

# SGO 4301 – Global Environmental Change

## Course content

We are now living in the Anthropocene Era, where human activities are transforming the Earth System and contributing to climate change, biodiversity loss, ozone depletion, land cover changes, and changes to the global water system. How do people perceive and understand these changes, and how can we respond? Can we adapt to change? Can we transform society towards a more sustainable future? Who decides what type of world we will live in? Do we have a responsibility to future generations? How do we change entrenched systems when powerful interests are threatened? What role do beliefs, values, and worldviews play in all of this? These are some of the questions that will be addressed in this course. A variety of theoretical frameworks and approaches to understanding responses to environmental change will be discussed. These theories will be practically applied in a course project that aims to give students firsthand experience with transformative responses to global environmental change at the personal, behavioral, cultural and systems levels.

Students will gain a greater awareness of the opportunities for social scientists to contribute to research and policy debates on global environmental change, and they will develop their understandings of the challenges and possibilities associated with transformative change. The course will be organized as weekly lectures and discussions, as well as four project-related seminars. Participation in the course is mandatory. Student assessment will be based on course participation, a short “self-reflection” paper, and a project paper and presentation.

## Learning outcomes

### Knowledge

- Explain and provide examples of different frameworks and approaches to understanding global environmental change;
- Understand the “emerging” role of the social sciences and humanities in global environmental change research, and the implications of for policies and responses;
- Recognize the linkages between different responses to global environmental problems and the underlying frameworks that promote them;
- Be able to identify how worldviews, values and beliefs influence the construction of knowledge and prioritized responses to environmental and social problems.

### Skills

- Critically read and discuss articles and books on environmental change, recognizing the importance of different discourses and approaches;
- Understand both the need for and challenges to interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches to complex global problems.
- Experience the challenges and opportunities for implementing change processes at different scales.

## Admission

This course is a part of the Master's program in Human Geography.

Students in other master programs may apply to be accepted as guest students. Please note that the following special restrictions apply:

- applicant must be admitted to a master program.
- this course will be taken as a part of their Master's degree. A confirmation from the students student adviser must be attached to the application.
- there are available places in this course.

Applications must be sent the department by XXXX.

Students who are admitted to study programmes at UiO must each semester register which courses and exams they wish to sign up for [in StudentWeb](#).

International applicants, if you are not already enrolled as a student at UiO, please see our information about [admission requirements and procedures for international applicants](#).

The examination in this course is not available for external candidates. Only students admitted to the course may sit for the examination.

## Prerequisites

### Recommended prior knowledge

[SGO2301 - Environment and society](#)

## Teaching

This course is taught at the University of Oslo, Blindern campus. Other locations in Oslo may be used.

The lectures are given in English.

Teaching takes place throughout the semester, as outlined in the course plan.

### Criteria for access to teaching resources

A student who has completed compulsory instruction and coursework and has had these approved, is not entitled to repeat that instruction and coursework. A student who has been admitted to a course, but who has not completed compulsory instruction and coursework or had these approved, is entitled to repeat that instruction and coursework, contingent on available capacity.

## Exam information

Assessment is based on course participation (mandatory participation (evaluated as Pass/Fail) in at least 7 out of 10 of the lectures/discussions and 3 out of 4 seminars), a short "self-reflection" paper on personal change (25%), and a term paper and presentation of a project that students will work on throughout the semester (75%).

Course grades are awarded on a descending scale using alphabetic grades from A to E for passes and F for fail.

When submitting the term paper students are required to submit a [compulsory statement](#) regarding plagiarism.

Any take home exam or essay etc. handed in at the University of Oslo may be checked for plagiarism by use of the Ephorus text recognition software.

## Exam resources

No special exam resources are allowed.

## Language of examination

The students can choose whether they will write the paper in English, Norwegian, Swedish or Danish.

## Assessment and grading

Examination results are available in StudentWeb three weeks after the date of submission, if no other information is given on the semester page of the current semester.

Course grades are awarded on a descending scale using alphabetic grades from A to E for passes and F for fail. Read more about [the grading system](#) .

An external auditor regularly evaluates the academic quality of the course, including the form of exam used on the course.