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UT-403-1

Political Ecology

Study Guide 2023

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Welcome to the course "Political Ecology"

Course content

The aim of this course is to provide the students with a good understanding of:

- the complex relationships between humans and environment, with an emphasis on a global understanding of ecology that focuses on the intersection of local and global scales, and North-South inequalities;

- the political and economic forces that shape contemporary global ecological challenges (such as climate change) and solutions for the green transition;

- how human-environment relationships vary across gender, race & ethnicity, class and other socio-cultural dimensions;

- key empirical case studies from a political ecology perspective.

Through the lens of political ecology, and with a focus on selected case studies, the students will explore how human-environment relations and approaches to the climate crisis are vested with power and powerful actors, shaped by structures, histories, cultures and perceptions across multiple scales of analysis. The interactions and tensions between local and global dimensions will be a key aspect of the course, as will be the multiple discourses and ideologies that shape the development and implementation of solutions to the climate crisis.

You will study examples such as energy & extractives, lithium-ion batteries, and smart cities, which will link environmental challenges to development issues of poverty and inequality.

The course consists of four modules. Module 1 (weeks 1 and 2) will be an introduction to political ecology. Module 2 and Module 3 will focus on concepts, theories and approaches in political ecology. Module 2 (weeks 3 to 7) will explore market and Malthusian approaches to the environment and the green transition, and political ecology alternative and critical approaches that go beyond market logics. Module 3 (weeks 8 to 12) will explore the role of cultures, perceptions and identities in human-environment relationships. The last module, Module 4 (weeks 13, 14 & 15) will focus on key empirical areas in political ecology.

Learning outcomes

On completion of the course the students should:

- have a thorough knowledge of political ecology as a field, its emergence, theories and concepts
- have an understanding of actors involved and be able to critically analyse how they act and relate to each other
- be able to recognise and critically analyse environmental discourses and their practical consequences in relation to society and culture

- be able to discuss the connection and interaction of local, national and global process through case studies

Zoom lectures and compulsory readings

There will be an introductory Zoom lecture at the beginning of the course, followed by regular Zoom live lectures - see full calendar at the bottom of this page (any changes will be notified in Canvas). You are strongly encouraged to attend the Zoom lectures, as they are an opportunity to engage directly with the course instructors and provide comments and questions to the lectures and the course content more generally. If you can't attend some of the lectures for whatever reason, a video recording of the lectures will be posted in Canvas afterwards.

The Zoom lectures will also act as a virtual classroom, with the course instructor providing specific instructions and updates on the course. The lectures also work as the equivalent of traditional lectures in a face-to-face university course.

Please note that the lectures are an essential part of the course. It is compulsory to either actively attend or to listen from the beginning to the end to the video recordings, if you can't attend.

Attendance also requires you to be fully attentive during the lectures. **You are expected to follow all Zoom lectures (live or recorded) from beginning to end, and to do so with full attention. Please do not see this as some kind of YouTube/social media activity, where you just play things in the background and switch off your mind after a few minutes! You need to stay focused throughout the lectures. You are encouraged to take notes to help you remember the content and structure your thoughts on the topic.**

Please note that these lectures are not summaries of the readings and do not constitute a replacement for the compulsory readings. Each student is expected to do all the compulsory readings and master the course content. All compulsory readings are available in Canvas in the Modules section.

The course instructor will add additional readings and materials (which are not compulsory) with the regular Zoom lectures. You can find the lecture recordings and the additional materials in the Modules section of the Canvas course – once they are uploaded in Canvas.

Workload

Please remember that this is a full semester course and, according to the university rules and regulations, it involves 270 hours of study. **This course is NOT comparable to online courses you can take on platforms such as Coursera, edX, or FutureLearn.** It involves a full-time workload as for any other full-time face-to-face master's course in Norwegian universities. If you are struggling with the workload due to other competing commitments, the master's programme in Global Development and Planning offers considerable flexibility, and you can switch to part-time studies.

Contact our student adviser Tonje Kløkstad (tonje.klokstad@uia.no), if you want to discuss this option and the implications for your study plan.

Assessment

Your final grade in the course will be made up of:

- one group essay (TASK 3, 30% of final grade) at the end of Module 2;

- one individual essay (TASK 4, 70% of final grade) at the end of Module 3;

- three group discussion tasks across the course (TASKS 1, 2 & 5; these tasks are carried out in Zoom group discussions and are assesed on a pass/fail basis; **you need to pass all of them to get an overall pass for participation**).

Note that each deliverable has a volume guideline stated in words (e.g. max 2500 words). You are allowed to write 10% more or less of the stated limit. Please keep to these rules. Not abiding to the limits may result in penalties in the form of a reduced grade. **Abstract, title page, table of contents, reference list, appendices and charts are not part of the word count.**

The instructor marks the group essay and the individual essay. The tutor gives a provisional individual participation grade, which is then moderated and finalised by the instructor. We use a letter grading scheme (A to F) in accordance with Norwegian national regulations (see pp.5-6 of UiA examination regulations for the grading descriptors) of the group essay and individual essay. A to E allow you to pass the course, F is a fail. As stated before, the participation tasks are assessed as pass/fail.

