

Proposed changes to the course description for SGO2302 for Spring 2023

Manjana Milkoreit, September 26, 2022

Removals

Additions

No proposed changes to the pensum

COURSE DESCRIPTION

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 outcomes

Knowledge

- Understand key concepts, theories, **and debates** about environmental problems, including **causes and responsibility, impacts and vulnerability**, resilience, adaptation and human security;
- Explain the role that discourses **and worldviews** 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.
- 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 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](#)

Compulsory instruction and coursework

- ~~Write a~~ A written reflection paper, based on a self-identified sustainability challenge, drawing on course material.
- ~~Attending Attendance~~ at the first seminar. ~~Here, the purpose and structure of the 30-day challenge and the requirements for the reflection paper are discussed.~~
- ~~Subsequent seminar sessions are voluntary, but attendance is highly recommended.~~

It is required of the student that he/she writes a reflection paper based on a ~~self-identified sustainability challenge~~ 30-day experiment with personal behavior change and drawing on course material. The reflection paper is graded pass/fail. **A passing grade is a prerequisite for taking the final exam.** 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.

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 Canvas 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 ~~85~~-day home exam ~~in English~~. The minimum length of the home exam is ~~10 pages~~ 4500 words and maximum ~~14 pages~~ 5500 words (excluding references) ~~using 12 point letter size and a spacing of lines 1 1/2~~.

The exam question will be available from 10.00h on the day of the exam and must be submitted at 12.00h ~~85~~ days later.

[Previous exams](#) (Please note that the exam format has changed recently, and past exams offer limited guidance for exams from 2023 onwards.)

Submit assignments in Inspira

You submit your assignment in the digital examination system Inspira. [Read about how to submit your assignment.](#)

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

- [Explanation of grades and appeals](#)

Resit an examination

- [Illness at exams / postponed exams](#)
- [Resitting an examination](#)

Withdrawal from an examination

It is possible to take the exam up to 3 times. If you [withdraw from the exam](#) after the deadline or during the exam, this 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.

SYLLABUS/READING LIST

Main books

Leichenko, R. M. and O'Brien, K. 2019. *Climate and Society: Transforming the Future*. Cambridge: Polity Press. (250 pages)

Available as e-book

- Brown, K. 2013. Social Ecological Resilience and Human Security. Chapter 9 (Pages 107-116) in Sygna, Linda, Karen O'Brien and Johanna Wolf (eds.), *A Changing Environment for Human Security: Transformative Approaches to Research, Policy, and Action*. London, UK: Routledge-Earthscan. (10 pages) [E-book](#)
- Dryzek, J. 2013. Making Sense of Earth's Politics: A Discourse Approach. Chapter 1 (Pages 3-23) in Dryzek, John. 2013. *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses* Oxford: Oxford University Press. (21 pages)
- Ehrhardt-Martinez, K. and Schor, J.B. et al. 2015. Consumption and Climate Change. Chapter 4 (Pages (93-106) in Dunlap, R. and Brulle, R. (eds.) *Climate and Society*, London. Routledge. (14 pages) [E-book](#)
- Head, L. 2016. Grief will be our companion. Chapter 2 (pages (21-37) in Head, Lesley. 2016. *Hope and Grief in the Anthropocene: Re-Conceptualising Human-nature Relations*. New York, NY: Routledge. (17 pages) [E-book](#)
- Heyd, T. and Brooks, N. 2009. Exploring cultural dimensions of adaptation. Chapter 17 (Pages 269-282) in: Adger, N. W., Lorenzoni, I. and O'Brien, K. (eds.) *Adapting to Climate Change- Thresholds, Values, Governance*. Cambridge University press, UK (14 pages) [E-book](#)
- Milkoreit, M. 2016. The Promise of Climate Fiction – Imagination, Storytelling and the Politics of the Future. Chapter 10 (Pages (171-191)) in: Wapner, P. and E. Hilal (eds.) 2016, *Reimagining Climate Change*. Routledge Publishing (21 pages) [E-book](#)
- Riedy, C. 2019. The Witnesses. Pages 1- 15 in K. O'Brien et al (eds) *Our Entangled Future: Stories to Empower Quantum Social Change*. (15 pages) [E-book](#).
- Sharma, M. 2017. The Radical Systems and Cultural Transformer: Everyone's Contribution. Chapter 9 (Pages 209-231) in *Radical Transformational Leadership: Strategic Action for Change Agents*. North Atlantic Books. (23 pages) [E-book](#)
- Stirling, A. 2015. Emancipating transformations: from controlling 'the transition' to culturing plural radical progress. Chapter 4 in: I. Scoones et al. 2015. *The Politics of Green Transformations*. (Pages 54-67) London: Routledge/Earthscan. (14 pages) [E-book](#)
- Wilhite, H. 2016. A theory of Habits. Chapter 2 in: Wilhite, Harold. 2016. *The Political Economy of Low Carbon Transformation: Breaking the Habits of Capitalism*. (21-39) London: New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. (19 pages) [E-book](#)

In compendium

- Singh, V. 2016. Entanglement. In: J.J. Adams (eds.) *Loosed Upon the World: The Saga Anthology of Climate Fiction*. (269-322). London: Saga (54 pages)
- Stoknes, Per Espen. 2015. What We Think About When We Try Not to Think About Global Warming. Pages 54-84 (Chapters 5-7). White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green. (31 pages)

