

Political Ecology

Code: 42406
ECTS Credits: 6

| Degree | Type | Year | Semester |
|--|------|------|----------|
| 4313784 Interdisciplinary Studies in Environmental, Economic and Social Sustainability | OT | 0 | 1 |

Contact

Name: Georgios Kallis

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Use of Languages

Principal working language: english (eng)

Teachers

Isabelle Michele Sophie Anguelovski

Sergio Villamayor Tomás

Prerequisites

If not native English speaker: valid IELTS (with a minimum score of 6.5) or TOEFL (minimum 550 paper based, 213 computer based, 79 web-based) score report or a Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English or Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English.

The students must hold an undergraduate degree with relevance to environmental or urban studies. Preferably with previous training in a social science (i.e., business, sociology, political science, economics)

Objectives and Contextualisation

In this course we will explore the interdisciplinary field of Political Ecology. Political Ecology is a theoretical and methodological approach for the study of socio-ecological systems that focuses on conflict, power and the uneven distribution of environmental costs and benefits. This course will familiarize you with core concepts used by political ecologists at ICTA and teach you how to apply these concepts to your empirical material. We will introduce you to a profoundly new, critical way of looking at and understanding environmental problems, politics and policies.

By the end of this course you should be able to conduct, if you wish, a political ecology research project on your own. In addition, you will learn how to read and analyze social science, and you will improve your writing and argumentative skills.

Competences

- Apply knowledge of environmental and ecological economics to the analysis and interpretation of environmental problem areas.
- Communicate orally and in writing in English.
- Continue the learning process, to a large extent autonomously.
- Integrate knowledge and use it to make judgements in complex situations, with incomplete information, while keeping in mind social and ethical responsibilities.

- Solve problems in new or little-known situations within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to the field of study.
- Work in an international, multidisciplinary context.

Learning Outcomes

1. Communicate orally and in writing in English.
2. Continue the learning process, to a large extent autonomously.
3. Develop a holistic vision of the relationship between the economy, politics and biophysical systems.
4. Integrate knowledge and use it to make judgements in complex situations, with incomplete information, while keeping in mind social and ethical responsibilities.
5. Know the different approaches to environmental problems on the part of political ecology.
6. Solve problems in new or little-known situations within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to the field of study.
7. Work in an international, multidisciplinary context.

Content

PART I - INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL ECOLOGY

Week 1 - What is political ecology? (Giorgos Kallis)

21/10

Robbins, P., 2004. Political versus Apolitical Ecologies. (Chapter 1) in *Political Ecology*, Blackwell.

Week 2 - Ecological distribution conflicts (Giorgos Kallis)

28/10

Martinez-Alier, J., 2009. Social metabolism, ecological distribution conflicts, and languages of valuation. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 20(1): 58-87.

Demaria, F., 2010. Shipbreaking at Alang-Sosiya (India): an ecological distribution conflict. *Ecological Economics*, 70(2): 250-260.

Week 3 - The social construction of nature (Giorgos Kallis)

4/11

Robbins, P., 2004. Challenges in Social Construction (Chapter 6). In *Political Ecology*, Blackwell

Sletto B, 2008, The Knowledge that Counts: Institutional Identities, Policy Science, and the Conflict Over Fire Management in the Gran Sabana, Venezuela *World Development* 36(10) 1938-1955

PART II - POLITICAL ECOLOGY OF THE COMMONS

Week 4 - Political ecology and the commons 1.0: from Hardin to Ostrom (Sergio Villamayor)

11/11

Hardin, G. (1968). The tragedy of the commons. *Science*, 162(3859), 1243-1248.

Ostrom, E. 1990. *Governing The Commons*. Cambridge University Press, New York.

(pp. 58-82)

Week 5 - Political ecology and the commons 2.0: power, values and justice (Sergio Villamayor)

18/11

Agrawal, A. 1994. I don't need it but you can't have it: Politics on the commons. *Pastoral Development Network* 36:36-55.

Scholtens, Joeri. 2016. The elusive quest for access and collective action: North Sri Lankan fishers' thwarted struggles against a foreign trawler fleet. *International Journal of the Commons*, 10(2).

Week 6 - Enclosures and Accumulation by Dispossession (Giorgos Kallis)

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Federici, S. The devaluation of women's labor, In *Eco-sufficiency and global justice. Women write political ecology*, ed. Ariel Shalleh (London: Pluto Press, 2009).

Week 7 - Commoning beyond capitalism: counter-hegemonic projects in the rural, urban commons and digital sectors (Sergio Villamayor)

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Linebaugh, P. (2008). *The Magna Carta manifesto: Liberties and commons for all*. Univ of California Press, Introduction (pp. 20-39).

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Week 8 - Commons, gender, embodiment and care (Sergio Villamayor)

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Elmhirst, R., & Darmastuti, A. (2015). Material feminism and multi-local political ecologies: Rethinking gender and nature in Lampung, Indonesia. *Gendered entanglements. Revisiting gender in rapidly changing Asia*, 177-206

Singh, N. M. (2013). The affective labor of growing forests and the becoming of environmental subjects: Rethinking environmentality in Odisha, India. *Geoforum*, 47, 189-198.

PART III - URBAN POLITICAL ECOLOGY

For the next four sessions, please choose 2 (compulsory) readings out of the 3 articles listed for each session.

Week 9 A political ecology of urban environmental justice: The origins and evolution of activism around environmental equity (Isabelle Anguelovski)

16/12

Agyeman, J., Schlosberg, D., Craven, L., & Matthews, C. (2016). Trends and directions in environmental justice: from inequity to everyday life, community, and just sustainabilities. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 41, 321-340.