It is probably easier to read this PDF study guide at the beginning of the course to have an overview of all its components before you start. However, once the course starts, any potential changes will be communicated through Canvas, and, in case of changes, the Canvas course materials and details override the study guide.

In the first instance, contact your course tutor, Avoid Masiraha (masirahaa@yahoo.com) for any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact the instructor, Vito Laterza (vito.laterza@uia.no), as well. However, be aware of that we need some time to respond to your messages. The course tutor will usually respond within 48 hours.

The instructor will hold open virtual office hours after marking the two essays (Task 3 and Task 4), if students want to discuss their work further. Details about dates, times and modalities for these sessions will be provided in Canvas.

Participation in Zoom group discussions and grading

The participation grade is given as an overall pass or fail. You need to pass the participation component to pass the whole course, and that means passing all the Zoom group discussions. If you do not pass the participation component, you will fail the whole course.

You cannot miss more than 1 Zoom group discussion out of the total 3 in this course (TASK 1, TASK 2 and TASK 5), and even then, you will need to be excused for it in advance of the session via approval of the instructor, by providing a medical certificate and/or other suitable documentation - only health reasons or extenuating circumstances (such as family tragedy or similar) will be considered; competing work commitments are not considered valid excuses and missing Zoom group discussions for that will constitute a fail.

You cannot as a rule reschedule your slot for group discussion - the schedule is finalised with the tutor on Monday 28 August 10.00-13.00 in the compulsory session dedicated to it. After that, it is binding that you attend the slots agreed for your group.

This is to emphasise that Zoom group discussions are not optional, but an essential part of your learning and assessment.

Please read carefully through the group discussions' assessment criteria and guidelines at the end of this study guide - *please note that these guidelines are for Zoom group discussions and are slightly different from the guidelines for Canvas written group discussions that you will follow in other courses, to adjust for the different formats (e.g. live & oral vs written).*

Anonymised grading

Canvas allows the instructor to grade your assignments anonymously. However, there is a relatively convoluted procedure to do that, and the anonymisation is only temporary - e.g. the instructor manually controls the anonymisation while marking. The instructor will grade your essays anonymously.

While this system is not ideal, and we will strive to continue the dialogue with the Canvas support team to strengthen the anonymisation procedures, the instructor prefers to use Canvas, because it allows feedback on your submitted work, including in-text comments. This will be useful for your work throughout the master's programme. The alternative would be to use Inspera (the formal university examination system), which doesn't allow an easy way to provide extensive feedback.

Group work

Group work is an important component of this course. It helps you build rapport with your students and interact with the tutor and the instructor. Through group work, you also develop key teamworking skills that are essential in today's job market.

While group work can be rewarding and fun, and will help you build close ties with your peers, it also presents its challenges. At the beginning of the course, you will sign a group contract with your group members, where weavers for each group task where you need coordination will be identified. The group contract also serves the purpose of laying down your obligations and expectations as group members.

For the group essay (TASK 3), you are expected to act responsibly, to be available to your team members when there is a group task deadline, and to put in a good amount of effort to contribute to the final output. **You will need to check regularly the Canvas group discussion created to manage your teamwork and use that as the primary communication tool. Your weaver and group members should not be put in a situation of having to chase you outside Canvas to elicit your response and contribution! Your obligation to use Canvas is part of the social contract you undertake as student on the master's programme.**

You can also use the Collaborations tool in Canvas to collectively write and edit work with the Office365 suite (Collaborations tool in the left menu) - if you do so, you need to add the tutor in the group, this is mandatory. You can also use Google Docs if you wish, but there too you will need to add the tutor in the group - this is again mandatory, as we need to be able to follow your group work in case there are issues or tensions that arise in the group that might require our intervention.

Zoom video calls can also be helpful in coordinating group work. However, you should always write downn a few lines about such meetings in the Canvas group discussion where you do your teamwork, so that the tutor and the instructor are in the know. You can set up your own Zoom calls with your group peers at https://uiano.zoom.us (your Feide login gives you access to your personal Zoom account).

You cannot use any social media or instant messaging tool for group work (e.g. Facebook, Whatsapp or other social media/instant messaging app). Please respect this rule, in the past major group conflicts have arisen because of group communications moving on social media and instant messaging apps. We will not intervene in conflicts that arise from use of instant messaging or social media for study-related work, which means students will be left without mediation in that case, with the negative effects that usually result in those situations (including often students underperforming and getting low grades as a result).

The weaver for the group essay (TASK 3) will prepare a list of the participating group members (separately from the submission, to allow the instructor to grade the essay anonymously). The weaver must not add those who have not participated in the group work. If your name does not appear in that list, you will receive an F (fail).