Available online

- @Barnett, J. and Adger, W.N. 2007. Climate Change, Human Security and Violent Conflict. *Political Geography*, 26, 6. 639–655. [Available online](#) (17 pages)
- @Gibbs, W. Wayt. 2017 “How Much Energy Will the World Need?” *Anthropocene Magazine*. [Available online](#) (4 pages)
- @Ingram, M., Ingram, H. and Lejano, R. 2015. Environmental Action in the Anthropocene: The Power of Narrative Networks. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, November. 1–16. [Available online](#) (16 pages)
- @Jenkins, K., McCauley, D., Heffron, R., Stephan, H., Rehner, R., 2016. Energy justice: A conceptual review. *Energy Research & Social Science*. 11: 174–182. [Available online](#) (9 pages)
- @Leichenko, R. and Silva, J.A. 2014. Climate Change and Poverty: Vulnerability, Impacts, and Alleviation Strategies. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*. 5, 4: 539–56. [Available online](#). (18 pages)
- @Maxwell, S. Fuller, R., Brooks, T. and Watson, J. 2016. Biodiversity: The ravages of guns, nets and bulldozers. *Nature* 536, 7615: 143-145 [Available online](#) (3 pages)
- @ Nursey-Bray, M., Palmer, R., Smith, T. F., & Rist, P. (2019). Old ways for new days: Australian Indigenous peoples and climate change. *Local Environment*, 24(5), 473-486. (14 pages)
- @O’Brien, K. 2018. Is the 1.5°C Target Possible? Exploring the Dynamics of Social Transformations. *COSUST* 31: 153-160 [Available online](#) (7 pages)
- @O’Brien, K. and Leichenko, R. M. 2000. Double Exposure: Assessing the Impacts of Climate Change within the Context of Economic Globalization. *Global Environmental Change* 10, 3: 221–32. [Available online](#) (12 pages)
- @ Reckien, D., Creutzig, F., Fernandez, B., Lwasa, S., Tovar-Restrepo, M., McEvoy, D. and Satterthwaite, D.. 2017. Climate Change, Equity and the Sustainable Development Goals: An Urban Perspective. *Environment and Urbanization* 29, 1: 159–82 [Available online](#) (24 pages)
- @Roberts, J. T. and Parks, B. C. 2010. A “shared vision”? Why inequality should worry us. In: O’Brien, Karen, Asunción Lera St Clair, and Berit Kristoffersen, (eds.) 2010. *Climate Change, Ethics and Human Security*. (65-82) New York: Cambridge University Press. [Available online](#) (18 pages)
- @Scoville-Simonds, M., Jamali, H., and Hufty, M. 2019. The Hazards of Mainstreaming: Climate change adaptation politics in three dimensions. *World Development* 125 [Available online](#) (10 pages)
- Shi, L. et al. 2016. Roadmap towards justice in urban climate adaptation research. *Nature Climate Change* 6: 131–137. [Available online](#) (7 pages)
- @Steffen, W.S., Rockström, J. and Costanza, R. 2011. How Defining Planetary Boundaries Can Transform Our Approach to Growth Solutions. *Solutions: For a sustainable and desirable future*. 2, 3: 1-8 [Available online](#) (8 pages)
- @Szigeti, C., Toth, G., & Szabo, D. R. (2017). Decoupling—shifts in ecological footprint intensity of nations in the last decade. *Ecological Indicators*, 72, 111-117. [Available Online](#) (7 pages)

@ Thomas, K., Hardy, R. D., Lazrus, H., Mendez, M., Orlove, B., Rivera-Collazo, I., ... & Winthrop, R. (2019). Explaining differential vulnerability to climate change: A social science review. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, 10(2), e565. [Available Online](#) (18 pages)

@Tibbs, H. 2011. Changing Cultural Values and the Transition to Sustainability. *Journal of Futures Studies*, 15, 3: 13 – 32. [Available online](#) (20 pages)

@Vermeulen, S.J., Campbell, B.M., and Ingram, J.S.I., 2012. Climate Change and food systems. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 37 (1), 195–222. [Available online](#) (28 pages)

@Vijay, V., Pimm, S. L., Jenkins, C. N. and Smith, S. J. 2016. The Impacts of Oil Palm on Recent Deforestation and Biodiversity Loss. *PLOS ONE*. 11, 7: 1-19 [Available online](#) (19 pages)

@ Weber, A. and Hildegard, K. 2015. Towards Cultures of Aliveness: Politics and Poetics in a Postdualistic Age, an Anthropocene Manifesto. *The Solutions Journal* 6, 5. 58-65. [Available online](#) (8 pages)

@Welsby, D., Price, J., Pye, S., & Ekins, P. (2021). Unextractable fossil fuels in a 1.5 C world. *Nature*, 597(7875), 230-234. [Available online](#) (4 pages)

@Zoomers, A. 2010. Globalisation and the foreignisation of space: seven processes driving the current global land grab. *Journal of Peasant Studies*. 37, 2: 429-447. (19 pages) [Available online](#)