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:
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. Online 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 societally collapse, possibly within the lifespan of today’s college student.