The normal procedure is for the named members of the submitted group essay to receive the same grade. However, the instructor reserves the right to lower the grade of specific members, if group tensions arise, and if there is evidence to show that one or more group members have not put in sufficient work, thus unreasonably increasing the workload of the other members.

The group will also lose marks collectively on their group essay, if the group as a whole does not follow the guidelines above regarding the regular use of the Canvas group discussion for teamwork to coordinate the group essay activities.

Zoom group discussions are also an important component of group work, even though they are assessed individually.

Plagiarism and rules against reuse of materials from other courses

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and, according to the UiA official guidelines, is punishable with up to a full year of suspension from your study (and from any academic course in Norway). Please check all relevant guidelines in the Canvas Development Management specialisation room here (link accessible when you gain access to this for the master's introduction seminar). You can also refresh your memory from the introductory face-to-face seminar about how to avoid plagiarism by watching this video here (link accessible when you gain access to this for the master's introduction seminar).

Our approach to plagiarism is that we try to deal with all cases of plagiarism in a gradual way that provides increasing penalties over the master's programme, to encourage learning while keeping essential academic standards. As this is a 1st semester course, if extensive and/or serious plagiarism is found in the group essay (TASK 3), the person responsible for that will lose at least one mark (e.g. if the collective mark is B, the person plagiarising will get a C etc.), or two for very serious cases (e.g. if the collective mark is B, the person plagiarising will get a D).

In the individual essay (TASK 4), which comes after the group essay, all cases of serious and extensive plagiarism will be punished with an F. Lighter cases will still cause a loss of marks – one, two or more depending on the seriousness.

Students should also be reminded that we use a rather lenient approach, because if the plagiarism cases were to be referred to the University Appeals Committee, a student can be suspended for one or two semesters from the master's programme and from any other academic course in Norway.'

Please note that reusing materials from other courses in the master's programme or from other study programmes you might have attended before or are currently attending elsewhere is considered self-plagiarism, which is one form of plagiarism and is not allowed.

If you reuse materials from other assignments for a task, you will fail that specific task (e.g. grade F). This also means that you cannot reuse materials from Task 3 (the group essay) for Task 4 (the individual essay) - that too will be punished with a fail (F grade). To avoid any duplication of work between Task 3 and Task 4, you cannot use the empirical cases of li-ion batteries and electromobility in Task 4. Failure to do will also result in an F grade.

Rules on ChatGPT and other Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools

The use of ChatGPT and any other other AI-powered tools is forbidden for this course. To avoid any misunderstanding, you should not use any AI-powered tools for this course for anything related to learning, studying, preparing for and producing tasks, whether they are oral or written. **You are required to read compulsory readings and any additional literature by yourself, without the aid of any AI-powered tools. This applies not only to AI tools that produce summaries of the reading, but also AI**

tools that can be used to polish and copyedit texts: you should not use any such tools either, you should write and edit your own texts.

You are evaluated on the basis of your own work, you are the owner of your own work (hence also the rules on plagiarism) and any other enhancement / improvement that comes from AI tools will be considered cheating - **it simply is not your own work.** By not doing your own work as defined here, you are also losing the opportunity to gain key skills in critical thinking and writing, which are an essential part of the course pedagogics.

Referencing

Good referencing practices are just as important to avoid plagiarism - if we are not sure which source you are citing from because of bad referencing, that in itself constitutes plagiarism. But polish and care in referencing count beyond plagiarism: you risk to lose marks if you don't format references in-text and in the final bibliography appropriately. As for your other master's courses, you need to use the APA 7th standard. Please check the resources on referencing in this [Canvas page on academic writing](#) (link accessible when you gain access to this for the master's introduction seminar) to make sure that your referencing skills are up to standard.

Student evaluations

Towards the end of the course, you will fill in an anonymous digital survey tailored for this course administered by the university. You will be alerted in good time about this, and you will be able to do the survey in Canvas.

Canvas suggestions box

This is a Canvas group discussion where you can make recommendations for improvement for the Canvas room, flag any issues we should take into account to use Canvas more effectively, and/or discuss how to improve interaction and the quality and experience of online learning activities. The tutor and the instructor will read this regularly and respond to suggestions and comments, act upon what is feasible in the short-term, and plan for any long-term changes.

ASSSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

The course begins on 28 August end ends on 5 December 2023.

Task	Assignment Size	Due Date

1	Participation (Zoom group discussion)	7 or 8 September
2	Participation (Zoom group discussion)	21 or 22 September
3	**Group essay (30%)**	**15 October**
4	**Individual essay (70%)**	**19 November**
5	Participation (Zoom group discussion)	4 or 5 December

Assignments are due before the end of the day (23:59) Norwegian time (UTC+1).
Please submit all assignments on Canvas.

