

SGO2302

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.~~

This course focuses on human-environment relationships and their implications for nature and society. Scientific concepts such as the “Anthropocene” and “planetary boundaries,” which are increasingly used to describe the nature and extent of contemporary environmental challenges, will be explored from a social science perspective. The issue of climate change will be a focal point for examining the drivers and consequences of environmental change, including relationships to processes such as globalization, urbanization, and land use changes. Social science perspectives on topics such as consumption, energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, impacts, vulnerability, resilience, adaptation and mitigation will be presented and related to the broader debates about transitions and transformations to sustainability.

The lectures, readings and seminars will explore how environmental discourses influence understandings and responses to contemporary environmental problems, including the role of beliefs, values, and worldviews in shaping the rules, norms, institutions, policies and power relationships, which can either promote or constrain practical responses to environmental challenges. Students will actively engage with debates on and experiments

with individual and collective change, and explore what alternative approaches and paradigms have to offer.

Learning outcome

Knowledge

- Identify key concepts and theories about environmental issues, including vulnerability, resilience, adaptation and human security;
- Explain the role that discourses play in framing environmental problems and solutions, and their influence on research, policy and actions;
- Understand key issues related to climate change, including the social drivers and potentials for adaptation and transformation;
- Explain how environmental problems are linked to understandings of human-environment relationships, and understand the role of beliefs, values and worldviews.

Skills and Competence

- Discuss and debate articles and text about environmental issues;
- Recognize how different discourses are represented in media coverage of environmental issues;
- Understand the diversity of viewpoints about environmental issues and develop skills for effective communication.
- Understand relationships and distinctions between social change and individual change.
- Write an academic text with references that addresses a particular question related to environment and society;

Admission

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](#).

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

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](#) or

[SOS1000 - Innføring i sosiologi](#)

Overlapping courses

10 credits overlap with [SGO2301 - Environment and society \(discontinued\)](#)

Teaching

Seminars and lectures.

Compulsory instruction and coursework

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.

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.

General information

- 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.

Absence from compulsory tuition activities

If you are ill or have another valid reason for being absent from compulsory tuition activities, your absence may be approved or the compulsory activity may be postponed.

- [Report absence from or the need for a postponed deadline on a compulsory tuition activity](#)

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 exam is a 2-week home exam in English. The minimum length of the home exam is 10 pages (excluding references) and maximum 14 pages, using 12 point letter size and a spacing of lines 1 1/2.

The exam question is handed out in Fronter at 10.00 am on the day of the exam and must be submitted at 2.00 pm 14 days later.

[Previous exam texts](#)

Use of sources and citation

You should familiarize yourself with the rules that apply to [the use of sources and citations](#). If you violate the rules, you may be suspected of [cheating/attempted cheating](#).

Language of examination

The examination text is given in English. You may submit your response in Norwegian, Swedish, Danish or English.

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](#).

Explanations and appeals

It is recommended to request an explanation of your grade before you decide to appeal.

Appeal

- [Appeal against grades](#)
- [Complaint about formal exam errors](#)

Explanation

The deadline to request an explanation is one week after the grade is published. For oral and practical examinations, the deadline is immediately after you have received your grade.

The explanation should normally be given within two weeks after you have asked for it. The examiner decides whether the explanation is to be given in writing or verbally.

Ask for explanation of your grade in this course:

- [home exam](#)

Resit an examination

- [Illness at exams / postponed exams](#)

- [Resitting an examination](#)

Withdrawal from an examination

If you wish to withdraw from the exam you must do so in Studentweb at least two weeks [prior to the deadline](#). Failure to do so will be counted as an examination attempt.

Special examination arrangements

Application form, deadline and requirements for [special examination arrangements](#).

Evaluation

The course is subject to continuous evaluation. At regular intervals we also ask students to participate in a more comprehensive evaluation