



Anthropological Perspectives on Sustainable Development

Educational subject description sheet

Basic information

<p>Field of study Joint Bachelor in Sustainability</p> <p>Speciality Social Sciences & Humanities</p> <p>Organizational unit Faculty of Law and Administration</p> <p>Study level first cycle (joint degree programme)</p> <p>Study form full-time degree programme</p> <p>Education profile General academic</p> <p>Mandatory obligatory</p>	<p>Education cycle 2025/26</p> <p>Subject code UJ.WPAJBSSSHS.880.16587.25</p> <p>Lecture languages english</p> <p>Subject related to scientific research Yes</p> <p>Disciplines ISCED classification 0314 Sociology and cultural studies</p> <p>USOS code</p>	
Subject coordinator	Piotr Szwedo	
Lecturer	Kathrin Eitel, Esther Leemann, Désirée Gmur	
Period Semester 4	<p>Examination graded credit</p> <p>Activities and hours Discussion class: 30</p>	Number of ECTS points 3.0

Goals

C1	The aim of this course is to interactively familiarize students with the premises, meanings, and challenges of various concepts of sustainability from a social anthropological perspective and to deepen their understanding of different key topics through case studies. Students learn about theoretical debates on sustainability and will be introduced to recent empirical case studies, learning to put them in context and to understand the relations between them.
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Subject's learning outcomes

Code	Outcomes in terms of	Effects	Examination methods
Knowledge - Student knows and understands:			
W1	theoretical perspectives that shed light on the relationality of sustainability and related concepts.	JBS_K1_W01	credit with grade, essay, presentation
W2	power asymmetries, global inequalities and (post)colonial forces in relation to sustainability topics.	JBS_K1_W04	credit with grade, essay, presentation
W3	the benefits of an applied and engaged anthropology for dealing with sustainability issues.	JBS_K1_W06, JBS_K1_W07	credit with grade, essay, presentation
Skills - Student can:			
U1	develop and present a critical, concise, and logical idea of how concepts, such as sustainability, can (or cannot) be meaningfully implemented at different levels.	JBS_K1_U02	credit with grade, essay, presentation
Social competences - Student is ready for:			
K1	to take a standpoint on the sustainability discourse and its effects at the local level and defend it against mainstream and uncritical arguments.	JBS_K1_K03, JBS_K1_K04, JBS_K1_K05	credit with grade, essay, presentation

Calculation of ECTS points

Activity form	Activity hours*
Discussion class	30
preparation for classes	15
preparation of a multimedia presentation	15
essay preparation	30
Student workload	Hours 90
	ECTS 3.0

* hour means 45 minutes

Study content

No.	Course content	Subject's learning outcomes
1.	An outline of the history of sustainability, development and SDGs: Anthropological perspectives	W1, W2, W3
2.	Identifying key concepts, such as resilience, mitigation/adaption, and development/modernity	W1, W2, W3
3.	Developing a critical lens on these concepts from an anthropological perspective by delving into ethnographic case studies that scrutinize sustainability and development "from below"	W1, W2, W3

No.	Course content	Subject's learning outcomes
4.	Case study I: Development induced displacement: Large-scale plantations and Indigenous Peoples' rights in Cambodia	W1, W2, W3, U1, K1
5.	Case study II: Urban flood resilience in Vietnam	W1, W2, W3, U1, K1
6.	Case study III: The role of participation and constitutionality for sustainability in natural resources management	W1, W2, W3, U1, K1
7.	Case study IV: Post-disaster housing reconstruction in Nicaragua	W1, W2, W3, U1, K1
8.	Case study V: Transnational travelling of sustainability strategies and global processes of responsibility-making	W1, W2, W3, U1, K1
9.	Case study VI: Food sustainability in the context of institutional transformations and climate change in Tanzania and Senegal	W1, W2, W3, U1, K1
10.	Excursion: UNDRR (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva) or Bruno Manser Fonds (Basel)	W2, W3, U1, K1
11.	Course summary and takeaways: Potential and limitations for sustainability transformation from below	W1, W2, W3, U1, K1

Course advanced

Teaching methods :

text analysis, brainstorming, conversation lecture, lecture with multimedia presentation, discussion, peer review

Activities	Examination methods	Credit conditions
Discussion class	credit with grade, essay, presentation	Active participation (non-graded), presentation (graded), essay (graded)

Entry requirements

None

Literature

Obligatory

- Bollig, Michael (2014): Resilience - Analytical Tool, Bridging Concept or Development Goal? Anthropological Perspectives on the Use of a Border Object. In: Zeitschrift für Ethnologie 139, 253-279.
- Eitel, Kathrin (2022): Reshuffling Responsibility: Waste, Environmental Justice and Urban Citizenship in Cambodia. In: Worldwide Waste: Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies 5/1, 1-13.
- Gmür, D. (2020): Not Affected the Same Way: Gendered Outcomes for Commons and Resilience Grabbing by Large-Scale Forest Investors in Tanzania. Land 9(4), 122.
- Leemann, Esther (2012): Communal leadership in post-Mitch housing reconstruction in Nicaragua. In: Duyne Barenstein, Jennifer and Esther Leemann (eds.), Post-Disaster Reconstruction and Change: Communities' Perspectives. Boca Raton: CRC Press, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Owolodun Babatunde, Gmür Désirée, Felber Selina, Ollier Camille, Haller Tobias, Merten Sonja (2024): From Diversity to Uniformity: Comparing nutritional transition of food consumption in four regions in Senegal. Food, Culture & Society.

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_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_W01	The graduate can describe the concept of sustainability and recognize the differences in relevant definitions, models and approaches.
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.