

AALTO MUO-E8018 / SUSTAINABILITY POLITICS / AUTUMN 2021

Student Handbook

Thursdays 09:15 -12:00 (online via Zoom and on campus weeks 2 and 4 for those who wish. Details will follow).

Instructor: Eeva Berglund, eeva.berglund@aalto.fi

Teaching assistant: Mailis Niiranen, mailis.niiranen@aalto.fi

The best way to contact us is face to face, including on Zoom. If you send an email, give us at least 36 hours to reply.

Office hours will be held upon request on Zoom, just contact Eeva.

Course Details:

5 ECTS (English)

Workload: 18h course sessions and 117h Preparing course assignments including reading

Grading scale: 0 - 5 (full spectrum of grades in use).

Note: All students who submit the first two commentaries are expected to complete all the required assignments and will receive a grade.

CONTENTS OVERVIEW

This is a reading seminar with lectures and discussion, partly held on walks. Through these means we will learn to pose critical questions about sustainability and environmental management. Through working on a selection of texts written for different audiences, the course will help students to notice and spell out political dimensions of caring for the environment. Students will explore different perspectives and definitions of sustainability and consider the implications of how shared problems are framed in public and academic life.

Key themes: the political nature of environmental problems and solutions; sociotechnical systems and social change; the environment in government and policy.

The format of the sessions varies, but will usually include an introduction to the topic, student discussions and exercises as well as an overview of set readings.

The course relies on doing substantial and careful reading (and making notes). Texts should be read before the relevant lecture session.



As part of the course participation, each student are expected to contribute actively to discussion on the set readings. Additional online activities may be added to the program via MyCourses. Films and other free online content will also be included, some of which students can watch in their own time.

The sessions in weeks 2 and 4 will combine a lecture with walking and talking.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The course will help students to understand the political dimensions of environmental concerns and interventions, and provide analytical tools to discuss the role of different institutions and actors in the field.

On successful completion of the course students should:

- be familiar with the main institutions (broadly conceived) of environmental governance
- have a sense of environmentalism as something historical and context-dependent
- understand the key terms in studying political life
- be familiar with vocabularies for discussing diffuse, complex and 'hybrid' problems and linking politics to sustainability

The course also develops students' critical reading and writing skills, and enhances their capacity to discuss environmental issues in a critical, creative and professional way.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Successful completion of the course requires:

- 1. Active participation** in teaching sessions: Regular attendance is required. Notify staff in advance if you have a problem with this.
- 2. Writing weekly reaction papers:** Submit at least 4 reaction papers of max. 600 words each to receive the credits. Your texts are shared with everyone via MyCourses. Submit your text **by 12:00 (noon) the day before** each session.
- 3. An essay** of about 2000 words. **Due 25.10.2021 at 20:00.**

Guidance on how to do reaction papers (point 2 above) will be given in the first lecture (16.9.2021) and details of the essay (point 3) in lecture 3 (30.9.2021).

Marks are given from 1 - 5 (0 indicates fail).

Assessment criteria follow typical expectations for master's level study as follows:

Topic and research: Knowledge of the issue, evidence and illustrations provided, and appropriate uses of sources. Ensure that you include materials from this course. (40%)

Analysis and argumentation: Ability to analyze and synthesize in order to make an argument; interpretation and critical thought. (40%)

Communication: Language, quality of writing and care with referencing and formatting. (Visual materials are less important) (20%).

Marking is based on the overall quality of the submission.

You will receive feedback through interaction in the classroom and some written individual comments on reaction papers. This will also help you to develop analytical and writing skills.

PLEASE NOTE

All reaction papers are shared with all participants through the MyCourses platform. Essays and any other personal coursework are not shared. You need not prepare any power-points, the focus is on spoken and written work. In your written work **DO NOT** copy and paste, i.e. **PLAGIARISE** (see Aalto code of conduct).

The course is designed to be a hybrid of remote and campus-based learning, but it can be completed entirely online.

