This is an advanced undergraduate seminar (juniors and seniors only) in non-mathematical approaches to Dynamic Systems Theory as it applies to human development across the life span and across generations. Concepts such as chaos, indeterminacy, emergence, butterfly effects, non-linear transitions, and fractals will help us to understand the complex interactions in the person-environment dynamic system and to answer some of the following questions:

• Can we optimize human development by cultivating relationships between body and mind, person and family, family and society, society and the natural world, including the earth and its biosphere?
• How can we use “systems intelligence” to re-create educational, political, service, and business organizations for the welfare of all?
• Can humans cooperate and re-build, rather than fight and destroy?
• What is known about ancient and modern holistic (relational, systems-oriented) approaches to human health and well-being and what do these approaches offer for the solution of some of the major problems that humans now face?

This class will be conducted like a graduate seminar, with students and teacher co-leading discussions of interdisciplinary readings. Students will write short weekly papers, complete a mid-term and final exam, and write a term project on applying systems theory to the study/solution of a real-world issue/problem in which they have a personal interest.

What students have said about this class:

“This class was probably the best of my college education. I learned a lot and loved doing so.”

“This was a very interesting, life changing, perspective changing course. I learned a lot about those around me, about myself and about this world and how we all interact with one another and influence or affect each other.”

For more information about the course, contact: alan.fogel@psych.utah.edu

Dr. Fogel is the author of many books and articles on systems thinking and human development. He has received the University of Utah John R. Park Teaching Fellowship (1996), the University Distinguished Teaching Award (2001), the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences Superior Teaching Award (2006), and the University of Utah Distinguished Scholarly and Creative Research Award (2008).