

# **A Sociological Framework for Understanding Climate Change, Sea-level Rise and Coastal Flooding in the African American Community: A Systems Approach**

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DHS Summer Research Team

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# Introduction

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A part of the Current Research Focus Climate Change, Sea-level Rise (SLR) and Coastal Flooding (CF), Norfolk State University proposes a collaborative effort between the natural sciences and social sciences to examine the perceptions and attitudes of African Americans in the Hampton Roads area to both SLR and CF.



# Background

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As a sociologist on the collaborative team, analyzing racial dynamics and perceptions of marginalized populations is critical to understanding under-served communities in relation to natural security, emergency preparedness, and resilience is relevant to the goals and objectives of Department of Homeland Security (DHS).



# Primary Research Focus

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*A sociological perspective contextualizes the environmental impact on the African American community*

## Sociological Focus

- Socio-environmental dynamics, including the social and behavioral responses, as they relate to community issues, such as drugs, trash, vacant and abandoned houses, jobs and crime
- Social determinants that underpin the biological determinants of health and well-being related to pathogens, waterborne disease and air quality
- Analyze residential decision- making for planning responses to SLR and flooding as it impacts health disparities



# Conceptual Framework

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There is growing empirical evidence that low-income and minority communities are disproportionately impacted by environmental issues and natural disasters (Bullard, 2000; 2009) Environmental sociologist, Robert Bullard has been at the forefront of the environmental justice movement, as regard to equitable development and the impact on marginalized communities

- Examine human-made threats to the environment
- Understand cultural and structural forces
- Explore long-range implications

# Research Nexus

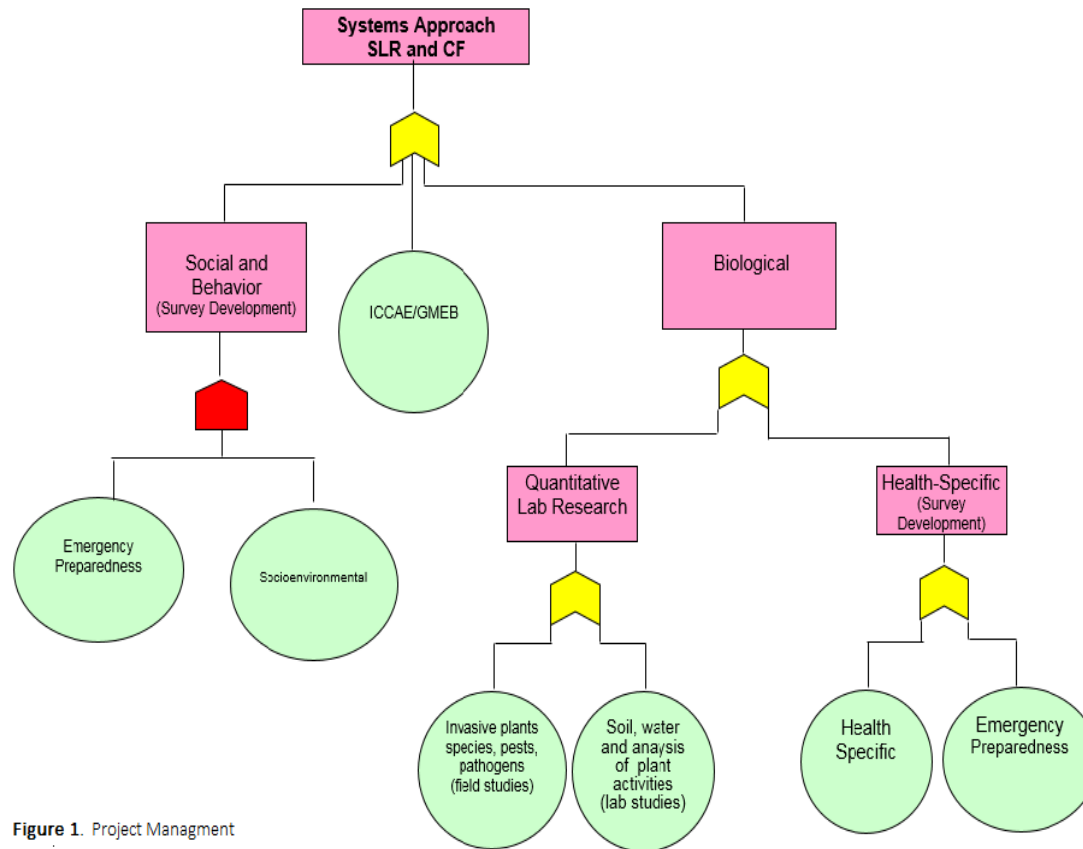


Figure 1. Project Management



# Collaboration Goals

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- Interdisciplinary Research Agenda
- Curriculum Development
  - Environmental Crime and Justice
  - Proposed Concentration
- Diversity Pipeline
- Campus and Community Engagement

