SUM 4200: KEY ISSUES IN DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT
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COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

The course is based on selected topics within the broad field of development and environment which exemplify the application of different disciplinary approaches. The topics are all of current relevance in relation to the challenge of sustainable development, and lectures are based on ongoing research at SUM.

The course runs parallel with, and complements, SUM4100 Research Methods. In addition to exemplifying interdisciplinarity, the course explores the complex interplay between local, national and global arenas; the role of different actors - international development organisations, national governments, non-governmental organisations and multi-national corporations; and the interrelationship between research and policy.

Following two introductory lectures, the course consists of five sections, each of two weeks and typically composed of four lectures and one seminar. Each section takes up a theme which is currently being studied by one of SUMs research groups: Forests and Governance, Poverty and Development, Communicating Sustainability, Global Health, Energy and Climate. In addition there will be a mid-term review and a concluding session.

Below is a week-by-week plan of the teaching activities for the course, including the readings for each lecture. The texts marked “readings” are obligatory, and should be read in advance of the given lecture. In addition, each student may choose further readings, preferably about the topic that may be chosen for the master’s thesis. The texts marked “additional readings” are suggestions to use as these additional pages.

Changes in the teaching plan may occur:

WEEK 34. Introduction

*Introduction*
Tuesday 21 August 10.15 - 1200
Lecturer: Desmond McNeill

This lecture will introduce students to the Centre, to each other, and to course SUM 4200. As preparation, students are encouraged to study SUMs website - not only ‘Studies’ but also ‘Research’ at [http://www.sum.uio.no/english/research/](http://www.sum.uio.no/english/research/)
This lecture will consist of a historical overview of the research and policy domains of development and the environment. We will discuss their origins, intentions, and changes over the past half century as the global economy has expanded, global social inequalities have increased and a number of environmental problems have increased in severity. We will examine goal conflicts and clashes between ‘developmentalists’ and ‘environmentalists’ as well as between countries of the North and South. We will set the stage for a critical assessment of the theories and policies aimed at sustainable development.

Required readings


WEEKS 35 AND 36. Forests and Governance

Global and Local Governance and Sustainable Development

Tuesday 28 August 10.15-12.00
Lecturer: Desmond McNeill

This lecture will critically address the issue of governance of the environment, using a ‘logico-historical’ approach to analyse it in terms of variation over space and time. The recent policy REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in developing countries) will be used to illustrate the key points.

Required readings:

*The economics of REDD: global, national, local*

**Thursday 30 August 14.15-16.00**
Lecturer: Desmond McNeill

This lecture will provide students with an understanding of REDD from an economic and political economy perspective, analysing the rationale for the policy in terms of costs and benefits, incentive structures etc, and also identifying some of the challenges faced, both in theory and practice.

Required readings:


“*No Rights, No REDD*”: NGOs and the Local Community

**Tuesday 4 September 14.15-16.00**
Lecturer: Signe Howell

This lecture will provide an anthropological perspective on REDD, focussing on the beliefs, values and interests of local communities in relation to the forest, and on their interactions with non-governmental organisations which are playing a key role in REDD.

Required readings:


Finding the Forest? Critical Reflections on MARV (Monitoring, Assessment, Reporting and Verification)

Wednesday 5 September 14.15-16.00
Lecturer: Mariel Aguilar Støen

Using examples from a range of initiatives, this lecture will introduce students to some of the practical and theoretical challenges faced by REDD and other economic based initiatives for the conservation of forests. It will analyze reforestation and forest conservation programmes in countries in South and North, starting from the German model forest, and including the reforestation programme of Franco in Spain, the war on drugs in Latin America, and forest conservation programmes in Africa. The lecture will examine how power struggles and alliances between governments, NGOs, donors, citizens, researchers and the private sector contribute to “create a forest” that can be monitored, quantified, commoditized and protected. What have been the consequences of reforestation programmes for local communities and their forests, biodiversity and agriculture?

