

Til:

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Proposal for establishing an Honours Certificate in *Environmental Humanities and Sciences* (MA Level) at the Oslo School of Environmental Humanities (OSEH), Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages (IKOS), Faculty of Humanities, UiO

Name of Study Programme:

Honours Certificate in Environmental Humanities and Sciences (EHS)

Programme's Aims and Format:

The proposed Honours Certificate in *Environmental Humanities and Sciences* (EHS) at the Master's level will offer students in existing discipline-based MA programmes the opportunity to develop additional interdisciplinary competence in environmental and climate change studies. Courses are designed for students from all disciplinary backgrounds¹ at UiO who wish to deepen their understanding of the complex relationships between humans and their environments. The programme enables students to integrate disciplinary training, carried out in their main MA programme, with *supplementary* courses related to environmental and climate change studies from different academic perspectives. The programme is international and interdisciplinary in format, offering courses both within the natural sciences, social sciences, and the humanities at UiO. The programme aims to provide a model and blueprint for designing other interdisciplinary Honours Certificates at MA level at UiO. The innovative and interdisciplinary format, and its global orientation, will make the Honours Certificate Programme attractive both to Norwegian and international students. *Environmental Humanities and Sciences* will be the first Master's level Honour's Programme with an interdisciplinary focus on environmental topics in Norway. It will be based at the Oslo School of Environmental Humanities (OSEH), Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages (IKOS), Faculty of Humanities, UiO. The programme will require novel forms of organising interdisciplinary teaching on the environment that crosses the humanities, social sciences and life sciences.

¹ The programme is open for all students at UiO, from the humanities, social sciences – including educational science and law – natural and life sciences, and medical sciences.



Contribution to UiO's 2030 strategy²:

The Honours Certificate *Environmental Humanities and Sciences* directly responds both to new student demands of the climate-change generation, as well as to UiO's 2030 strategy emphasizing the need to build a sustainable university while strengthening interdisciplinary research and education related to the climate crisis and rapid environmental change. The programme is in line with several goals mentioned in UiO's 2030 strategy (draft version):

- **Interdisciplinarity:** The new Honours Certificate corresponds with UiO's strategic aim to "stimulate innovative discipline-specific and cross-disciplinary research and internal and external collaboration" (UiO Strategy 2030). The programme *Environmental Humanities and Sciences* is interdisciplinary in format, courses are offered within both the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities. Students will learn together in interdisciplinary groups and develop joint research questions that combine the strengths and knowledges of different disciplines and reach out beyond the university.
- **Addressing societal and environmental challenges:** The programme's focus on transmitting knowledge about the global climatic and environmental crisis corresponds directly to UiO's goal of helping to "solve society's immediate and long-term challenges", as well as UiO's vision to "educate students with the knowledge, ability and willingness to create a better world" (UiO Strategy 2030). Interdisciplinary experts in the field will teach students in the programme about environmental problems, thus making sure that "UiO graduates have the ability to view their subject in a wider social perspective and make concrete contributions to a sustainable world", (UiO Strategy 2030).
- **Critical thinking and problem solving:** The Honours Certificate *Environmental Humanities and Sciences* will offer students in existing discipline-based MA programmes a unique opportunity to develop additional interdisciplinary competence in environmental and climate change studies. The programme will enable students to learn about environmental topics in an interdisciplinary setting, providing an ideal setting for them to "learn critical thinking, creativity, problem solving, ethical reflection, and collaboration (UiO strategy 2030).
- **Career possibilities within and beyond academia:** The new programme supports UiO's strategy to support "young researchers so that they are well prepared for a career both within and outside academia" The Honours Certificate will provide students with an innovative interdisciplinary environmental education appreciated by employers both inside and outside of academia. Possible career paths – in addition to those usually associated with the student's main discipline of study – might include working in environmental governance and policy, companies engaged in SDG work,

² Based on the UiO's 2030 strategy draft version published in late 2019: https://www.uio.no/english/for-employees/support/projects/strategy-2030/01.10_draft_strategy2030_en.pdf, downloaded 14.01.2020. The document will be updated once the final UiO 2030 strategy is published on 14 February 2020.

environmental organizations, sustainable businesses and start-ups, or in environmental research and teaching institutions.

Programme Structure:

The Honours qualification in *Environmental Humanities and Sciences* consists of 20 ECTS points taught over the course of two semesters. The programme will start in MA students' second semester in order to allow students to first familiarize with their main MA programme. The Honours Certificate will be completed alongside the students' main degree subject. Thus, students enrolled in the Honours programme will complete 20 ECTS in addition to the 120 ECTS in their own discipline within two years' time. This will allow Master's students to receive the necessary training in their own academic disciplines while, at the same time, look beyond traditional academic confines.