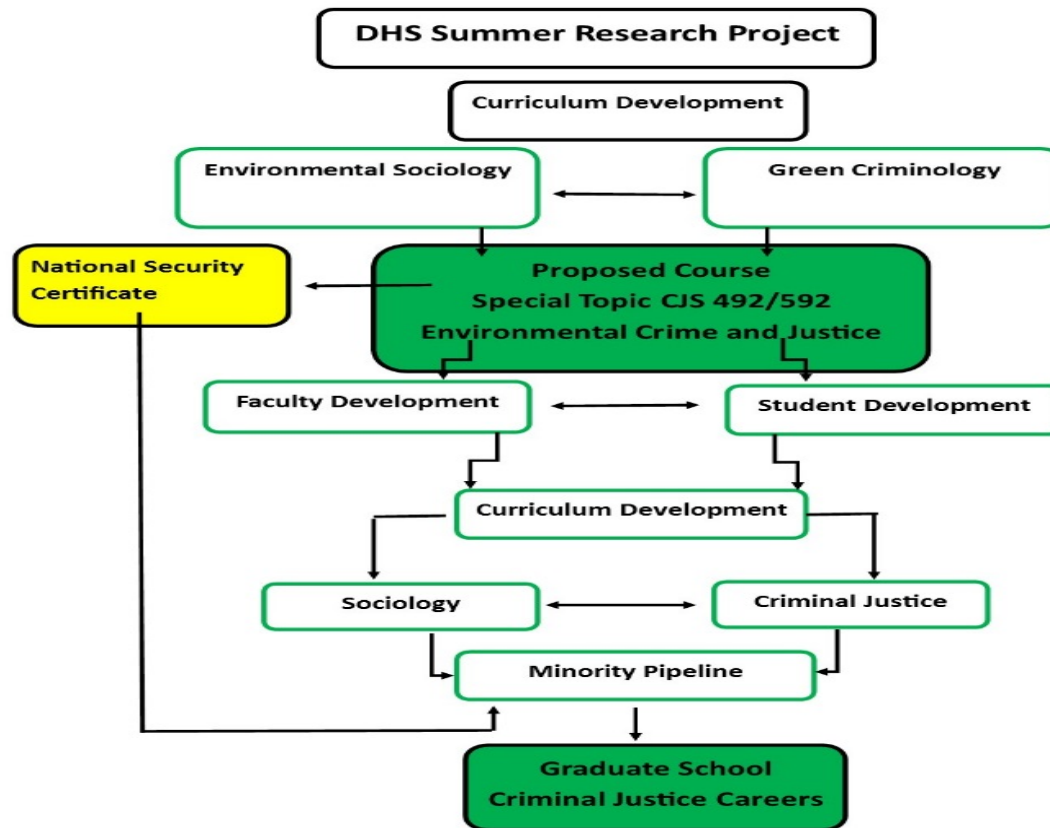
# Research Model

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# Curriculum Development



# Campus Collaboration

DIA designated IC-CAE

Department of Sociology

**Strategies for Ecology Education, Diversity and Sustainability (SEEDS) Club**  
Promotes an ecology profession with wide representation to ensure environmental understanding and a sustainable future for all

**W.E.B. Du Bois Sociology Club**  
Focuses on providing and developing social and academic skills to prepare budding sociologists for career opportunities in their chosen field. We also sponsor, organize and facilitate seminars, panel discussions, social activities, and community service projects



Collaboration between the SEEDS Club and the Sociology Club can bring awareness to environmental issues and produce student lead activities demonstrating how issues of ecology goes beyond the science realm and affects each and every one of us



# Field Research: Community Voices