WEEKLY PROGRAMME AND READINGS

Week 1	16.9.2021	Sustainability, development and risk
Week 2	23.9.2021	Hybrid problems, fluid solutions
Week 3	30.9.2021	Environmental knowledge, government and governance
Week 4	7.10.2021	Infrastructure walk
Week 5	14.10.2021	Environment and justice
Week 6	21.10.2021	A new political landscape

Each week there will be lecturing and in-class discussions with small group exercises. Make sure you read the required texts marked (R) and as much of the others (supplementary texts) as you have time for and find interesting. Your weekly reading workload should be around 7 - 10 hours and the writing a little less. I recommend you start working on your essay around week 3.

When two texts are marked required (R), comment on both, but do them separately. Indicate clearly on your submission which text you are working with. If only one text is marked (R), you can choose one of the supplementary texts to write about as well. See the template provided under 'Materials' if you are unclear about how to format your submissions.

NOTE: THERE WILL BE ADDITIONS TO THE READING LIST AS THE COURSE PROGRESSES. THESE WILL BE CIRCULATED ON *MYCOURSES* AS WELL AS ANNOUNCED IN CLASS. LECTURE SLIDES WILL ALSO BE MADE AVAILABLE, BUT YOU ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO MAKE YOUR **OWN** LECTURE NOTES.



Week 1 16.9.2021 Sustainability, development and politics

(R compulsory pre-reading) White, Damian F, Alan Rudy, Brian J. Gareau (2016) *Environments, Natures and Social Theory*, 'Introduction: the socio-ecological imagination', pp.1-16. (I recommend the whole book, it's excellent.)

(R compulsory pre-reading) Beck, Ulrich (1998) 'Politics of Risk Society' in Jane Franklin, ed. *The Politics of Risk Society*.

European Commission Press Release 'European Green Deal: Commission proposes transformation of EU Economy and society to meet climate ambitions', https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_3541

Cronon, William (1995) 'The trouble with wilderness; or, Getting back to the wrong nature', W.Cronon (ed.) *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. New York and London: Norton.

Escobar, Arturo (2006) 'Difference and Conflict in the Struggle Over Natural Resources: A political ecology framework', *Development*, Vol. 49(3): 6-13.

Hajer, Maarten (2006) 'Doing discourse analysis: coalitions, practices, meaning', in van den Brink, M. and T. Metzger (eds) *Words Matter in Policy and Planning: Discourse theory and method in the social sciences*.

Ho, Karen (2021) 'Finance, Circa 1980s: The Acceleration of Extraction', in Feral Atlas (online) <https://feralatlas.supdigital.org/?cd=true&bdtext=feral-atlas-and-the-more-than-human-anthropocene&rr=true&cdex=true&text=ho-acceleration&ttype=essay>

Jasanoff, Sheila (2018) 'Just transitions: A humble approach to global energy futures', *Energy Research and Social Science*, 25: 11-14.

Parajuli, Pramod (2004) 'Revisiting Ghandi and Zapata: Motion of global capital, geographies of difference and the formation of ecological ethnicities', in M. Blaser et al. (eds) *In the Way of Development: Indigenous Peoples, Life Projects and Globalization*.

Sachs, Wolfgang (1999) *Planet dialectics*, pp. 1-23.

Swyngedouw, Erik (2013) The non-political politics of climate change. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 12(1), 1-8.

This sketch, by Keith Thomas, of Europe's so-called enlightenment thinkers in the form of a book review in the *London Review of Books* is worthwhile: <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v43/n10/keith-thomas/lights-on-and-away-we-go> Aalto has a subscription.

After the session, the lecture slides of that session and the readings for the following week will be available online. Go through your own notes and the slides, and scan the following week's texts. Carefully read all texts marked 'R' and as many of the others as interest you and you have time for. As discussed during the class, write your reactions to the required (R) text drawing on academic, lay, and personal insights, making sure you give full references (in academic style). Submit this in a word file of a maximum of 600 words (about 300 words each if there are two readings). Put your **name**, the **date** and **text name** on each submitted document, please.

Week 2 23.9.2021 Hybrid problems, fluid solutions (Walk)

(R) de Laet, Marianne and Annemarie Mol, 2000, 'The Zimbabwe Bushpump: Mechanics of a Fluid Technology', *Social Studies of Science* 2000 30: 225.

