

Course content

This course focuses on contemporary environmental issues and the challenges of both understanding and responding to them in an equitable and sustainable manner. The course presents insights on discourses and framings of environmental problems, including how beliefs, values and worldviews influence perceptions of problems as well as proposed solutions, and the implications for human security. The lectures introduce economic, political, cultural and ethical perspectives on environmental problems, focusing on issues such as climate change, ~~energy supply and energy consumption~~, urban environmental problems, land use change, biodiversity, access to water and food, and vulnerability and adaptation to environmental change and disaster risk. The course includes discussions of the different types of social transitions and transformations that are considered necessary for creating a resilient and sustainable future. Understandings of human-environment relationships, ~~the role of technology in~~ social change, conceptions of power, and the role of individual and collective action in systems-scale change will be considered. Students are expected to participate actively in the seminars.

Learning outcome

Knowledge

- Understand key concepts and theories about environmental problems, including vulnerability, resilience, adaptation and human security;
- Explain the role that discourses play in framing problems and solutions;
- Recognize different perspectives and approaches to environmental problems, and how these influence research, policy and action;
- Understand the key issues related to individual environmental problems such as climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, etc.;
- Understand the links between globalization and environmental change, and recognize how multiple processes (e.g., economic change, urbanization, epidemics, etc.) intersect and interact;
- Explain how environmental problems are linked to development and understandings of human-environment relationships and society-technology dynamics;
- Understand how contributions from the social sciences can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of environmental problems and solutions.

Skills and Competences

- Discuss and debate articles and text on environmental issues;
- Recognize how different discourses are represented in media coverage of environmental issues;
- Experience in writing short opinion pieces on environmental problems;
- Write an academic text with references that addresses a particular question related to environment and society;
- Reflect and comment on the assignments of other students;
- Present and defend viewpoints among a group of students.