ZOOM LECTURES' SCHEDULE

Week	Lecture / session	Date	Time
1	Compulsory session to schedule Zoom group discussions	28 August	10.00-13.00
1	Zoom Lecture 1	28 August	13.30-15.30
1	Zoom Lecture 2	29 August	13.30-14.30
2	Zoom lecture 3	4 September	13.30-14.45
3	Zoom lecture 4	11 September	13.30-14.45
6	Zoom lecture 5	25 September	13.30-15.00
9	Zoom lecture 6	16 October	13.30-14.45
12	Zoom lecture 7	06 November	13.30-14.45

The links to attend the Zoom lectures will be provided in advance of each lecture as an announcement. Please make sure that your video camera and mic work properly before you join the lectures.

MODULE 1 – Introduction to political ecology

Learning outcomes:

- Gain an overview of key issues and approaches in political ecology;

- Learn about North-South inequalities in political ecology knowledge and development practice.

Content:

Read synopsis for each week or cluster of weeks for content details.

Weeks 1 & 2 (28 August – 8 September) - Introduction: What is Political Ecology?

In these two weeks, students will get an overview of key issues and approaches in political ecology, as a way to introduce the field and understand its origins and multiple contemporary evolutions.

ZOOM LECTURE 1

On **Monday 28 August, 13:30 to 15:30,** you will attend an introductory Zoom lecture which will:

- introduce the course, providing an overview of the course structure, the teaching philosophy, course rules and students', instructor's and tutor's obligations and expectations;

- introduce the compulsory readings for Weeks 1 & 2 and introduce the first group discussion (TASK 1).

ZOOM LECTURE 2

Tuesday 29 August, 13.30-14.30.

This lecture will discuss why the use of ChatGPT and other AI tools is forbidden for this course, providing a philosophical foundation for such choice, and discussing issues of ownership and subjectivity in student work (and academic work more generally).

ZOOM LECTURE 3

Monday 4 September, 13.30-14.45.

This lecture will debunk stereotypes about global North and South in political ecology.

Compulsory readings and materials:

West, P. 2016. Critical political ecology: from space and place to sovereignty. Video lecture given at the National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center (SESYNC), Annapolis, US. Online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAWfggb1ezw

Robbins, P. (2012). *Political Ecology: a critical introduction* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. Chapters 1 to 4 (pp. 11-100).

Middleton, B.R. (2015). Jahát Jatítotòdom: toward an indigenous political ecology. In: R.L. Bryant (Ed.), *The International Handbook of Political Ecology* (pp. 561-576). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

Eriksen, T.H. (2016). *Overheating: an anthropology of accelerated change*. London: Pluto Press.
Read Preface, Chapter 1, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.

TASK 1 – ZOOM GROUP DISCUSSION

TASK INSTRUCTIONS:

What is political ecology? How does it differ from other approaches to global environmental challenges? Discuss.

Allocated time: 90 minutes.

This Zoom group discussion will take place on **Thursday 7 or Friday 8 September 2023**.

Date/Time: TBA

Zoom link: https://uiano.zoom.us/my/masiraha

Please remember that your interventions need to be focused on the compulsory readings for Weeks 1 & 2. You need to have done all the compulsory readings in advance of the Zoom group discussion. You are also required to either attend Zoom Lecture 1 and Zoom Lecture 3, or watch the videos afterwards, and in advance of the Zoom group discussion.

The appointed weaver for this task (check your group contract) has the responsibility of steering the discussions. The tutor will also be there to facilitate the conversation.

This task counts towards the overall participation grade and is assessed as pass/fail. You need to pass this task to pass the participation grade and the whole course.

MODULE 2 – Concepts, theories and approaches I: market approaches to the environment and their critics

Learning outcomes:

- Gain an understanding of Malthusian and market approaches to the environment;

- Gain an understanding of approaches that are critical of market-oriented solutions to global environmental challenges;

- Gain an understanding of key issues in green transitions at the local and global level, for instance around the emergence of Li-ion batteries as market solutions to the climate crisis.

Content:

Read synopsis for each week or cluster of weeks for content details.

Weeks 3 & 4 (11-22 September) - Malthusian and market approaches to the environment

In these weeks, we will critically explore Malthusian and market approaches to the environment that have been at the centre of conventional ways to define ecological challenges and implement solutions to them. We will also look at the colonial roots of market approaches.

ZOOM LECTURE 4, Monday 11 September, 13.30-14.45.

Compulsory readings:

Kula, E. (1998). *History of Environmental Economic Thought.* London: Routledge. Chapter 2 (The Malthusian problem, pp. 22-35).

Tietenberg, T. & Lewis, L. (2018). *Environmental and Natural Resource Economics* (11ᵗʰ ed.). London: Routledge. Chapters 1 (Visions of the Future, pp. 1-15) and 2 (The Economic Approach, pp. 17-44).

Wiesmeth, H. (2022). *Environmental Economics: Theory and Policy in Equilibrium* (2nd ed.). Cham, Switzerland: Springer. Chapter 12 (Holistic Environmental Policies, pp. 225-250).

Shanguhyia, M.S. (2013). Africa and the making of the global environmental narrative: challenges and opportunities for the continent's development initiatives. In T. Falola & J. Achberger (Eds.), *The Political Economy of Development and Underdevelopment in Africa* (pp. 19-46). London: Routledge.