Required readings:


- Scott, J.C. 1998 Chapter 1. Nature and Space (pp 11-52) in *Seeing like a state. How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*. Yale University Press

Additional (optional) reading:


**Friday 7 September 10.15-12.00**

Seminar: Desmond McNeill

Students will be encouraged to discuss what they have learnt about REDD and governance, and to debate the issue among themselves so as to reveal different perspectives: both as regards different disciplines, and different standpoints (interests) of actors, and the sources and extents of their power and authority.

**WEEK 37 Free**

**WEEKS 38 AND 39. Poverty and Development**

*Poverty and Elusive Development*

**Tuesday 18 September 10.15-12.00**

Lecturer: Dan Banik

This introductory lecture will question the current status of the development agenda and examine why development has eluded large groups of people living in poverty. Dan Banik will argue that there is a general unwillingness to understand, and focus adequate attention on, the factors that explain the continued production of poverty and inequality. Development has
also become increasingly buzzword-driven, although little effort is made to operationalise such terms for actual implementation on the ground. The lecture will further highlight how development interventions have become largely synonymous with ‘crises’ and why there is a need to be refocus our attention on vulnerability and the less sensational, and often invisible, processes that perpetuate poverty.

Required readings:


*Food security and natural resource-based livelihoods*

**Thursday 20 September 10.15-12.00**

Lecturers: Ola Westengen and Ingrid Nesheim

This lecture will focus on food security and natural resource-based livelihoods. According to UN and World Bank figures 75% of the poor in developing countries live in the rural areas and most of them rely on subsistence agriculture for their livelihoods. Small scale farming in developing countries depends on the locally available natural resources and access to external inputs. *Westengen* and *Nesheim* will a) highlight different perspectives on food security exemplified by approaches to understand and address rural food insecurity by investing in agriculture in Sub Saharan Africa; b) discuss agroforestry technologies as successful low input agricultural technology; c) discuss the idea that non-timber forest products (NTFPs) can provide an environmentally sustainable basis for rural livelihoods.

Required readings:

Chinese Aid and African Development  
**Friday 21 September 10.15-12.00**  
Lecturers: Ulrikke Bryn Wethal & Dan Banik

This lecture will analyses the growing presence of China in the African continent. Riding on an impressive record of rapid economic growth and its sheer size, China is influencing social and economic policies around the world. It is interacting in numerous ways with poorer countries, including through so-called ‘South-South’ dialogues. These give access to natural resources, new and growing markets, and also reduce the dependence of African countries on traditional forms of aid from the Global North. The lecture will examine the impact of Chinese aid on poverty reduction, and critically analyse and highlight the impact of ideas, values and tangible benefits resulting from China’s engagement in Africa.

**Required Readings:**

Visible and Invisible Disasters: Malnutrition in India and Cyclone in Bangladesh  
**Wednesday 26 September 2012 14.15 – 16.00**  
Lecturers: Maren Aase & Dan Banik

This lecture will highlight the distinction between visible and invisible disasters, with a specific focus on malnutrition in India and cyclones in Bangladesh. Disasters such as floods, cyclones and famine are shattering events that affect more than 200 million people every year. Such events are, however, also processes, influenced by social,
political and ecological realities, which in turn influence the extent of the disaster, the proportionality of the suffering and the politics of disaster prevention and relief. How can we better respond to disasters while at the same time preventing new ones? How can we better bridge the gap between long term development and short term relief, in research and policy? The lecture will discuss the concept of “disaster”, why some disasters attract more attention than others and the relationship between disasters, poverty and development.

