



JAGIELLONIAN  
UNIVERSITY  
IN KRAKÓW

Political Ecology  
Educational subject description sheet

**Basic information**

<b>Field of study</b> Joint Bachelor in Sustainability		<b>Education cycle</b> 2025/26	
<b>Speciality</b> Social Sciences & Humanities		<b>Realization year</b> 2027/28	
<b>Organizational unit</b> Faculty of Law and Administration		<b>Subject code</b> UJ.WPAJBSSSHS.810.16600.25	
<b>Study level</b> first cycle (joint degree programme)		<b>Lecture languages</b> english	
<b>Study form</b> full-time degree programme		<b>Subject related to scientific research</b> Yes	
<b>Education profile</b> General academic		<b>Disciplines</b> Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Political and Administrative Sciences	
<b>Mandatory</b> elective		<b>ISCED classification</b> 0314 Sociology and cultural studies	
		<b>USOS code</b>	
<b>Subject coordinator</b>	Piotr Szwedo		
<b>Lecturer</b>	Désirée Gmur		
<b>Period</b> Semester 5	<b>Examination</b> graded credit	<b>Number of ECTS points</b> 6.0	
	<b>Activities and hours</b> Discussion class: 28		

## Goals

C1	The aim is to interactively familiarize students with the premises and challenges of the concept of political ecology from a social anthropological perspective, and to deepen their understanding of the different main topics and case studies dealt with during the course. Students learn the theoretical debates in political ecology, their historical development and context, and will be introduced to newer empirical case studies, learning to contextualize them and relate them to the wider theoretical debates.
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## Subject's learning outcomes

Code	Outcomes in terms of	Effects	Examination methods
<b>Knowledge - Student knows and understands:</b>			
W1	the origins and meanings of political ecology (social and political background of environmental degradation) and are able to relate it to other important concepts such as gender, intersectionality, political economy, different concepts of power, commons, NI, and land rights.	JBS_K1_W06, JBS_K1_W07	credit with grade, essay, presentation
W2	difference between schools of thought and debated issues within political ecology.	JBS_K1_W07	credit with grade, essay, presentation
W3	usefulness of anthropological perspectives, especially political (emic perceptions and structures of power) and ecological and economic anthropology (ontologies, local traditional ecological knowledge, commons, local institutions), for understanding political ecology and human-nature relations.	JBS_K1_W03, JBS_K1_W04	credit with grade, essay, presentation
<b>Skills - Student can:</b>			
U1	develop and present a critical, concise and logical idea of how concepts may be useful to implement on different levels or not.	JBS_K1_U02	credit with grade, essay, presentation
U2	read and comprehend complex texts in a critical manner, including recognizing structure, purpose, and argument.	JBS_K1_U01	credit with grade, essay, presentation
U3	engage in analytical, networked, and structural thinking in relation to different thematic specializations, bringing together knowledge of current debates in political ecology and social anthropology.	JBS_K1_U03	credit with grade, essay, presentation
<b>Social competences - Student is ready for:</b>			
K1	to take a standpoint in current political ecology debates and related societal discourses.	JBS_K1_K03, JBS_K1_K04, JBS_K1_K05	credit with grade, essay, presentation

## Calculation of ECTS points

Activity form	Activity hours*
Discussion class	28
preparation for classes	56

preparation of a multimedia presentation	16
essay preparation	50
<b>Student workload</b>	<b>Hours</b> 150
	<b>ECTS</b> 6.0

\* hour means 45 minutes

## Study content

No.	Course content	Subject's learning outcomes
1.	Introduction and organization of the course	W1, W2
2.	Important debates in Political Ecology I:  Basic debates in political ecology; The political context of environmental degradation; Land rights; Conditions of sustainable use of natural resources in traditional societies; Sustainable development as important debate in political ecology; Paradigm change regarding land rights in development and conservation projects; The position of Blaikie and Brookfield; The position of Arturo Escobar	W1, W2
3.	Important debates in Political Ecology II:  Basic debates in political ecology; The political context of environmental degradation; Land rights; Conditions of sustainable use of natural resources in traditional societies; Sustainable development as important debate in political ecology; Paradigm change regarding land rights in development and conservation projects; The position of Blaikie and Brookfield; The position of Arturo Escobar	W1, W2
4.	Political Ecology and New Institutionalism:  New Institutionalism in Social Anthropology (NI); NIPE (New Institutional Political Ecology)-Approach	W1, W2, W3
5.	Feminist Political Ecology (more than human, ontological turn and feminism):  Understanding the relations between women, gender roles and- relations, their intersections with other identity categories and the natural environment, their local embeddedness and as well as the changes thereof; Theorizing the differentiated forms of power and access to resources;	W1, W2, W3, U1, U2, U3, K1
6.	Environmental perception and power:  Understanding different discursive perceptions of nature and the environment, which perceptions become the dominant discourse (Foucault) and how this impacts the negotiations on how resource rights and use should be organized (legitimation and power); how the concept of the anti-politics machine (James Ferguson) can be extended to environmental questions	W1, W2, W3, U1, U2, U3, K1
7.	Political Ecology in the context of disasters and climate change:  Understanding disasters and climate change and their impacts as functions of political processes, inequality and subordination rather than only of natural conditions of a place; i.e. understanding their effects as embedded in more deep and complex processes	W1, W2, W3, U1, U2, U3, K1
8.	The political ecology of Large-scale land acquisitions: Understanding the social, economic and environmental impacts of large-scale land acquisitions and the role of different stakeholders on the local, national and international level as well as their relations in this regard	W1, W2, W3, U1, U2, U3, K1