Adam, Barbara (2002) 'The gendered time politics of globalization: of shadowlands and elusive justice', *Feminist Review*, 70: 3 -29.

Feral Atlas, 'Introduction' <https://feralatlas.supdigital.org/?cd=true&bdtext=introduction-to-feral-atlas> and the essay, 'What is the anthropocene': <https://feralatlas.supdigital.org/?cd=true&bdtext=feral-atlas-and-the-more-than-human-anthropocene&rr=true&cdex=true&text=what-is-the-anthropocene&ttype=essay>

Geels, Frank W. (2019). Socio-technical transitions to sustainability: a review of criticisms and elaborations of the Multi-Level Perspective. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 39, 187-201.

Gibson-Graham, J. K., and Ethan Miller (2015) "Economy as ecological livelihood." In Gibson K., D.B. Rose & R. Fincher (eds) *Manifesto for Living in the Anthropocene*: 7-16.

Haraway, Donna (1985) 'Manifesto for cyborgs: science, technology, and socialist feminism in the 1980s'. *Socialist Review*, no. 80 (1985): 65–108.

Latour, Bruno (2008, September). A cautious Prometheus? A few steps toward a philosophy of design (with special attention to Peter Sloterdijk). In *Proceedings of the 2008 annual international conference of the design history society* (pp. 2-10). <http://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/112-DESIGN-CORNWALL-GB.pdf>

Otter, Christopher (2014) 'Scale, evolution and emergence in food systems', *Limn magazine*, Issue 4, online <https://limn.it/articles/scale-evolution-and-emergence-in-food-systems/> [only online]

Pappas, Stephanie (2020) 'Human-Made Stuff Now Outweighs All Life on Earth', *Scientific American*, Dec. 9, 2020, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/human-made-stuff-now-outweighs-all-life-on-earth/?print=true>

Smith A, Fressoli, M Abrol, E Arond, A Ely 2017 *Grassroots Innovation Movements, Pathways to Sustainability*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

Thackara, John (2006) *In the Bubble: designing in a complex world*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

White, Damian F, Alan Rudy, Brian J. Gareau (2016) *Environments, Natures and Social Theory*, chapter 6, 'Hybridities and Agencies: Latour, Haraway, Beck and the Vital Materialists'.

Week 3 30.9.2021 Environmental knowledge, government and governance

(R) Scoones, I et al. (2015) 'The politics of green transformations', in Scoones, I., M. Leach & P. Newell (eds) *The Politics of Green Transformations*.

(R) White, Damian F, Alan Rudy, Brian J. Gareau (2016) *Environments, Natures and Social Theory*, chapter 8, 'Global environmental governance and neoliberalization'

Cohen, B. & G. Ottinger (2011) 'Introduction: Environmental Justice and the Transformation of Science and Engineering', *Technoscience and Environmental Justice: Expert Cultures in a Grassroots Movement*.

Fairhead James and Melissa Leach (1995) 'Reading Forest History Backwards', *Environment and History*, 1: 55-91.

Hardin, Garrett (1968) 'The Tragedy of the Commons', *Science*, New Series, Vol. 162, No. 3859: 1243-1248.

Illich, Ivan (1973) *Tools for conviviality*.

Jackson, T. & R. Webster (2016) *Limits Revisited: a review of the limits to growth debate*, Report to the UK's All-Party Parliamentary Group: limits2growth.org.uk/revisited.

Jamison, Andrew (2003) 'The making of green knowledge: the contribution from activism', *Futures*, 35: 703-716.

Martinez-Alier, Joan (2014) "The environmentalism of the poor." *Geoforum* 54: 239-241.

Mirowski, Philip (2017) "Against citizen science." *Aeon*, 20 November, <https://aeon.co/essays/is-grassroots-citizen-science-a-front-for-big-business>

Mouffe, Chantal (2019) 'Artistic strategies in politics and political strategies in art' in T. Bieling (ed.) *Design (&) Activism* (I recommend the other chapters in the book also).