The Honours Certificate comprises of the following mandatory and elective modules:

1. Mandatory course *Welcome to the Anthropocene*, 5 ECTS

This course consists of a lecture series taught by invited teachers from different disciplines and faculties. This will give the students the possibility of hearing presentations from a variety of researchers and disciplines, followed by a group discussion. The course will have a global focus on environmental and climatic challenges in different parts of the world. Funding from OSEH is used to invite teachers from different disciplines or from outside of UiO. The format will be 30 minutes presentations, light reading as preparation, and discussions in class.

Teaching Plan:

- Total of 8 lectures each of 2 x 45 minutes hours including students' discussions
- Starts in late February
- Exam: Position paper on a free-choice topic among one of those that was discussed in the lectures. Graded.

2. Mandatory course *Knowing Natures: Environmental Humanities Research Seminar*, 10 ECTS

This course consists of 10 ECTS for all enrolled students. This course is taught over two semesters, starting in spring as introduction to the programme. While receiving individual and group supervision, students work towards a final project where they develop their own environmental research. There will be two intensive teaching blocks each term, including excursions and out-of-the classroom teaching sessions. The course is taught as shorter intensive clusters of classes in order to not collide with students' main MA programmes teaching. Students will be encouraged to do collaborative, experimental and innovative

research that spans different disciplines. Thereby, they can both draw on their disciplinary background from the main MA programme, and try out something new.

During the course, students will be taught different theories and methods of environmental research. Group work will be encouraged to enable interdisciplinary conversations at an early stage of their career. Students will be guided by scholars from different disciplines to jointly develop an empirical environmental study. The course will have scientific and field trip components. For example, students will collaboratively study an urban marine restoration project, a community garden, or the Oslo's communal waste and recycling system, combining perspectives and research methods from disciplines such as ecology, botany, anthropology, political ecology, philosophy, or environmental history. During this course, the students will also get insights into creative and arts-driven research methods employed in the environmental humanities – such as filmmaking, photography, exhibition design, participatory mapping, performance, journalistic and creative writing, or poetry. This will enable them to tell their own environmental stories through creative methods, no matter what disciplinary backgrounds they come from.

The course will facilitate for students to form a cohort at the beginning of the programme. Students come together on a regular basis and discuss their project ideas in detail with each other, the main responsible teacher (normally the director of OSEH) and invited guest teachers. For the final project, students can experiment with different methods of research dissemination: They can develop an exhibit, a creative arts project, a media presentation, an audio-guide, a blog entry, an academic publication, or another format decided in consultation with the main teacher.

Funding from OSEH will be used to organize fieldtrips, support students' research, invite co-teachers, environmental practitioners and experts, etc.

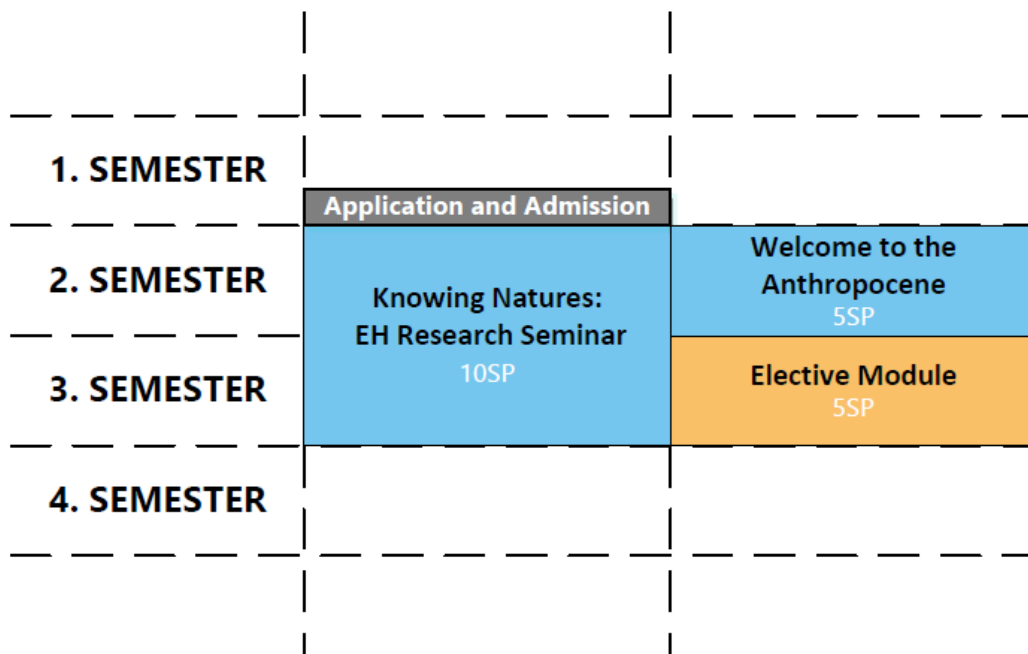
Teaching Plan:

- First session of block teaching in early February, two days over a weekend (not to clash with other classes, for instance at Tøyen or as a student retreat)
- Second session of block teaching in May, three days (if possible, in form of an excursion or place-based seminar, e.g. at a permaculture farm, an ecological restoration site, or an environmental community project).
- At the end of the two teaching blocks, students will have developed their own research plan and receive individual/ group supervision.
- From late August to November: Regular meetings with students, presentations, supervisions, etc. If students are on fieldwork, it is possible to ensure close supervision through online-meetings, or find other flexible supervision models.
- Exam: By the end of the third semester, the students finalize and present their projects. Since creative and experimental projects are encouraged, the final projects will be assessed as pass/fail and evaluated and commented on in text form.

3. Elective Courses

Students choose at least one 5 ECTS Elective Course from a compiled list of recommended courses (students are free to choose more than one). Students are required to choose Elective Courses from outside of their own discipline. Content areas could be categorized as, for instance, "Environmental Humanities", "Environmental Social Sciences", "Life Sciences and Natural Sciences", "Environmental Policy and Law". The courses within these content areas will be based in already existing courses in the faculties of humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, law, etc. A high degree of new flexibility is needed to make it possible for the Honours students to take an originally 10 ECTS course as a 5 ECTS course, and to enable Honours students at MA level to participate in a BA course (e.g. "Introduction to Ecology"). During our meeting on 07.11.19 with representatives from Mat-Nat and SV, it became clear that this kind of flexibility is possible. For example, UiO's Center for Development and the Environment (SUM) has also already established 5 ECTS courses that could be relevant to include.

Schematic overview:



■ Mandatory ■ Elective

With the recommended course of study, students ideally finish the module in two semesters.

Admission requirements:

The Honours Programme *Environmental Humanities and Sciences* will be open for all Master's students at UiO, but will admit only a limited number of 25 students to begin with, once a year. To apply for the programme, students will need to submit a motivation letter and a short essay on an environmental topic. Students will need to include a recommendation letter from a teacher in their main MA programme. This is necessary in order to realistically assess the student's motivation and abilities to gain 20 ECTS in addition to their full MA studies.

We aim to announce the Honours Certificate in spring 2020, accept applications from students enrolled in their MA programmes in late October 2020, and start teaching from February 2021. The MA Certificate is studied in addition to the existing MA programmes and is integrated into the 2-year study process. To start with, 25 students from different faculties, disciplines and study programmes will be admitted to the Certificate Programme.

Development:

The proposal for the EHS Honours Certificate has been developed in close collaboration with scholars and administrative staff from different academic disciplines and at different faculties of UiO. The programme's structure, content and its implementation has been discussed and approved during preparatory meetings with Pro-rector Gro Bjørnerud, Dean of Studies at HF Gunn Enli, and Dean of Studies at Mat-Nat Knut Mørken. The programme's content and structure has been further developed during meetings with Anders Malthe-Sørensen (Mat-Nat), Dag O. Hessen (Mat-Nat), Rune Flikke (SV), Ursula Münster (OSEH director, HF), Mette H. Hansen (HF), and Ingar Stene (HF), as well as during meetings with members of the group *Sustainable UiO* led by Sidsel Roalkvam (Director, SUM,).

In addition, the programme draws on the OSEH director's previous experience as Director of Academic Programmes at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society (RCC), LMU Munich, where she taught and supervised more than 100 interdisciplinary Master's students in the field of environmental studies. The EHS proposal has therefore also been designed in close intellectual exchange with leading international scholars, currently in the process of developing reformative and cutting-edge environmental study programmes in response to the climate crisis. These include the RCC's Environmental Studies Program, the Penn Program in Environmental Humanities at the University of Pennsylvania, the Msc program in Environment, Culture and Society at the University of Edinburgh, the MA program in Environmental Humanities at Bath Spa University, UK, the Gaylord Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin Madison, and the Yale University's Graduate program in Environmental Humanities, USA. On 22-23 November 2019, the proposal was discussed at the international workshop on *Teaching Environmental Humanities* at the RCC, and possibilities of close future collaboration between the programmes and institutions were envisioned.