No.	Course content	Subject's learning outcomes
9.	Land grabbing as commons and resilience grabbing:  Understanding the role of resources held as common property for the livelihoods and resilience in crises of local people and the impact of land acquisitions	W1, W2, W3, U1, U2, U3, K1
10.	People and Protected areas (Environmental protection as green grabbing - protected areas and animal species/biodiversity protection):  Understanding the different perceptions and discourses of nature informing different conservation strategies such as protected areas, how they are locally perceived and how they impact ecological and economic sustainability	W1, W2, W3, U1, U2, U3, K1
11.	Political ecology in the context of mineral resources (petroleum production, mining), environment and human rights (environmental justice)	W1, W2, W3, U1, U2, U3, K1
12.	Political ecology in the context of the proliferation of mega-infrastructure projects (ports, roads, dams, solar/wind-energy, large agro-industrial projects)	W1, W2, W3, U1, U2, U3, K1
13.	Food systems, food security and food sustainability: understanding the role of institutions and power relations in regulating access to different resources and how they build the base of different food systems, food security and food sustainability	W1, W2, W3, U1, U2, U3, K1
14.	Course summary and review; clarification of essay topics and requirements	W1, W2, W3, U1, U2, U3, K1

## Course advanced

### Teaching methods :

text analysis, brainstorming, conversation lecture, lecture with multimedia presentation, discussion, case study

Activities	Examination methods	Credit conditions
Discussion class	credit with grade, essay, presentation	Active participation (20%), presentation (40%), essay (40%)

## Entry requirements

Recommended: Lecture: Ecology and Economy (Core area)

## Literature

### Obligatory

1. Benjamin, Ch. 2008. Legal Pluralism and Decentralisation: Natural Resource Management in Mali. *World Development* 34(11): 2255-2276.
2. Kuba, R. and Lentz, C. (eds). 2006. *Land and the Politics of Belonging in West Africa*. Leiden: Brill.
3. Evers, S., Spierenburg, M. and Wels, H. (eds). 2005. *Competing Jurisdictions*. Leiden. Brill.
4. Robbins, P. 2004. *Political Ecology*. London: Blackwell.
5. Zimmerer, K.S. and Basset, T.J. (eds). 2003. *Political Ecology*. New Yourk/London: Guilford.
6. Leach, M and Mearns, R (eds). 1996. *The lie of the land. Challenging Recieved Wisdom on the African Environment*. Oxford/Portsmouth. James Currey/Heinemann.
7. Blaikie, P. and Brookfield H. 1987. *Land Degradation and Society*. London and New York: Routledge.

## Effects

Code	Content
JBS_K1_K03	The graduate can consider different visions of the future and develop own evidence-based opinions in reference to the balance of values linked to economic development, social welfare, and environmental protection.
JBS_K1_K04	The graduate can critically assess and verbalize own competencies and skills related to different aspects of sustainability as well as their need for development.
JBS_K1_K05	The graduate can defend the importance of scientific data and methods as a basis for decision-making.
JBS_K1_U01	The graduate can critically analyse academic literature, formulate research questions and conduct research under supervision.
JBS_K1_U02	The graduate can present and report knowledge, methodologies, ideas, problems and solutions, clearly and comprehensively, in different forms destined for different audiences - including discussions and debates which require defending a substantiated opinion, as well as conversations in a foreign language at the CEFR B2 level.
JBS_K1_U03	The graduate can apply adequate methods and tools, including selected IT tools, to solve problems related to data collection, analysis, and management in the context of sustainability.
JBS_K1_W03	The graduate can give examples of sustainability-related dilemmas and hypothesize on the optimal course of action.
JBS_K1_W04	The graduate can identify sustainability-related problems specific to selected cultural, geographical, and political contexts.
JBS_K1_W06	The graduate can describe interconnections between various aspects of sustainability and identify their significance in the context of natural and social sciences, with a special focus on disciplines included in the selected specialisation track (law and politics; chemistry and physics; chemistry and biology; economics and geography; economics, management and engineering; humanities).
JBS_K1_W07	The graduate can apply the theory and methodology of disciplines included in the selected specialisation track to sustainability-related problems, taking into consideration practical limitations such as protection of intellectual property.