Ostrom, Elinor et al. 'A General Framework for Analyzing Sustainability of Socio-Ecological Systems', *Science*, 352: 419-422. 2009.

Sachs, Wolfgang (1999). *Planet dialectics*. Chapter 7, 'The Blue Planet: On the Ambiguity of a Modern Icon'.

Samerski, Silja (2018) Tools for degrowth? Ivan Illich's critique of technology revisited. *Journal of cleaner production*, 197, 1637-1646.

Scott, James (1998) *Seeing Like a State: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*, Especially chapter 1 'Nature and Space'.

Also see: Latour, B. (1987) *Science in Action*, especially chapter 6 'Centres of calculation'

[Film clips - *All watched over by machines of loving grace*, Adam Curtis, BBC 2011]

Week 4 7.10.2021 Infrastructure walk

This session will begin with a lecture, both on-site and online. Those who want and are able to will gather in Otaniemi and then walk in small groups before breaking out into groups (including online) for the remainder of the morning. Those not coming to campus will walk where they are. Your reaction paper can be about your walk or next week's reading. Either way, make sure you read the required text!

(R) Shove, Elizabeth & Walker, Gordon (2010). Governing transitions in the sustainability of everyday life. *Research policy*, 39(4), 471-476.

Mattern, Shannon (2020) "Purity and Security" *Places Journal*, December 2020.
<https://doi.org/10.22269/201201>

Schlosberg, D. (2019) 'From postmaterialism to sustainable materialism: the environmental politics of practice-based movements'. *Environmental Politics*, 1-21.

Schor, Juliet (2013) 'Tackling turbo consumption. Interview with Juliet Schor', *Soundings*.
https://hettingern.people.cofc.edu/Nature_Technology_and_Society_Spring_2013/Schor_Tackling_Turbo_Consumption.pdf

Shove, E., Pantzar, M., & Watson, M. (2012) *The dynamics of social practice: Everyday life and how it changes*.

Shove, E., & Trentmann, F. (Eds) (2018) *Infrastructures in practice: the dynamics of demand in networked societies*. (I recommend all of it).

Spurling N 2015 'Demand by design: how our infrastructure and professions shape what we do', in Robison R (Ed.) *Sustainability: new questions, new answers*. Global Sustainability Institute, ARU: Cambridge, UK.

Van Dooren, Thom, Eben Kirksey and Ursula Münster (2016) "Multispecies Studies Cultivating Arts of Attentiveness." *Environmental Humanities* 8.1: 1-23.

Whyte, K. (2018) Critical investigations of resilience: a brief introduction to indigenous environmental studies & sciences. *Daedalus*, 147(2), 136-147.

Wilk, R. (2002) 'Consumption, human needs, and global environmental change', *Global Environmental Change* 12: 5-13. (AND/OR Wilk, R (2006) 'Bottled Water: The pure commodity in the age of branding', *Journal of Consumer Culture*, Vol6(3): 303-325.)