Required Readings:


Additional (optional) readings:


**Friday 28 September 10.15-12.00**

Seminar: *Ulrikke Bryn Wethal* (with additional participation of PAD lecturers)
WEEKS 40 AND 41. Communicating Sustainability

Communicating Sustainability: Development, Environment and the Power of Cultural Narratives

Tuesday 2 October 10.15-12.00
Lecturer: Nina Witoszek

This lecture will critically discuss and illustrate the power of cultural narratives and social rituals in creating attitudes to development and the environment. There are many ways in which authoritative discourses on sustainability influence policy making and economic strategies. We shall ask how is the economic and environmental success of a community influenced by “charismatic” stories and the choice of rhetorical ploys? In what way do myths, stories, and social habits contribute to societal and environmental collapse? What are the discursive weaknesses of the Brundtland Report? Statoil-Hydro flags a green, sustainable profile: is it convincing? And what are the main problems with the way in which modern media and society at large frame sustainable development and the climate crisis?

Required Readings:


Additional (optional) reading:

Yearning For The Good Life – A Utopian Dream or Sustainable Vision?
Thursday 4 October 10.15-12.00
Lecturer: Karen Syse

This lecture will identify and convey contemporary narratives that use motives like “good life,” “withdrawal,” and “voluntary simplicity” as visions for a sustainable future. TV-shows, cookbooks and lifestyle magazines often recall the utopian genre, and we will explore whether, how, whom, and why these narratives inspire towards a sustainable shift.

Required reading:


Additional (optional) reading:

- Tuan, Y.-F. 1986. The good life, Madison, Wisc., University of Wisconsin Press

The Climate Change Best-Sellers of a Pre-Revolutionary Planet
Tuesday 9 October 10.15-12.00
Lecturer: Kristian Bjørkdal

In his book, The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France, cultural historian Robert Darnton writes the history of the lesser known, but no less influential, books that spawned the French Revolution. This lecture will seek to demonstrate how Darnton's approach can be used as a framework to study contemporary book history, and I present a rudimentary such history of some recent climate change bestsellers, like Al Gore's Inconvenient Truth, George Monbiot's Heat, and James Lovelock's Revenge of Gaia. The trouble appears to be that - unlike in 18th century France - these books cause no revolution in how we relate to nature. I ask, first: Why is that? And, then: If books really can cause revolutions, how can the contemporary attempt to mobilize narratives for sustainability learn from pre-revolutionary France? And how can it not?

Required readings:


Additional (optional) reading:

- Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co.)

**Wednesday 10 October 14.15-16.00**

*Environmental Imagination*

Lecturer: Thorunn Endreson

In this lecture I will question different ways of communicating the environmental crisis in fiction. Building on reader’s responses and on Kari Marie Norgaard’s research on climate change and denial, I will argue that dystopian visions of future doom do not seem to work and ask whether utopian visions of a sustainable world could be mobilizing towards sustainability. I will juxtapose utopian visions and Kate Soper’s ideas of an ‘alternative hedonism’.

Required readings:


Additional (optional) reading


**Friday 12 October 10.15 – 12.00**

Seminar: *How can Culture Contribute to the Age of Ecomodernity?*

Nina Witoszek/Martin Lee Muller
The seminar will be a panel debate with the students reviewing the key questions and core debates related to communicating sustainability

**WEEK 42. Mid-term Review**

**Deadline Monday October 15 at 6 PM.**

Compulsory midterm assignment to be submitted in fronter (https://fronter.uio.no/).

Desmond McNeill

**WEEKS 43 AND 44. Global Health**

*Health and Development*

**Tuesday 23 October 10.15-12.00**

Lecturer: Sidsel Roalkvam

This introductory lecture explores health within its broader development context. In rich and poor countries alike, the gross inequalities in people’s health are not simply a product of their individual choices. They are determined by people’s place in society and the environment in which they find themselves. The lecture addresses issues that are both important for today’s developing countries and common to the whole world. Globalization, economic crisis and poor governance, for example, have profound health effects.

Required reading:

- Ronald Labontè and Ted Schrecker Globalization and Social Determinants of health equity in global governance (part 3 of 3) *Globalization and health* 3-7

*Historical origins, actors and key policy debates in global health*

**Thursday 25 October 10.15 – 12.00**

Lecturer: Katerini Storeng

This lecture explores key controversies and challenges in global health governance the ways in which global health is influenced by power relations, explore case studies and dilemmas, and provide analytical tools for thinking through the politics of global health.

