

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 **geographical and sociological** 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, 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, 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.

Admission

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

Admission to this course is given on the basis of specific rules. For further information, please read:

[Rangeringsregler ved SV-fakultetet](#)

You may apply to sit for the exam(s) in this course as a [private candidate](#).

Private candidates are given a 6-hours school exam in English. The exam is held on the same day as the submission of the regular home exam.

Prerequisites

Formal prerequisite knowledge

No obligatory prerequisites beyond the minimum requirements for entrance to higher education in Norway.

Recommended previous knowledge

[SGO1001 - Innføring i Samfunnsgeografi](#)

eller

[SOS1000 – Innføring i sosiologi](#)

Teaching

This course will be taught at The University of Oslo, Blindern campus. Other location in Oslo may be used. The e-learning tool Fronter will normally be used.

The teaching is organized as lectures and seminars, which will be given in English. The course is part of the regular course provision at The Faculty of Social Science.

[Application for change of seminar group](#)

Teaching is mainly held during daytime. Teaching is organised as a combination of lectures and seminars throughout the semester. On the semester page you can find information about time and place of the current semesters lectures and seminars.

It is required of the student that he/she writes a feature article relevant to the course. The student must be present in the first seminar where he/she will be assigned to a group. Valid absence such as illness etc. must to be documented by a medical certificate.

Completed and approved compulsory course work is valid until the course is no longer offered. Students who have failed to complete the compulsory course work cannot take the exam.

Access to teaching

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, depending on available capacity.

Examination

The Faculty of Social Science is responsible for the exam(s), and exam(s) are/is normally held at The University of Oslo, Blindern campus. Other locations in Oslo may be used.

The exam for this course is a 2-week take home exam in English. The exam question is handed out at 10.00 am on the day of the exam and must be submitted at 2.00 pm 14 days later. The minimum length of the home exam is 12 pages (excluding references) using 12 point letter size and a spacing of lines 1 1/2.

When submitting the essay the candidate is also required to submit a statement regarding plagiarism, also called a [compulsory statement](#)

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.

[Previous exam texts](#)

Language of examination

The students can choose whether they will answer the exam questions in English, Norwegian, Swedish or Danish.

Grading scale

Grades are awarded on a scale from A to F, where A is the best grade and F is a fail. Read more about [the grading system](#).

Examination results are available in StudentWeb three weeks after the examination-date, if no other information is given on the Web page for the current semester.

Explanations and appeals

You may:

- [request an explanation of your grades](#)
- [appeal about your grades](#)
- [make a complaint about formal exam errors](#)

Resit an examination

You can usually resit an exam, but the conditions depend on whether you had a valid reason for absence from the regular exam. Read more about [resitting an exam](#).

Withdrawal from an examination

A student may sit this exam up to 3 times. If a student wishes to withdraw from the exam, s/he must do so in StudentWeb at least two weeks [prior to the first day of the exam](#). Failure to do so will be counted as one of the three opportunities to sit the exam.

Special examination arrangements

Application forms for special examination arrangements on school-exams should be sent to The Faculty of Social Science. Applications for special examination arrangements on other exams should be sent to the Department which organizes the course.

Evaluation

Feedback from our students is essential to us in our efforts to ensure and further improve the high quality of our programmes and courses. All courses are subject to continuous evaluation. At regular intervals we also ask students on a particular course to participate in a more comprehensive, periodic evaluation of this course.