Week 5 14.10.2021 Environment and justice

- (R) White, Damian F, Alan Rudy, Brian J. Gareau (2016) *Environments, Natures and Social Theory*, chapter 7, 'Culture, spaces, power'.
- (R) Barbosa, Lucia M and Gordon Walker (2020) 'Epistemic injustice, risk mapping and climatic events: analysing epistemic resistance in the context of favela removal in Rio de Janeiro', *Geographica Helvetica*, 75: 381-391, <https://doi.org/10.5194/gh-75-381-2020>
- Agyeman, J. et al. (2016) 'Trends and Directions in Environmental Justice: From Inequity to Everyday Life, Community, and Just Sustainabilities' *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, Vol. 41:321-340.
<http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev-environ-110615-090052>
- Anguelovski, I., Brand, A. L., Ranganathan, M., & Hyra, D. (2021). Decolonizing the Green City: From Environmental Privilege to Emancipatory Green Justice. *Environmental Justice*.
- Di Chiro, Giovanna (2009) 'Living environmentalisms: coalition politics, social reproduction, and environmental justice', *Environmental Politics*, 17:2, 276-298.
- Guha, Ramachandra (1989) Radical American environmentalism and wilderness preservation: a third world critique. *Environmental ethics*, 11(1), 71-83.
- Kaika, Maria (2017) "'Don't call me resilient again!": the New Urban Agenda as immunology ... or ... what happens when communities refuse to be vaccinated with 'smart cities' and indicators', *ENVIRONMENT & URBANIZATION*, Vol. 1 (April): 89-102.
- Katz, Cindy (2008) 'Bad elements: Katrina and the scoured landscape of social reproduction', *Gender, Place and Culture*, Vol. 15: 15-29.
- Lehtinen, A. A. (2008) 'Landscapes of Domination: Living in and off the forests in eastern Finland', in M. Jones & K. R. Olwig (eds) *Nordic Landscapes: Region and belonging on the northern edge of Europe*,
- MacGregor, Sherilyn (2021) Making matter great again? Ecofeminism, new materialism and the everyday turn in environmental politics. *Environmental Politics*, 30(1-2), 41-60.
- Miller Ethan (2019) *Reimagining livelihoods: Life beyond economy, society, and environment*.
- Pellow, D. N. (2016) 'Toward a critical environmental justice studies: Black Lives Matter as an environmental justice challenge'. In *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, 13(2), 221-236.
- Rajan, S. Ravi and Colin A.M. Duncan (2013) 'Ecologies of Hope: environment, technology and habitation - case studies from the intervenient middle', *Journal of Political Ecology*, online: http://jpe.library.arizona.edu/Volume20/Volume_20.html
- Scheidel, A., et al. (2020) 'Environmental conflicts and defenders: A global overview'. *Global Environmental Change*, 63, 102104.

Week 6 15.10.2020 A new political landscape

Berglund E (2019) 'Small mutinies in the comfortable slot: The new environmentalism as repair', in *Repair, Breakages, Breakthroughs: Ethnographic Responses*, Francisco Martinez and Patrick Laviolette (eds).

* Demaria, Federico and Ashish Kothari (2017) "The Post-Development Dictionary agenda: paths to the pluriverse." *Third World Quarterly* 38.12: 2588-2599.

Escobar, A. (2020) *Pluriversal politics: The real and the possible*.

Farrell, J., McConnell, K., & Brulle, R. (2019) Evidence-based strategies to combat scientific misinformation. *Nature climate change*, 9(3), 191-195.

Krellenberg, K., & Koch, F. (2021) Conceptualizing interactions between SDGs and urban sustainability transformations in Covid-19 times. *Politics and Governance*, 9(1), 200-210.

Latouche, Serge (2009) *Farewell to Growth*, translated from the French *Petit traité de la décroissance sereine* [2007].

Lockwood, M. (2018). Right-wing populism and the climate change agenda: exploring the linkages. *Environmental Politics*, 27(4), 712-732.

* Masco, J. (2017) The crisis in crisis. *Current Anthropology*, 58(S15), S65-S76.

Mastini, R., Kallis, G., & Hickel, J. (2021) A green new deal without growth? *Ecological Economics*, 179, 106832.

Paulson, Susan (2018) Pluriversal learning: pathways toward a world of many worlds. *Nordia Geographical Publications*, 47(5), 85-109.

* Røpke, I. (2020) 'Econ 101 – In need of a sustainability transition', *Ecological Economics*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2019.106515>

Stengers, I. (2018) *Another science is possible: A manifesto for slow science*.

Toivanen, T. (2021) A Player Bigger Than Its Size: Finnish Bioeconomy and Forest Policy in the Era of Global Climate Politics. In *Bioeconomy and Global Inequalities* (pp. 131-149).

Tsing, A. L., Bubandt, N., Gan, E., & Swanson, H. A. (Eds.) (2017) *Arts of living on a damaged planet: Ghosts and monsters of the Anthropocene*. U of Minnesota Press.

Traganou, Jilly (Ed.) (2020) *Design and Political Dissent: Spaces, Visuals, Materialities*.

* White, D. (2020) Just transitions/design for transitions: preliminary notes on a design politics for a green new deal. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 31(2), 20-39.

[During the lecture we will watch the film *Jukajoki* by Prettygoodproductions 2016 and discuss it.]