

Content

Course Code	Course Name	Semester	Theory	Practice	Lab	Credit	ECTS
SP493	Political ecology	7	3	0	0	3	6

Prerequisites

Admission Requirements

Language of Instruction English

Course Type Elective

Course Level Bachelor Degree

Objective

This course examines the relationship between society and the environment from critical and Marxist perspectives. 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. This year's focus will be on food systems as a lens through which global capitalism, inequality, and environmental change can be studied.

Content

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.

References

Alkon A. and Agyeman J. (eds) (2011). *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class and Sustainability*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (Selected chapters)

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. *Third World Quarterly*, 39(7), 1227–1246. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2018.1491301>

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) *Paul J. Crutzen and the Anthropocene: A New Epoch in Earth’s History. The Anthropocene: Politik—Economics—Society—Science*, vol 1. Springer, Cham https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-82202-6_2

D’Alisa, G., & Demaria, F. (2024). Accumulation by contamination: Worldwide cost-shifting strategies of capital in waste management. *World Development*, 184, 106725. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2024.106725>

Edelman, M. (2005). Bringing the Moral Economy back in? ... to the Study of 21st-Century Transnational Peasant Movements, Social Movement Studies, American Anthropologist, 107(3), 331-345

Escobar, A. (1998). Whose knowledge, whose nature? Biodiversity, conservation, and the political ecology of social movements. *Journal of Political Ecology*, 5(1), 53–82. <https://doi.org/10.2458/v5i1.21397>

Foster, J. B. (1999). Marx’s theory of metabolic rift: Classical foundations for environmental sociology. *American Journal of Sociology*, 105(2), 366–405. <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdf/10.1086/210315>

Friedmann, H., & McMichael, P. (1989). Agriculture and the state system: The rise and decline of national agricultures, 1870 to the present. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 29(2), 93–117.

Haraway, D. (2015). Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making kin. *Environmental Humanities*, 6(1), 159–165. <https://doi.org/10.1215/22011919-3615934>

Heynen N (2006) Justice of eating in the city: The political ecology of urban hunger. In: Heynen N, Kaika M, Swyngedouw E (eds) *In the Nature of Cities: Urban Political Ecology and the Politics of Urban Metabolism* Abingdon: Routledge, 127–142.

Huber, M. (2017). Reinvigorating class in political ecology: Nitrogen capital and the means of degradation. *Geoforum*, 85, 345–352. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2017.01.010>

Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1978 [1846]). *The German Ideology*. New York: International Publishers. (Part I, Chapter 3)

Lappé, F. M., Collins, J., Rosset, P., & Esparza, L. (1998). *World Hunger: Twelve Myths*. New York: Grove Press.

Martínez-Alier, J. (2012). Environmental justice and economic degrowth: An alliance between two movements. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 23(1), 51–73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10455752.2011.648839>

McMichael, P. (2009). A food regime genealogy. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 36(1), 139–169. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150902820354>

Moore, J. W. (2017). The Capitalocene, Part I: on the nature and origins of our ecological crisis. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 44(3), 594–630. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2016.1235036>

Moragues-Faus, A., & Morgan, K. (2015). Reframing the foodscape: the emergent world of urban food policy. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 47(7), 1558–1573. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X15595754>

Nyéleni Forum for Food Sovereignty. (2007, February). Declaration of Nyéleni. Sélingué, Mali. <https://nyeleni.org/IMG/pdf/DeclNyeleni-en.pdf>

Patel, R. (2009). Food sovereignty. *The journal of peasant studies*, 36(3), 663–706.

Robbins, P. (2012). *Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction* (2nd ed.). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. (Selected chapters).

Shiva, V. (1991). *The Violence of the Green Revolution: Third World Agriculture, Ecology and Politics*. London: Zed Books. (Selected chapters).

Shiva V. (1992). The seed and the earth. *Biotechnology and the colonisation of regeneration. Development dialogue*, (1-2), 151–168.

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

Tilzey, M. (2018). *Political Ecology, Food Regimes, and Food Sovereignty: Crisis, Resistance, and Resilience*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64556-8>

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.

Watts, M. J. (2015). Now and then: the origins of political ecology and the rebirth of adaptation as a form of thought. In T. Perreault, G. Bridge & J. McCarthy (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Political Ecology* (pp. 19–50). London & New York: Routledge.

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.

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