

Course title:

Ecological crisis: environmental cultures, movements and politics

Instructors:

The instructing team includes researchers both from CES (Stefania Barca, Lúcia Fernandes) and from the Environmental Humanities Lab (Marco Armiero) at the Polytechnic University of Stockholm (EHL/KTH), which is associated with CES through partnership in the EU funded program European Network of Political Ecology ("Entitle"). The course also enjoys the guest contribution of Laura Centemeri (CNRS Marseille), a member of the "Entitle" team.

Learning outcomes:

This course is intended to offer a global overview of the current ecological crisis in its multiple interconnections: politico-economic, cultural and epistemological, governmental. Students are supposed to learn about the historical processes which led to the current crisis, as well as the diversity of implications that environmental problems pose to different social groups in different geo-historical contexts (viz. environmental inequalities), while also individuating their trans-scalar nature and global implications. The ultimate scope of the course is for students to acquire the ability to develop new and imaginative ways of conceptualizing nature/society relationships in different geo-political and cultural contexts, in order to contribute to the formulation of more inclusive and socially just environmental policies.

Syllabus:

The course is structured in 15 sessions of 3 hours each (total 45 hours).

1. Introduction: the environment in the Social Sciences and Humanities (Barca)

11 October 10h30-13h00

2. Keywords in environment and society (Armiero)

11 October 17h00-20h00

3. Environmental science, policy and management (Armiero)

25 October 10h00-13h00

4. Nature, modernity, and the (post)colonial world system (Barca)

25 October 17h00-20h00

5. Migrations and the environment (Armiero)

8 November 10h00-13h00

6. The commons, global and local (Barca)

8 November 17h00-20h00

7. Environmental conflicts, urban and rural (Armiero)

22 November 10h00-13h00

8. Production, re-production and ecology (Barca)

22 November 17h00-20h00

9. Environmental violence and the industrial hazard regime (Barca):

11 December (wed) 17h00-20h00

10. Environmental movements: knowledge(s) and activism (Armiero)

13 December 10h00—13h00

11. Contaminated citizenships: chemical risk in Portugal and Brasil (Fernandes)

13 December 17h00-20h00

12. Labor and the environment

17 January 10h00-13h00

13. Environmental damage and remediation (Centemeri)

17 January 17h00-20h00

14. Mega-projects: narratives and counter-narratives of 'development' (Centemeri)

31 January 10h00-13h00

15. Conclusions and discussion of paper proposals (Armiero, Barca, Fernandes)

31 January 17h00-20h00

Teaching methodologies (including evaluation):

The teaching methodology aims to prepare students to a critical reading of texts of scientific-investigative nature, as well as to active participation in collective scientific debates, and to develop their communication skills in critical-analytical argumentation. In the end, this methodology aims at training future top-level instructors and researchers of international standard.

Classes will consist of two parts: first, a general introduction by the instructor (approximately 30 min, plus 15 minutes for questions and clarifications); second, collective discussion of reading assignments.

The latter will take place as follows: each class will have 2 reading assignments. Each student will be expected to individually present one of the two readings to the class, by responding (in a concise and clear way) to the three following questions:

1. what is the texts' main argument and how does it help to explain the addressed problem
2. what approach does the author apply (theory, methodology)
3. what can be counter-argued, criticized or complemented by further research (i.e. possible case studies)

Examples of possible ways to answer question 3:

- The author states that climate change is not real. **Counter-argument:** the IPCC has demonstrated that climate change is really happening
- The author states that climate change is real. **Critique:** incomplete information, because climate change is more real for some than for others (e.g. small islands, lowlands and deltas, etc).
- The author states that climate change is real and unequally impacting the world. **Possible case-study** may address how are extreme weather events impacting specific human groups (e.g. Black or Latino populations in the US)

Individual oral presentations should take no more than 5 minutes.

Students will be ALSO expected to contribute to the general discussion by making questions or comments on other student's presentations.

Reading assignments and a concise bibliography for each class will be made available by the instructors at least one week in advance.

Attendance is mandatory for at least 60% of classes (9 sessions). Students who will not meet this requirement will not be considered for final evaluation. Evaluation will be based on: active participation to class discussions (35%) and elaboration of a final essay, individual or collective (65%). Collective essays will have to clearly indicate which parts are to be attributed to each author.