TASK 2 – ZOOM GROUP DISCUSSION

TASK INSTRUCTIONS (you should do the following steps in the given order):

a) If you had to summarise the key features of market approaches to global environmental challenges, what would they be?

Allocated time: 20 mins

b) Agree on three main features of market approaches in your group that you will discuss in more depth in step c).

Allocated time: 10 mins

c) Discuss some of the political, ethical and empirical assumptions behind the three main features chose in step b) – i.e. the kind of political beliefs, moral values, and views about how environment and society work.

Allocated time: 60 mins

This Zoom group discussion will take place on **Thursday 21 or Friday 22 September 2023**.

Date/Time: TBA

Zoom link: https://uiano.zoom.us/my/masiraha

Please remember that your interventions need to be focused on the compulsory readings for Weeks 3 & 4. You need to have done all the compulsory readings in advance of the Zoom group discussion. You are also required to either attend Zoom lecture 4, or watch the video afterwards, and in advance of the Zoom group discussion.

The appointed weaver for this task (check your group contract) has the responsibility of steering the discussions, including ensuring that the group can agree three main features to discuss in step b) within the alloted time.

This task counts towards the overall participation grade and is assessed as pass/fail. You need to pass this task to pass the participation grade and the whole course.

Weeks 5, 6 & 7 (25 September - 13 October) - Beyond the market: alternative economic approaches to the ecological crisis & criticisms of green capitalism

In these three weeks, we will consider how markets are often part of the problem, rather than the solution, but also how challenging it is to change the fundamental structures of capitalism. We will explore alternative economic approaches to the ecological crisis that criticise and go beyond Malthusian and market approaches,

including debates about green growth, degrowth and socio-ecological justice, and critiques of green capitalism. Broader overviews of key structural issues will be complemented by literature that focuses on injustices and inequalities in specific regions around the world, but always in connection with global trends.

ZOOM LECTURE 5, Monday 25 September, 13.30-15.00.

Compulsory readings:

Ahmed, N.M. (2017). *Failing States, Collapsing Systems: biophysical triggers of political violence*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer. Read pp. 1-94.

Hickel, J. & Kallis, G. (2020). Is green growth possible? *New Political Economy, 25*(4), 469-486.

Ponte, S. (2020). Green capital accumulation: business and sustainability management in a world of global value chains. *New Political Economy*, *25*(1), 72-84.

Pichler, M., Staritz, C., Küblböck, K., Plank, C., Raza, W. & Ruiz Peyré, F. (2017). *Fairness and justice in natural resource politics*. Routledge. Chapter 1 (introduction).

Jerez, B., Garces, I. & Torres, R. (2021). Lithium extractivism and water injustices in the Salar de Atacama, Chile: the colonial shadow of green electromobility. *Political Geography*, *87,* 102382.

Okpanachi, E., Ambe-Uva, T. & Fassih, A. (2022). Energy regime reconfiguration and just transition in the Global South: lessons for West Africa from Morocco's comparative experience. *Futures*, *139,* 102934.

Gärdebo, J. (under review). Transitioning unions: what constitutes a just transition for Swedish trade unions? *Circulated with permission from the author, please do not circulate further as the manuscript is not yet published.*

TASK 3 – GROUP ESSAY

Write an essay of max 2500 words, in response to the following question:

"Lithium-ion batteries have been hailed by many as the most environmentally sustainable option for the green transition in the transport sector. At the same time, the emerging global battery value chains are characterised by multiple socio-economic and socio-environmental inequalities and injustices among different regions and social groups across the world.

What are the pros and cons of adopting batteries as the main solution for green transport from a justice and global development perspective? What solutions can be implemented to address inequalities and injustices in the battery value

chains? Can batteries work as a just solution for all in the current market system? Discuss.

Provide examples from specific regions of the world and show how they are connected with the global system of production behind batteries."

For this essay:

- Read policy and advocacy sources to understand how the extraction of battery raw materials and the production of battery components work in terms of social, environmental and economic impacts on the markets, societies and communities involved in battery value chains.

- Battery value chains are complex and spanning a wide range of regions, so you need to pick some aspects of these chains and some geographic regions to make your case through specific examples.

- Policy and advocacy sources are needed for crucial information, but they can't provide the academic tools for analysis that you need to make this into an academic essay. For your conceptual analysis and overall arguments, you should draw on the main readings in weeks 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7, but feel free to also use any other readings covered thus far. You can use additional academic readings not in the course list, but only after you have extensively used the course readings, not as a substitute for them.

Submission deadline: **Sunday 15 October**.

This group essay counts for 30% of your final grade

<u>**Please note:**</u> only the group weaver should submit the assignment, the submission will count for the other participating group members as well.

To enable the instructor to grade the submissions anonymously, please do not put the group number or the names of the participating group members in the submitted document.

You can only submit in Word format (extensions .doc or .docx).