Required reading:

**Evidence and Impact**

**Tuesday 30 October 14.15-16.00**

Lecturer: Sidsel Roalkvam

This lecture focuses on the Millennium Development Health goals and discusses how evidence influences change in global health policy. Types of evidence used in global health research and policy making are introduced and what counts as evidence in global health and the processes through which research is translated into policy are discussed.


*Global health policy, local realities*

**Wednesday 31 October 14.15-16.00**

Lecturer: Sidsel Roalkvam

This lecture illustrates the multiple determinants of health which result in inequalities in health within and between countries. A special emphasis are placed on the broad, wider upstream determinants of health like gender, culture, health systems, the environment, socioeconomic position and employment.

Required reading:


**Friday 2 November 10.15 – 12.00**

Seminar: Birgit Kvernflaten and Sidsel Roalkvam

**WEEKS 45 AND 46. Energy and Climate**

*The energy dilemmas*

**Tuesday 6 November 10.15-12.00**

Lecturer: Hal Wilhite

This lecture will explore the dilemmas which follow from energy’s importance to development and contributor to a number of critical environmental problems, including climate change. Important forms for production, distribution and use of energy will be explored as well as alternatives to current dominating forms for production involving fossil fuels. The concept of energy conservation will be critically analyzed, traced historically and problematized politically.

Required reading:


Additional (optional) reading:


*Human-Made Climatic Change: Problems and Solutions*

**Thursday 8 November 2012 10.15-12.00**

Lecturer: Asbjørn Torvanger
This lecture provides an overview of driving forces leading to climate change and possible solutions to this problem. The first part describes the climate system, trends in temperature change, how emissions of greenhouse gases impacts the climate system, and shows scenarios for emissions and change in global temperature. The second part explains expected impacts on nature and society of climate change, as well as the main policy options of mitigating emissions and adapting to the changes. Next, the focus is on design of climate policy in terms of policy aims, framework for the policy, and use of various policy tools, particularly emissions trading and taxing. Finally, I turn to challenges involved in negotiating a global climate policy agreement and prospects for international collaboration on climate policy after the end of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol this year.

Required reading:


Additional (optional) readings:

Energy and everyday life

Tuesday 13 November 14.15-16.00
Lecturer: Hal Wilhite

This lecture will explore and contrast the ways that energy is related to consumption and everyday lives in countries of the North and South. The theorizing of sustainable consumption will be introduced and critically analyzed. The question will be raised as to whether conventional theories of low energy transformation are adequate in relation to environmental challenges. Recent developments in theory and policy of sustainable energy will be presented and discussed.

Required readings:


Additional (optional) readings:


A gender perspective on energy and sustainable development

Wednesday 14 November 14.15-16.00
Lecturer: Tanja Winther

The importance of understanding gender relations is widely acknowledged in international development cooperation and research. Yet relatively little is known as to how a gender perspective could inform energy interventions in ways that enhance women's empowerment and produce increased gender equality. A narrow way of addressing gender in concrete interventions and a lack of gender-disaggregated data are examples of reasons for why overall goals for gender equality only have had modest impact on results. Similarly, in the
North, the ideology of gender equality seems to produce a gender blindness in the field of energy from policy to practice and research. Empirical evidence demonstrates the need to focus on men, women and their relationships for understanding energy’s uses in any context. By providing examples from distinct cultural settings, this lecture seeks to show that gender matters to sustainable energy.

Required reading:


Additional (optional) reading:


**WEEK 47**
Concluding Session
Friday 23 November 13.15 – 15.00
Desmond McNeill

**WEEK 48.**
School Exam
Thursday 29 November at 09:00 (4 hours).
School Exam - 4 hour school exam to be held at SUM from 9.00 -13.00