

## Course content

This course focuses on human-environment relationships and their implications for nature and society. 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. Scientific concepts, such as the "Anthropocene," which are increasingly used to describe the nature and extent of contemporary environmental challenges, will be explored from a social science perspective. Other 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

- 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 Competence

- 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.

## Teaching

Seminars and lectures.

## Compulsory instruction and coursework

It is required of the student that he/she writes a reflection paper based on a self-identified sustainability challenge, drawing on course material. The purpose and structure of the challenge and the requirements for the reflection paper are discussed at the first seminar and students must therefore be present in their assigned seminar group for this seminar. Subsequent seminar sessions are voluntary but attendance is highly recommended.

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.

## Examination

The exam is a 3-day 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 will be available from 10.00 am on the day of the exam and must be submitted at 2.00 pm 3 days later.