Formatting and structure

The essay should follow the following structure (but the subheadings and specifics under each section are up to you):

Title page

Table of contents

Abstract *(optional)*

Introduction

Main body

Conclusion

References

The bibliography needs to follow the **APA 7th standard**, as you were taught in the introduction seminar programme.

MODULE 3 – Concepts, theories and approaches II: cultures, perceptions and identities in human-environment relations

Learning outcomes:

- Gain an understanding of how cultures, perceptions and identities shape and are shaped by human-environment relationships;

- Learn how to think about the interactions between global and local dimensions in understanding key environmental issues.

Content:

Read synopsis for each week or cluster of weeks for content details.

Weeks 8, 9 & 10 (16 October – 3 November) - Cultures, perceptions and worldviews: how people and communities across the world engage with the environment

We will now be moving from the study of systems and structures that affect and produce ecological challenges, to an understanding of people's specific interactions with their environments. Rather than focusing on culture as an abstract mental phenomenon separated from material processes, we will follow anthropologist Tim Ingold's focus on the bodily dimensions of culture and the importance of lived experience and perceptions. We will consider examples from different cultures, worldviews, religions and technological environments across the world.

ZOOM LECTURE 6, Monday 16 October, 13.30-14.45.

Compulsory readings:

Eriksen, T.H. (2016). *Overheating: an anthropology of accelerated change*. London: Pluto Press. Chapter 8 (Clashing scales: understanding overheating).

Ingold, T. (2000). *The Perception of the Environment: essays on livelihood, dwelling and skill*. London: Routledge. Chapters 9 (Culture, perception and cognition, pp. 157-171) and 10 (Building, dwelling, living, pp. 172-188)

Mususa, P. (2021). *There Used to Be Order: life on the Copperbelt after the privatisation of the Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines.* Ann Arbor, Michigan: Michigan University Press.

Chapter 3 ("Getting by": 'improvising a life' on the post-privatisation Copperbelt) [pre-print version, assigned with author's permission, do not circulate further].

Boellstorff, T. (2008). *Coming of Age in Second Life: an anthropologist explores the virtually human.* Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 4 (Place and time, pp. 89-117)

Eriksen, T.H. (1993). Being Norwegian in a shrinking world. In A. Cohen Kiel (Ed.), *Continuity and Change: aspects of modern Norway*, Scandinavian University Press.

Ramose, M. (2015). Ecology through Ubuntu. In R. Meinhold (Ed.), *Environmental Values: emerging from cultures and religions of the ASEAN region* (pp. 69-76). Bangkok: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung & Guna Chakra Research Center.

Manzoor, P. (2003). Nature and culture: an Islamic perspective. In H. Selin (Ed.), *Nature across Cultures: views of nature and the environment in non-Western cultures* (pp. 421-432), Springer.

Sólon, P. (2018). The rights of Mother Earth. In: V. Satgar (Ed.), *The Climate Crisis: South African and global democratic eco-socialist alternatives* (pp. 107-130). Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

Weeks 11 & 12 (6-17 November) - Political ecology and the intersections of race, class, gender and other identities

Identities play a key role in shaping people's interactions with the environment and how structures and systems produce multiple inequalities and exclusions at the expense of people and communities. We will look at how race, indigeneity, class, gender and other identities intersect in the production of local and global environments, and the power dynamics that sustain them.

ZOOM LECTURE 7, Monday 6 November, 13.30-14.45.

Compulsory readings:

Rocheleau, D., Thomas-Slayter, B. & Wangari, E. (1996). Gender and environment: a feminist political ecology perspective. In D. Rocheleau, B. Thomas-Slayter & E.

Wangari (Eds.), *Feminist Political Ecology: global issues and local experiences* (pp. 3-23). London: Routledge.

Pulido, L. (2016). Flint, environmental racism, and racial capitalism. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, *27*(3): 1-16.

Ekers, M. (2015). On the concreteness of labor and class in political ecology. In: T. Perreault, G. Bridge & J. McCarthy (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Political Ecology* (pp. 545-557) London: Routledge.

Kaijser, A. & Kronsell, A. (2014). Climate change through the lens of intersectionality. *Environmental Politics*, *23*(3): 417-433.

TASK 4 – INDIVIDUAL ESSAY

Write an essay of max 2500 words, as a response to the following question:

"Global approaches to key environmental challenges are needed to address the world's multiple ecological crises. Yet, people's understanding and perception of the environment are often localised and influenced by specific histories, worldviews, identities and experiences.

How can the tensions between the global and the local be reconciled?

Discuss with reference to concrete environmental challenges and examples, and by drawing on the curriculum thus far."

Submission deadline: **Sunday 19 November**.

This essay counts for 70% of your final grade

You cannot reuse any of the work done for Task 3, even if it is your own work - if you do so, you will get an F for this assignment. It is very important that Task 3 and Task 4 are two independent substantial pieces of work for the final grading, with substantial work carried out for both assignments without replication.

<u>Please note:</u> you can only submit in Word format (extensions .doc or .docx).

To enable the instructor to grade the submissions anonymously, please do not put your name in the submitted document.

