UC Berkeley Master of Climate Solutions

Course Description: CSOL 290B

Cultivating Climate Resilience: Worldviews, Community and Self

SEMESTER: Spring 2027

COURSE NUMBER: CSOL 290B

COURSE TITLE: Cultivating Climate Resilience: Worldviews, Community and Self

TIMING: Thursday February 4th 5-7pm, Saturday February 6th 10am-5pm, Sunday February 7th 10am-5pm and Thursday February 18th 5-7pm

UNITS OF CREDIT: 1

INSTRUCTORS: Kat Baird (kbaird@berkeley.edu) and Sharmila Singh (sharmilasingh@berkeley.edu)

ABSTRACT OF COURSE CONTENT AND OBJECTIVES:

A life working on climate solutions requires more than technical knowledge. It involves navigating uncertainty, maintaining a sense of purpose, building supportive relationships, and adapting to constantly changing circumstances. This experiential course explores the human dimensions of climate leadership through four interconnected themes: Worldviews, Self, Community, and Practice.

Students will examine how dominant worldviews and socially constructed beliefs shape their understanding of climate action, explore frameworks for resilience, hope, and self-efficacy, and investigate different ways social capital, mutual aid, and collective action enable meaningful change.

The first class will introduce key worldview and belief concepts. The second and third classes will be full day weekend immersion at a location in Berkeley, designed to facilitate both learning,

personal reflection and a sense of retreat. The final class will be about implementing the learnings for the long-term, both for communities and individuals.

Through facilitated discussions, critical reflection, peer learning, and practical exercises, students will work together developing tools to navigate complexity, sustain motivation, and approach their climate careers with greater intention and adaptability.

Learning Goals & Outcomes: At the end of this course students will be able to:

1. Explain how dominant worldviews, socially constructed beliefs and historical narratives about nature, value, and progress shape what we see as possible, valuable, or worth pursuing in climate work.
2. Use evidence-based frameworks for resilience, hope, and self-efficacy, along with contemplative views on meaning, grief, and joy, to stay grounded and motivated when outcomes are uncertain.
3. Explain how social capital, mutual aid, and collective resilience support coordinated action, and apply adaptive organizing, generative conflict, and storytelling to build shared commitment and collective impact.
4. Combine their evolving worldview, sustaining practices, and supportive relationships into a personal approach for leading and working in a climate career with intention and adaptability.

Our vision for this course:

- **The classroom as an ecosystem:** Students are not simply recipients of information. Their experiences, perspectives, and interactions become part of the curriculum.
- **Learning through experience:** Students encounter ideas by doing, reflecting, making, listening, and experimenting, rather than primarily through lectures.
- **Moving beyond intellectual understanding:** Engage emotional, intuitive, creative, and reflective capacities alongside analytical thinking.
- **Building personal and collective resilience:** Explore how people sustain themselves while working through uncertainty, grief, complexity, and change.
- **Facilitation rather than traditional instruction:** Instructor role is to create and hold a space for exploration, rather than positioned as experts with all the answers.
- **Connection as a form of learning:** Students gain insight from one another's lived experiences, cultural backgrounds, and ways of understanding the world.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	In Class
Class 1: Thursday February 4th 5-7pm	**Worldviews | Rethinking How We See the World** How do our assumptions shape what we believe is possible, valuable, or worth pursuing? This session examines how global events and personal experiences can challenge deeply held assumptions and established perspectives. Students explore how dominant worldviews and beliefs about nature, value, and progress are socially constructed and shaped by historical and cultural contexts. The session introduces alternative worldviews and encourages critical reflection on how these perspectives influence our understanding of climate challenges and approaches to solutions.
Class 2: Saturday February 6th 10am-5pm	**Self | Building Resilience and Sustaining Purpose** How do we stay grounded, motivated, and engaged when the work is complex, and outcomes are uncertain? This session examines the psychological and spiritual resources and practices that support long-term engagement in climate work. Students explore evidence-based approaches to resilience, hope, self-efficacy, and navigating uncertainty, alongside contemplative perspectives on meaning, grief, and joy. Through guided reflection and practical exercises, students identify approaches that can help sustain their own professional and personal well-being.
Class 3: Sunday February 7th 10am-5pm	**Community | Creating Change Through Connection** How do relationships and communities enable collective action and lasting change? This session examines the role of community in connecting individual perspectives to broader societal change. Students explore the sociology and economics of community, including social capital, mutual aid, and collective resilience as foundations for coordinated action. The session also examines adaptive approaches to community organizing, generative conflict, and the role of narrative and storytelling in building shared understanding, commitment, and collective impact.
Class 4: Thursday February 18th 5-7pm	**Practice | Bringing It All Together** How can we translate these insights into how we work, lead, and engage in the climate sector? The final session brings together the course's central themes and challenges students to apply them to their own professional contexts. Students reflect on their evolving worldviews, identify the

	practices and relationships that will sustain them, and develop a personal approach to navigating the opportunities and challenges of a career in climate solutions.

FACULTY BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

Kat Baird is Executive Director of Sustainability & Social Impact at the UC Berkeley Haas School of Business and Associate Director in the Master of Climate Solutions at Rausser College of Natural Resources. Over seven years at UC Berkeley, she has built sustainability strategies, designed new academic programming, and guided students in navigating complex climate careers. Before Berkeley, she spent nearly a decade in global grassroots advocacy and nonprofit leadership - engaging international pension funds and investors on climate risk, developing communication strategies for a global feminist fund, and training activists across Asia, Latin America, and the UK. Alongside her institutional work, Kat's approach to climate leadership is deeply shaped by a practice of collective resilience: she co-owns a duplex in Berkeley rooted in mutual care and regularly practices Buddhist and other contemplative traditions. Her writing on business education and sustainability has appeared in the *California Management Review* and *Financial Times*, and she holds a Master's in International Relations from the University of Edinburgh.

Sharmila Singh is Director of Career Services for UC Berkeley's Master of Climate Solutions program at Rausser College of Natural Resources, where she helps students navigate the evolving climate economy and build meaningful, impactful careers. She brings 15 years of experience in sustainability, advising organizations on climate strategy, resource efficiency, water reuse, zero waste, and sustainability reporting. Her work has focused on translating environmental commitments into practical strategies and measurable outcomes. At Berkeley, she draws on her industry experience and professional network to connect students with emerging career opportunities, build relationships with employers, and support students in translating their experience and interests into purposeful career pathways. She brings a practitioner's understanding of the climate sector, a strong perspective on emerging workforce trends, and a commitment to preparing the next generation of climate leaders.