Implementation Plan:

The following steps in the process of establishing the MA Honours Certificate in *Environmental Humanities and Sciences* include:

- Establish the two mandatory courses, including a description of the content, form and examination envisioned
- Compiling the full list of elective courses, ideally at least one or two from each of the faculties Mat-Nat, SUM, HF, SV and UV. Develop an administrative structure to accommodate these electives.
- Making a plan for publicizing and advertising the programme in the different faculties starting late spring 2020. Furthermore, Websites and an OSEH information stand at the "start of studies week" in August 2020, and targeted information in all participating faculties.
- An overview of the costs involved, for instance, when teachers are invited from different faculties and a given course is based in one specific department (how to share study points, costs of teachers, etc.). OSEH has funding for inviting external teachers, and for support for student projects, excursions, etc. for the next 3-4 years, and for the teaching time for the director in charge of the main course of the programme, and for the programme as such.
- An agreement on how to financially support the work put into revising existing subjects to include a 5 ECTS option for Honours MA students by teachers/staff outside of OSEH
- Present the Honours programme at the workshop: "Teaching Across Disciplines in the Anthropocene", organised by OSEH on 23 April 2020, with scholars and students of Mat-Nat, SUM, HF, SV and UV and UiO Energy.
- Receive student feedback on the programme. We aim to invite one student from each of the faculties Mat-Nat, SV, HF, UV to discuss the proposal with us and give input

Target audience and recruitment potential:

All Master's students at UiO

Internationalisation:

The EHS Honours Certificate will provide students with a global focus on environmental and climatic challenges in different parts of the world from different academic disciplines but with a firm basis in the humanities. The programme is ideally based at the Department for Cultural Studies and Oriental Languages (IKOS) to provide international perspectives. Lecturers will be interdisciplinary oriented in their own research, and with strong international connections. Importantly, the EHS Honours Certificate study will be part of an already established international network of environmental research and teaching programmes at universities in different parts of the world (see above). The Honours programme will help facilitate for students who wish to go abroad as part of their regular Master's programme.

Participating academic communities at UiO

Environmental Humanities at HF, Environmental Social Sciences at SV, SUM, and Environmental Natural Sciences at Mat-Nat.

Student numbers and start-up, including placement in the admission frame

25

Assessment of administrative resources, libraries, ICT and infrastructure

The Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages (IKOS) will administer the programme.

Assessment of financial and human resources

Assessment of financial and human resources For the period up to and including 2023, the resources are secured through the FP3-allocation for OSEH. Simultaneously IKOS are making long-term dispositions that will secure resources for teaching within environmental humanities. At the moment IKOS have three tenured academic staff who are clearly linked to the field: Ursula Münster (from 2019), Hugo Reinert (from 2019) and Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay (from 2020 – will be teaching from 2025). In addition, we have a substantial number of tenured academic staff who have done research within Environmental Humanities and who will contribute to the field. Adding to this, there will be contributions from the rest of the faculty, where the field of Environmental Humanities is expanding, especially at the other departments who are involved in OSEH: IFIKK and IAKH.

Management

In IKOS' Strategy 2025, admitted by the department board in September 2017, it is stated: "[It will be] important to draw on research- and academic themes and competence that runs across the different academic groups. Religion is studied and taught from different perspectives within all subject-areas; the same goes for culture and cultural heritage. Several important initiatives are developed in 2017 across the academic teams, like Environmental humanities and Religion and politics". Further on, in the paragraph about education: "IKOS will during the period explore collaboration in teaching across the different disciplines at the department, in relation to over-arching thematic priorities. This could for example be in the form of common courses or course packages, and organized collaboration about mentoring that relates to the interdisciplinary partnership-initiatives IKOS takes part in under the Faculty of Humanities' process for Strategic Research Priorities III (FP III)". In the departments' plan for 2020-2021 the Honours Certificate in Environmental humanities is mentioned in the preliminary paragraph under "Main features", and OSEH's own plan (where this is a priority) is included as part of the IKOS-plan. The management is closely involved, and sees the development of Environmental Humanities within both research and education as important for the department.

Med hilsen

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Dette dokumentet er godkjent elektronisk ved UiO og er derfor ikke signert.

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