Kabisch N and Haase D. (2014) Green justice or just green? Provision of urban green spaces in Berlin, Germany. *Landscape and Urban Planning* 122: 129-139.

Anguelovski I. (2013) Beyond a livable and green neighborhood: Asserting control, sovereignty, and transgression in the Casc Antic of Barcelona. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37: 1012-1034.

Week 10 - EJ and its relation to racial and colonial capitalism: Articulations of racial capitalism, and the unevenness it perpetuates within urban nature (Isabelle Anguelovski)

19/12

NOTE: The first part of this session will be a field trip to the Pou de la Figuera in Sant Pere/Santa Caterina. Meeting point 10am in front of the main entrance of the Palau de la Música on C/ Sant Pere mes alt (Metro Pl. Catalunya o Urquinaona).

McKittrick K. (2011) On plantations, prisons, and a black sense of place. *Social & Cultural Geography* 12: 947-963.

Brownlow, A. 2006. An archeology of fear and environmental change in Philadelphia. *Geoforum*, 37, 227-245

Anguelovski I. (2015) Alternative food provision conflicts in cities: Contesting food privilege, injustice, and whiteness in Jamaica Plain, Boston. *Geoforum* 58: 184-194.

Week 11 - Critical Urban Health and Environmental Justice (Helen Cole and Margarita Triguero)

13/1

Pearce J., Richardson R.A., Mitchell R. J., Shortt N.K. (2010) Environmental justice and health: the implications of the sociospatial distribution of multiple environmental deprivation for health inequalities in the United Kingdom. [Social Science and Medicine](#). 73(3): 410-20.

Hertzman, C., & Boyce, T. (2010). How experience gets under the skin to create gradients in developmental health. *Annual Review of Public Health*. 31: 329-47.

(Optional) [Mitchell R](#), [Popham F](#). (2008) Effect of exposure to natural environment on health inequalities: an observational population study. [Lancet](#). 372(9650):1655-60.

Week 12 - New green inequalities and environmental gentrification (Isabelle Anguelovski)

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Gould, K., & Lewis, T. (2016) Green Gentrification: Urban Sustainability and the Struggle for Environmental Justice. Routledge. Chapter 1 and 2.

Immergluck D and Balan T. (2018) Sustainable for whom? Green urban development, environmental gentrification, and the Atlanta Beltline. *Urban Geography* 39: 546-562.

Anguelovski I, Shi L, Chu E, et al. (2016) Equity Impacts of Urban Land Use Planning for Climate Adaptation: Critical Perspectives from the Global North and South. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 36: 333-348.

Methodology

Classes will follow a seminar format with a combination of teaching by the instructor and discussion in class of assigned readings. For each class we will read and discuss two articles. Typically one of them will be more theoretical, presenting the main concept to be discussed in this class, and the second will include a case-study, applying the concept in an environmental problem or conflict.

All students are expected to have read these articles in advance and write short commentaries (see assignments). In each class a critical discussion of the key ideas of the articles will take place under the facilitation of the instructor. This might also include discussion in small groups, games, use of audiovisual material (movies, lectures by famous political ecologists, videos, etc).

Activities

| Title | Hours | ECTS | Learning Outcomes |
|---------------------------------|-------|------|-------------------|
| Type: Directed | | | |
| Work in large group (classroom) | 30 | 1.2 | 1, 5, 3, 2, 7 |
| Work in small groups | 6 | 0.24 | 1, 5, 3, 7 |
| Type: Autonomous | | | |
| At home short assignment(s) | 19 | 0.76 | 7 |
| Readings | 25 | 1 | 5, 3 |
| Self-study | 61 | 2.44 | 4, 6, 2 |

Assessment

1. Weekly homework

Each week you will have to write a 250 words essay, answering to a question related to the readings for that week. You should hand in the assignment to the teacher at the beginning of each class. The assignment will be graded (1-10) and returned in the next class with comments. If you want to discuss your assignments or our evaluation you can ask for an appointment with the teacher.

The grade of the assignments will not be taken into account in your final grade, unless it is higher than the grade of your final exam, in which case it will count for 50% of your overall grade. The weekly assignments will help you recognize weaknesses and improve your writing, given that the final exam will consist of questions with the same style as the weekly assignments. In case you miss a class, you are sick, etc, you have to inform us in advance and then deliver the essay the following week or later as agreed with the teacher (it won't be graded though).

Failure to deliver the essay completely will have an impact on your overall final grade, half a point taken out of your final grade for each essay left undelivered.

Auditors have also to write the weekly assignment but are exempt from the final essay and exam.

2. Participation in class

Participation in class is encouraged, though it won't be evaluated or graded. Different people have different communication styles, some like to talk a lot, others less. We encourage discussion and participation with our teaching style, and we will try to encourage as many of you to speak up and position yourself with respect to the readings and the discussion. We run the discussions assuming you have done the readings, and you should be able to talk about the readings if and when prompted by the teacher.

3. Exam

This will take place on the 27th of January 2020 and will count for 100% of your final grade if it is higher than the average of your essays, or 50% if your essay average is higher. The material under examination will consist of all the articles read and discussed during the semester. The style of the questions will be similar to those handed in the weekly homework, i.e. short questions which you will have 250 words to answer. The exam will be "take-home", and you will be expected to use whatever resources you wish to answer the questions. It will be sent by email to all of you at 9 a.m the day of the exam and should be handed in by email by 6 p.m. the same day. The exams will be graded anonymously.

Assessment Activities

| Title | Weighting | Hours | ECTS | Learning Outcomes |
|--------------------|-----------|-------|------|-------------------|
| Final exam | 50% | 3 | 0.12 | 1, 5, 3, 4, 6, 2 |
| Weekly assignments | 50% | 6 | 0.24 | 1, 4, 6, 7 |

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