This class offers a deep dive into the philosophy and politics of social ecology designed for both newcomers to the theory and for those well versed in Bookchin’s work. Together, we’ll address epistemological questions that offer a rethinking of nature and human nature that transcends racist, patriarchal, and colonial outlooks that, in turn, open the way to envision a free, democratic, and ecological society. We’ll also take on a central and fraught question of social and ecological ethics. Using anti-racist and feminist perspectives, we’ll consider how to ground an ethics in a dialectical and ‘situated’ approach to making and evaluating knowledge claims. During the second half of the course, we’ll apply social ecology’s epistemological and ethical frameworks to creating a utopian and democratic political praxis. We’ll address Bookchin’s communalist project, exploring crucial questions including ‘what is dual power?’ and ‘how do we bring revolutionary perspectives to our work in social and ecological movements?’

**Class format**
Please complete course readings and watch the video lecture *before* logging into each Zoom session. Chaia will begin class discussion with a brief overview of the topics to be covered for that day’s class to be followed by either large or small group discussion. The video lectures and texts are hosted on our course portal and can be accessed anytime; the readings are downloadable. As the weekly video lectures range from 1-1.5 hours long, you might consider breaking them into two viewing sessions. The 25-50 pages of weekly readings should take an
estimated 1-3 hours depending on your reading speed. There are two (optional) discussion forums to pose comments and questions between sessions. For people who aren’t taking the class for college credit, there are no written assignments or grades.

**Required/Suggested Texts**
To help defray course costs, all readings will be available as electronic files. For those who wish to purchase books, several readings will be drawn from *The Philosophy of Social Ecology* (Murray Bookchin) and *The Ecology of Everyday Life* (Chaia Heller).

**Part I: Epistemology**

**Week 1: Cultural Conceptions of Nature: Race, Gender, Colonialism, Class**
- VIDEO: Climate Change’s White Supremacy Problem

**Week 2: Dialectical Naturalism: Transcending Colonial Notions of (Cultural) Evolution**

**Part II: Ethics**

**Week 3: Grounding Ethics in 'Nature' versus 'Natural History'**

**Week 4: Position and Positionality: Do Our Identities Affect the Legitimacy of Truth Claims?**

**Part III: Politics**

**Week 5: What Is Power, Anyway?: Explorations of Social, Political, and Dual Power**

Week 6: Direct Democracy: How Particular Identities Inform General Political Practice
• VIDEO: 21st Century Socialism: Nuilifer Koc discusses the history of socialism and the PKK.

Week 7: Experiments in Direct Democracy: From Ancient Athens to Rojava
• Murray Bookchin. “What is Communalism?!: The Democratic Dimension of Anarchism.”
• Debbie Bookchin, “How My Father’s Ideas Helped the Kurds Create a New Democracy.”
• Dilar Dirik. “Don’t Know Us Because of Our Guns, but Because of Our Ideas.”
• Video: Black Socialists in America x Kongra Star in Conversation about Rojava.
• Meredith Tax, “Trump’s Betrayal of Rojava.”

Week 8: Illustrative Opposition: The Revolutionary Potential of Social Movements