

Biocultural Diversity

Code: 43058
ECTS Credits: 6

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

The proposed teaching and assessment methodology that appear in the guide may be subject to changes as a result of the restrictions to face-to-face class attendance imposed by the health authorities.

Contact

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Use of Languages

Principal working language: english (eng)

Other comments on languages

Readings will be all in English and Spanish.

Teachers

Andre Braga Junqueira

Esteve Corbera Elizalde

Prerequisites

Students need to show interest in the links between human cultures and biodiversity at the local and global levels. Basic knowledge on conservation science would be recommended (e.g. notions on natural resource management and/ or management of natural protected areas), since conventional approaches to conservation will be critically examined during the course. The course will also mobilise advanced concepts from Geography, Anthropology, Ecological Economics and Environmental and Social Science research in general and therefore background knowledge on these fields would also be beneficial, although not strictly required. Good command in spoken Spanish (read in English) and teamwork skills are required.

Objectives and Contextualisation

Biodiversity loss is a well-known phenomenon. According to most projections, over the next thirty years, 20 percent of the world's existing species may cease to exist. Less widely known, though attracting increasing attention, is the loss of the world's cultural diversity. Several authors have remarked that the overlap between biological and cultural diversity is not random and that the loss of cultural and biological diversity are linked.

In this course, we study biocultural diversity, what it is, why it's important and what factors can result in its erosion and maintenance. Most of the lectures will be presenting case studies from ongoing research. Overall, the case studies have been selected to illustrate the overlap between biological and cultural diversity, how the loss of cultural diversity can affect biodiversity, and local responses to maintain biocultural diversity.

At a methodological level, this course will introduce the student to the analysis of related literature through the use of tools for literature search (i.e., Web of Science, Scopus) and enhance their ability to construct a database for scientific analysis.

Competences

- Analyse how the Earth functions on a global scale in order to understand and interpret environmental changes on the global and local scales.
- Communicate and justify conclusions clearly and unambiguously to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
- Integrate knowledge and use it to make judgements in complex situations, with incomplete information, while keeping in mind social and ethical responsibilities.
- Seek out information in the scientific literature using appropriate channels, and use this information to formulate and contextualise research in environmental sciences.
- 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. "Describe the concepts related to the idea of "biocultural diversity. "
2. Communicate and justify conclusions clearly and unambiguously to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
3. Express ideas and opinions on a complex topic (regarding (relationships of human groups and protection of biodiversity).
4. Seek out information in the scientific literature using appropriate channels, and use this information to formulate and contextualise research in environmental sciences.
5. Solve problems in new or little-known situations within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to the field of study.
6. Work in an international, multidisciplinary context.
7. Work with different case studies on the concept of biocultural diversity.

Content

Many of the lectures will present case studies from ongoing empirical research. Overall, the selected case studies illustrate the overlap between biological and cultural diversity, how the loss of cultures - often involving indigenous and impoverished peoples' removal from their lands, suppression of their societies, and the loss of traditional environmental knowledge- can affect both biodiversity and livelihoods. From there, local responses, often stemming from environmental conflicts occurring worldwide, help to defend and sometimes restore their biocultural diversity.

The contents of each part will be developed according to the calendar presented in the 'Bibliography' section, and include the following topics:

Introduction to the module.

The overlap between biological and cultural diversity.

Indigenous and local knowledge: Status and trends.

Indigenous Peoples and local communities' contributions to biodiversity conservation and management.

Indigenous People's as nature stewards.

The contributions of local knowledge to climate research.

The domestication of organisms, landscapes and (socio)cultural niche construction.

Understanding human-nature interactions through the lenses of Historical Ecology.

Synergies and tensions between western and indigenous knowledge systems.

Vulnerability and adaptation.

The power of environmental knowledge.

Conservation as cost.

Decolonising conservation.

Methodology

The module consists in 12 sessions of 3 hours each. Sessions are divided in two parts. During the first part (1.5h), students attend a lecture and discuss associated readings (see program below). Students are expected to have read the 2 articles associated to each lecture **before the class**. Some of the classes will be more participatory, including reading and video debates. During the second part (1.5h), students will learn about the different methods used in biocultural diversity and conservation studies. They will also learn how to write an essay in preparation for the final essay they need to submit.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Activities

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Lecture and reading discussion	18	0.72	1, 3, 5, 2, 7
Type: Supervised			
Systematic literature review	18	0.72	4, 7, 6
Type: Autonomous			
Essay writing and oral presentation	34	1.36	4, 3, 5, 2, 6
Search and reading of scientific texts	80	3.2	4, 7, 6

Assessment

Students will be evaluated according to...

- **Active participation in class (15%)**, showing understanding of the topic and readings, as well as the discussions held in class. Attendance is mandatory. If a student misses a class, s/he will have to write a 500-word critical essay on each of the readings for the missed class.
- **Training/learning essay 1 (15%)**.
- **Main essay** on a topic to be chosen by the participant (30%).
- 15 minutes **oral presentation** of the main essay during the last day of the course (30%).
- Role play exercise (10%).

Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Essays	35%	0	0	4, 3, 2, 7
Oral presentation of the final essay	35%	0	0	3, 7
Participation in the class	15%	0	0	4, 1, 3, 5, 6
Work in the systematic literature review	15%	0	0	4, 7, 6

Bibliography

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Software

None specifically needed