MODULE 4 – The lived realities of environment and society: case studies in political ecology

Learning outcomes:

- Learn how to apply concepts, theories and approaches studied in Modules 1-3 to specific environmental issues;

- Gain an overview of key empirical areas in political ecology with a focus on specific case studies across the world.

Content:

In this module, we will explore specific empirical topics and selected cases through the conceptual and theoretical lenses touched upon in Modules 1, 2 & 3. Students are expected to move back and forth across the course, to develop a holistic understanding of theoretical and empirical issues.

Weeks 13 & 14 (20 November – 5 December) – Empirical case studies

LAND

Compulsory readings:

Vasavi, A.R. (2020). The tiger and the tube well: malevolence in rural India. *Critical Asian Studies*, *52*(3): 429-445.

Mabeza, C. (2013). Metaphors for climate adaptation from Zimbabwe: Zephaniah Phiri Maseko and the marriage of water and soil. In L. Green (Ed.), *Contested Ecologies: dialogues in the South on nature and knowledge* (pp. 126-137). Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Gill, B. (2016). Can the river speak? Epistemological confrontation in the rise and fall of the land grab in Gambella, Ethiopia. *Environment and Planning A*, *48*(4): 699-717.

***

SMART CITIES

Compulsory readings:

Hu, M.-C., Wu, C.-Y. & Shih, T. (2015). Creating a new socio-technical regime in China: evidence from the Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City. *Futures*, *70*: 1-12.

Wiig, A. (2018). Secure the city, revitalize the zone: smart urbanization in Camden, New Jersey. *Environment and Planning C*, *36*(3): 403-422.

Viitanen, J. &Kingston, R. (2014). Smart cities and green growth: outsourcing democratic and environmental resilience to the global technology sector. *Environment and Planning A*, *46*(4): 803-819.

TASK 5 – ZOOM GROUP DISCUSSION

TASK INSTRUCTIONS (you should do the following steps in the given order):

a) Choose with your group one compulsory academic reading from Weeks 13, 14 & 15;
(**Please note:** *you will need to use the Canvas written group discussion and agree on this reading by Friday 24 November at the latest, so that everybody has time to read in advance of the Zoom group discussion)*

b) identify three key concepts and/or theories from Modules 1-2-3 that are relevant to the chosen empirical reading;

Allocated time: 20 mins

3) In discussion with group members, use these three concepts and/or theories to analyse key issues in the empirical reading.

Allocated time: 70 mins.

This Zoom group discussion will take place on **Monday 4 or Tuesday 5 December 2023**.

Date/Time: TBA

Zoom link: https://uiano.zoom.us/my/masiraha

Please remember that your interventions need to be focused on the compulsory readings from the relevant parts of the course you will be discussing. You also need to have done the chosen compulsory reading in step a) in advance of the Zoom group discussion. You are required to either attend Zoom Lecture 7 and Zoom Lecture 8, or watch the videos afterwards, and in advance of the Zoom group discussion.

The appointed weaver for this task (check your group contract) has the responsibility of steering the discussions, including ensuring that the group can agree on the chose compulsory reading in step a), and on the three key concepts and/or theories in step b).

This task counts towards the overall participation grade and is assessed as pass/fail. You need to pass this task to pass the participation grade and the whole course.

What students are encouraged to do in Zoom group discussions in order to get a pass grade

Contribute & critique: bring well-referenced, authoritative, relevant information to the discussion. The student is expected to do all the required readings and use as many of them as possible in the group discussions. It's good to draw from media opinion pieces and policy sources, but use them critically and show that you are aware that they are not academic sources. Try to bring the claims and angles provided in these pieces in dialogue with the academic literature. You are also welcome to read additional academic literature, but please remember to focus on the compulsory readings first.

Drawing from personal experience and concrete examples is a good way to refine your understanding of the academic sources. But don't just tell us personal anecdotes, make these anecdotes speak to the topics of discussion and the academic knowledge you are learning from the compulsory readings and any additional material.

Critically discuss and analyse the information and claims from the sources you use. Even when you agree with something, you should provide some critical distance between the text and yourself. In the same way, if you disagree with some claims in an academic source you are using, you should reflect about your own bias and personal beliefs as well, and articulate your position in a way that shows awareness of how your personal experience is positioned in relation to the debate.

Collaborate: constructively and collaboratively discuss other students' contributions in the discussion, and work towards achieving the group's objectives. In addition to bringing to the discussion relevant, well referenced and authoritative information, the student is expected to discuss ideas raised by group members, agree to them or disagree, as long as they can provide a strong justification for their stance.

Create: show creative independent thinking, analysis, insight, and initiative. Students are strongly advised against sticking to a passive reading of the texts, or other students' interpretations of the readings. Mere summaries of what you read are not particularly rewarded, and you are expected to show your own initiative in understand the texts through your own angle, knowledge and experiences. Students should be able to show that they have their own viewpoints. This can be demonstrated through sharing examples from the real world and personal experiences in relation to the task at hand.

