

Content

Course Code	Course Name	Semester	Theory	Practice	Lab	Credit	ECTS
SP493	Political ecology	5	3	0	0	3	6

Prerequisites	
Admission Requirements	

Language of Instruction	English
Course Type	Elective
Course Level	Bachelor Degree

Objective	<p>This course examines the relationship between society and the environment from critical and Marxist perspectives.</p> <p>It explores how power, politics, and ideology shape the ways in which people interact with nature and how these interactions affect both social and ecological systems. The course also focuses on the unequal distribution of environmental risks and benefits, the role of the state, and social movements in environmental governance.</p> <p>This year's focus will be on food systems as a lens through which global capitalism, inequality, and environmental change can be studied.</p>
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Content	<p>Overall, the course aims to provide students with a critical understanding of the relationship between society and the environment, and to equip them with the knowledge and skills to engage in environmental politics and advocacy from a critical and Marxist perspective. While each year the course may emphasize particular themes (such as food, waste, or urban ecologies), the central objective remains to critically analyse how power and inequality shape ecological relations under capitalism.</p>
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References	<p>Alkon A. and Agyeman J. (eds) (2011). <i>Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class and Sustainability</i>. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (Selected chapters)</p> <p>Borras Jr., S. M., Moreda, T., Alonso-Fradejas, A., & Brent, Z. W. (2018). Converging social justice issues and movements: implications for political actions and research. <i>Third World Quarterly</i>, 39(7), 1227–1246. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2018.1491301</p> <p>Crutzen, P.J., Stoermer, E.F. (2021). The 'Anthropocene' (2000). In: Benner, S., Lax, G., Crutzen, P.J., Pöschl, U., Lelieveld, J., Brauch, H.G. (eds) <i>Paul J. Crutzen and the Anthropocene: A New Epoch in Earth's History. The Anthropocene: Politik—Economics—Society—Science</i>, vol 1. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-82202-6_2</p> <p>D'Alisa, G., & Demaria, F. (2024). Accumulation by contamination: Worldwide cost-shifting strategies of capital in waste management. <i>World Development</i>, 184, 106725. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2024.106725</p> <p>Edelman, M. (2005). Bringing the Moral Economy back in? ... to the Study of 21st-Century Transnational Peasant Movements, <i>Social Movement Studies: American Anthropologist</i>, 107(3), 331-345</p> <p>Escobar, A. (1998). Whose knowledge, whose nature? Biodiversity, conservation, and the political ecology of social movements. <i>Journal of Political Ecology</i>, 5(1), 53–82. https://doi.org/10.2458/v5i1.21397</p> <p>Foster, J. B. (1999). Marx's theory of metabolic rift: Classical foundations for environmental sociology. <i>American Journal of Sociology</i>, 105(2), 366–405. https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdf/10.1086/210315</p> <p>Friedmann, H., & McMichael, P. (1989). Agriculture and the state system: The rise and decline of national agricultures, 1870 to the present. <i>Sociologia Ruralis</i>, 29(2), 93–117.</p> <p>Haraway, D. (2015). Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making kin. <i>Environmental Humanities</i>, 6(1), 159–165. https://doi.org/10.1215/22011919-3615934</p> <p>Heynen N (2006) Justice of eating in the city: The political ecology of urban hunger. In: Heynen N, Kaika M, Swyngedouw E (eds) <i>In the Nature of Cities: Urban Political Ecology and the Politics of Urban Metabolism</i>. Abingdon: Routledge, 127–142.</p> <p>Huber, M. (2017). Reinvigorating class in political ecology: Nitrogen capital and the means of degradation. <i>Geoforum</i>, 85, 345–352. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2017.01.010</p>
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Swyngedouw, E. (2010). Impossible Sustainability and the Post-political Condition. In: Cerreta, M., Concilio, G., Monno, V. (eds) *Making Strategies in Spatial Planning. Urban and Landscape Perspectives*, (pp. 185–205), vol 9. Springer, Dordrecht. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-3106-8_11

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Tornaghi, C. (2017). Urban agriculture in the food-disabling city:(Re)defining urban food justice, reimagining a politics of empowerment. *Antipode*, 49(3), 781-801.

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Zimmerer, K. S., Bassett, T. J. (2003). Approaching political ecology: Society, nature, and scale in human-environment studies. In Zimmerer, K. S., Bassett, T.J. (eds.) *Political Ecology: An Integrative Approach to Geography and Environment-Development Studies* (pp. 1-25). New York: Guilford Publications.

Theory Topics

Week	Weekly Contents
1	Introduction to the Course & Political Ecology
2	Critical and Marxist Perspectives and the Metabolic Rift
3	Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene: Competing Frameworks for the Ecological Crisis
4	Food Regimes and World Economy
5	Food and Social Justice: Class, Race, Gender
6	Hunger and the Paradox of Plenty: The (Post-)Political Nature of Food Crises
7	Seeds in the Political Ecology of Food: From Commons to Commodities
8	Agroecology and Food Sovereignty
9	Urban Political Ecology of Food and Insecurity
10	Political Ecology of Waste Management: Capital Accumulation, Dispossession, (Un)sustainable Development
11	Field Trip (Location TBA)

Week	Weekly Contents
12	Workshop and Peer Coaching: Preparing Digital Projects
13	Student Digital Projects / Presentations I
14	Student Digital Projects / Presentations II + Conclusion and Feedback