SINV 3303 Winter 2025 - Precis Description

Précises (3x15% = 45%): A **one-page, single-spaced** critical reflection/analysis (500-600 words). The goal of these assignments is three-fold: first, to carefully build your analysis and allow us to dialogue on your topic; second, to carefully stretch your systems muscles on individual topics before the final project, and; third, to work on your written communication skills - brevity and clarity are harder than you think, and more valuable than I can convey in an assignment.

An effective precis will address the question/topic assigned (see below), bring some outside of class evidence and develop at least one unique insight that connects that evidence with the topic, and it will do so clearly. Each of the topics is meant to help you develop individual bricks in a systems argument, but you are not "locked into" any conclusion. Evidence in a precis is usually peer-reviewed research, government reports and grey literature (reports created by non-governmental agencies, white papers and policy briefs that have not been peer reviewed but are based on some form of evidence and are meant to inform), but as we are on the edges of complexity in many of our topics, it is possible that other forms of evidence may be relevant or helpful to you (i.e. stories, practice, art), so the issue of appropriateness is more about 'fit' and the complex question you are exploring. When we look at complex questions, we should expect to go on a research journey (McGowan et al, 2014) that will bring together different methods, disciplines and even different epistemologies. The longer you have been in academia, paradoxically, this can be more difficult, so take advantage of these precises as a safe space to experiment and challenge yourself. When in doubt, contact me to have a discussion.

Topics:

(1) Complex Adaptive Systems Precis (Lit Review/why take this approach). Please answer the following issue/topic in your précis: **how might systems thinking compare to other solutions/analyses of your problem. Please cite at least two non-class articles/cases/studies (can include non-peer reviewed).**
HELPFUL QUESTIONS: *Why is a systems approach important/useful to the topic you are considering? Is it different from previous approaches? How? Explain*

(2) Boundaries Precis (what system are you looking at): What are the boundaries you are placing on your analysis? Which systems are you looking at and which might you need to leave behind? Why? **Please cite at least two non-class articles/studies (can include non-peer reviewed).**
> *Discuss at least two of the flowing:* Temporal Scale; Geographical Scale; Cultural Scale; Legislative/Regulatory; Ecologic
HELPFUL QUESTIONS: *Why stop there? At what point do connections between parts lose explanatory power? What about this ecosystem/bio-region is helpful? Is this a*

traditional territory? Is this a jurisdictional boundary - do laws stop applying? If the boundaries are not clear, are there points of conflict that might actually be helpful to explore?

(3) Feedback Loops & Thresholds (what are you finding in your system): <u>Identify at least two feedback loops and one threshold</u> that your system may approach without intervention, or one that you want to push it towards. **Please cite at least two non-class articles/studies (can include non-peer reviewed).**
<mark>HELPFUL QUESTIONS:</mark> *Where do we see growth/decrease? Where do we see equilibria that can be explored? Is there a tipping point that we want to get to? What do we want to avoid? What are the goals people are trying to achieve in the system? What gets measured and what gets responded to?*