Guidelines for individual participation in Zoom group discussions

Relax and focus on the discussion and what your group members say. While you might reasonably be anxious about your performance, the main goal of group discussions is to build a virtual classroom where you can learn with your peers. Rather

than talking to "show off" to the tutor and instructor, focus on the discussion topic and instructions and on what your group members are saying.

Provide information that no one else has contributed. As you all read the same course literature, it often happens that a number of students provide the same information in the group discussion. If you see that another group member has already contributed with certain information, find something else to say in the group discussion.

Perhaps you agree or disagree with something? Perhaps you have a personal example from your own life or home country that illustrates a point in the chapter? Perhaps one of the other group members has made an argument you agree/disagree with, or that you want him or her to elaborate on? Perhaps you have a different understanding or another way of saying things? Do you see another meaning in a statement? Then you can enrich the discussion and increase analytical clarity. Are you able to bring other useful references? All of this will lead to an interesting discussion.

Make a controversial and well-referenced argument for the sake of arguing. The good thing about a discussion is that you do not necessarily have to personally agree with what you are contributing. Sometimes providing a different and debatable view can lead to fruitful discussions and prompt others to contribute.

Acknowledge what you don't know and the complexities of what you are studying. We do reward clarity and the capacity to summarise complex arguments. But you can also humbly acknowledge the complexity of some issues and readings. Elaborate on what you are not clear about, or issues that present ambiguities and need an open mind. The discussion is a process, not a product.

UT-403 GROUP [x] CONTRACT

[*add group number above***]**

GROUP MEMBERS

Name	Email Address

Group Purpose

[*Highlight the main purpose of the group here; usually something related to succeed as a group in your various group tasks and related*]

Primary outcomes

[*Break down the main purpose into a number of key outcomes – perhaps 3 or 4 maximum*]

Duties of Group Members

[*Here you can put down the weaver for all the tasks when there is need for one; in UT-403-1, these tasks need a weaver: **Task 1, Task 2, Task 3** and **Task 5***]

Task	Task Name/Description	Deadline Date	Weaver
1			
2			
3			
5			

Expectations from each Group Member

[*You can edit these guidelines as you see fit; they provide some idea of the role of the weaver, who is key in all the group task*]

TASK 3 – Group essay

The role of the weaver in the group essay is to coordinate the work of the group so that students can successfully reach the goal of submitting a good essay by the deadline.

Normally, each group member will be expected to contribute significant work to TASK 3 otherwise their names will not be reflected on the group task. This will lead to a fail in that specific task for that member or for those members. In UT-403, the

As a weaver, you will be expected to facilitate the whole process surrounding that task including but not limited to; dividing up the task and allocating parts to members, setting deadlines for individual contributions to the task, ensuring that members make relevant contributions to the task, weaving or knitting the parts of the task together, ensuring that there is a 'red thread' running through the task after weaving it, and handing in the task on time on behalf of the group.

Above everything else, members are expected to communicate effectively and on a timely basis especially if you have been assigned to weave a task on a particular date and you find that you are unable to do that. Bottom Line: effective communication is of paramount importance for effective group functionality!

TASKS 1, 2 & 5 – Zoom group discussions

Members are expected to effectively and relevantly participate in group discussions otherwise the conversation will suffer.

The role of the weaver here is to steer the group discussion and to make sure that, if there are specific steps to the task (e.g. TASKS 2 & 5), those steps are completed by the group within the allocated times.

Management and Leadership issues in the group

The leadership and management will revolve around the weaving roles. When you are weaver for a task, you are the manager and the most responsible for that task. The responsibility includes all the roles of the weaver that are stated in the previous section.

Preferred Mode of Communication

[*Agree on the modes of communication for specific tasks; our strong recommendation is that you use the group discussions in Canvas for all communications related to group work; for Task 3, we have created specific group discussions called MANAGING TEAMWORK, where you can manage the group essay until submission.*

There is a collaboration tool in Canvas when you click on the "COLLABORATIONS" tab on the left menu. This allows you to use Microsoft Word to do collective writing, if you find this useful. We don't encourage it, but you can use Google Docs (outside Canvas).

In any event, it is compulsory to inform your tutor that you are using COLLABORATIONS or Google Docs, and you need to add the tutor to the group you created in COLLABORATIONS, or the Google Docs you are using.

You should always use the Canvas group discussions MANAGING TEAMWORK as the primary communication tool; this is particularly important, because if tensions and conflicts arise, the instructor and the tutor will be able to intervene to mediate and facilitate the issues. You are also encouraged to use Zoom for group calls to coordinate the group work on Task 3 (the group essay). You cannot use any social media tool for group work (e.g. Facebook, Whatsapp or other social media). Please respect this rule, in the past major group conflicts have arisen because of group communications moving on social media and instant messaging apps.]

Examples:

- Canvas discussion groups
- COLLABORATIONS tool in Canvas
- Zoom meetings

--END OF STUDY GUIDE--------------------------------------