, and Social Change	697
GLOSSARY		A-1
BIBLIOGRAPHY		A-15
CREDITS		A-51
INDEX		A-57

One can compare that Table of Contents to the three inquiries and 25 topics of the module's Sociology of Climate Change:

Social causes of climate change

- 1 Causes identified in the “green” updating of Classical Theory
- 2 Causes identified in contemporary Environmental Sociology

Climate impacts on society

- 3 Extreme weather events
- 4 Food
- 5 Water
- 6 Health and Illness
- 7 Economic impacts, at the level of the nation (U.S.)
- 8 Political impacts
- 9 Unequal impacts, globally, among nations
- 10 Unequal impacts, in the U.S., by State and by region
- 11 Unequal impacts, in the U.S., by race and class
- 12 The potential for catastrophic impacts

Societal responses to climate change

- 13 The science: discovery; communication; activism
- 14 Climate activism, the social movements
- 15 Climate denial, the counter-movement
- 16 Private sector actors, pro and con
- 17 Non-environmental “civil society” actors, pro and con
- 18 Traditional media – print (newspapers), network television
- 19 On line media – websites, blogs, social media
- 20 Public opinion
- 21 Policy – international; other nations
- 22 Policy – federal (US)
- 23 Policy – State, local (US)
- 24 Technological innovation (clean, renewable energy); green cities
- 25 “Plan B”: geoengineering

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Filling in content for the Venn diagram

Topics in Conley's textbook that a Sociology of Climate Change is going to significantly affect or modify? ("X" on the Venn diagram) I would propose that "X" is, in fact, large:

- Chapter 7 Stratification
- Chapter 9 Race
- Chapter 10 Poverty
- Chapter 11 Health and Society
- Chapter 14 Capitalism and the Economy
- Chapter 15 Authority and the State
- Chapter 16 Religion
- Chapter 17 Science, the Environment, and Society
- Chapter 18 Collective Action, Social Movements, and Social Change

Topics in Conley that are not as likely to be affected – except perhaps indirectly – by climate change?

- Most of "Part I, Using Your Sociological Imagination" (but doesn't climate change challenge us to broaden our imagination, our "construction of reality"?)
- Chapter 8 Gender (but indirect effects, especially if direct climate impacts are large?)
- Chapter 12 Family (again, possible indirect impacts worth exploring with students)
- Chapter 13 Education (ditto)

Finally, aspects of the sociology of climate change that appear to fall outside the scope of the typical Intro course?

Although Conley (and pretty much every Intro text I have examined) does discuss social disorganization, societal conflict, war, neither Conley nor the other textbooks go to the brink, discussing the conditions that lead to, or the very real possibility of, frank **societal collapse**, possibly within the lifespan of today's college student.