

# Sustainable Community Development and Eco-social Change

## Course Content

This course presents and discusses distinct perspectives on eco-social approaches to sustainable community development and their relevance to current debates on global, regional and local challenges. The course takes an interdisciplinary theoretical as well action-oriented approach for addressing, reflecting and discussing contextually anchored issues related to prevailing cultural, ethical, and political notions, emphasizing the relationships between human beings and the collectives they are part of across respective contexts. In particular, African concepts such as Ubuntu, Indaba and personhood represent an inversion of the privileging of the human being over the collectivity implied by the Western ideas of individualism, collectivism, and conviviality. However, indigenous perspectives from Western contexts (e.g. Sami) are also included. The course aims to give the students an overview of important concepts and of some of the main debates/directions regarding the complex relations between the ecological and the social dimensions. From African as well as Western perspectives, the relation between the 'eco' and the 'social' will be addressed by exploring key issues and contextual dilemmas regarding the relations between society and environment, economic growth, inequality, power and sustainability, planetary changes, ecological transformations and the Anthropocene, political contestations and changes of paradigms. Discussing these, the course incorporates action-related approaches and discusses how current issues inform and challenge policies and political controversies, actions and contestations at the community level.

### Main Subjects:

- What is the eco-social? Different theoretical perspectives on the relations between the ecological and the social
- Colonial history and power-relations as they relate to sustainable community development
- Key contextual concepts and approaches to current eco-social issues
- African and other indigenous notions of shaping and forming communities
- Western approaches to sustainable community development
- Controversies, politics, and policies related to sustainable community development
- Community development and religion
- Community responses, contestation, and social innovative actions
- Current issues related to sustainable community development

**Course Code:** MACOMM5345

**Number of ECTS:** 10

**Available as Single Course:** Yes

**Type of Course:** Elective

**Cycle:** Second Cycle

**Year of Study**

**Full Time:** Year 2

**Part Time:** Not Relevant

**Language of Instruction:** English

**Campus:** Online Course

**Semester:** Spring/Autumn

**Compulsory Attendance:** Yes

**Professional Training:** No

**Scope of Tuition:**

20 hours

**Scope of other Learning**

**Activities:**

10 hours

**Scope of Self-Study Activities:**

240 hours

**Total Workload:**

270 hours

**Prerequisites:**

## **Learning Outcome**

Completing the course will give the students the following learning outcome, sectioned into knowledge, skills, and general competence:

### **Knowledge:**

The Student

- has specialized knowledge about key theoretical approaches to sustainable community development in various contexts, including indigenous perspectives from African and Western contexts.
- has current and highly specialized knowledge about key perspectives, issues, and past and current debates about the eco-social, within the field of eco-social studies.
- has critical awareness of key ecological and social issues and complexities related to UN Sustainability Development Goals (SDG), such as sustainable development, green capitalism, Anthropocene, degrowth, deep ecology, degrowth has well as ongoing political controversies regarding inequality and power.
- can analyze key issues related to global and local eco-social issues and relate these to policy, political processes, local alternatives, and initiatives in various contexts.

### **Skills:**

The Student

- can analyze and critically assess key theoretical perspectives to eco-social sustainable community development and relate them to current problems and debates.
- can critically relate theoretical approaches to sustainable community development to political, policy and action-oriented approaches in context of current and contextual issues,
- can engage in cross-pollinating analyses and discussions, addressing issues related to eco-social approaches to sustainable community development
- can apply specialized problems-solving skills in research and/or innovation related to eco-social community initiatives on local or global levels, such as smart cities, community participation, and global eco-social movements

### **General Competence:**

The Student

- can manage and strategize for complex and unpredictable eco-social work context asking for innovation and transformation
- can contribute to professional knowledge and problem solving on current eco-social problems areas in workplaces, communities or society at large by applying specialized knowledge in practical assignments and projects in a life-long perspective
- can analyze relevant academic, professional and research ethical problems related to eco-social initiatives and work practice can communicate individually and in groups about eco-social issues, and debates both with specialists and the general public
- can address complex and unpredictable issues that require new strategic approaches and new ways of posing socio-natural problems and ways to address them

## Work and Teaching Methods

- Online lectures and seminars
- Interactive group work and presentations
- Online student interaction

## Compulsory Activities

- Participation in lectures and seminars, minimum 60% attendance of scheduled online real-time sessions
- Participation in online learning activities (e.g. Reflection log, Online forum discussion)
- Presentation of a topic, individually (connected to the written assignment) or in groups (connected to contextual issues)

## Assessment

Form of Assessment	Duration	Grade
Written assignment, 3000 words (+/- 10%)	One semester	A-F

### Additional Information about Assessment:

Common practice for academic writing needs to be followed (APA 7 reference style).

## Other

The course is a cooperative inter-institutional effort between institutions, aimed at sharing resources, perspectives, and goals. The course is an elective course which may involve the various master programs in the participating institutions. If the case of taking the course as an individual course, prerequisites are a relevant bachelor's degree.

## Reading list

### Books

Addy, Tony, John Klaasen, Terese Bue Kessel, Benedicte Tveter Kivle, Hans Morten Haugen (eds.). 2022. *Developing Just & Inclusive Communities Challenges for Diakonia, Christian Social Practice & Social Work* (Regnum Books). (Selected chapters) (150 pages).

Bull, Benedicte Bull, and Mariel Aguilar-Støen. 2023. *Handbook on International Development and the Environment*. Elgar Handbooks on Development. Edward Elgar Publishing. (Selected chapters) (100 pages). [Open access]

Ferguson, J. 2015. *Give a Man a Fish: Reflections on the New Politics of Distribution*. Duke University Press. (Selected chapters) (50 pages).

### Articles and book chapters

#### Concepts and issues

Adamson, Joni and Salma Monani. 2017. «Introduction: Cosmovisions, ecocriticism, and indigenous studies.» In Monani, Salma and Joni Adamson. 2017. *Ecocriticism and indigenous studies: Conversations from earth to cosmos*. New York: Routledge. 1-9. (10 pages)

Borowy, Iris. 2017. "Sustainable Development in Brundtland and Beyond: How (Not) to Reconcile Material Wealth, Environmental Limits and Just Distribution" in Estelita Vaz, Cristina Joanaz de Melo, Ligia M. Costa Pinto (eds) *Environmental History in the Making. Volume I: Explaining*. Cham: Springer, pp. 91-108. (17 pages).

Crutzen, Paul J., and Eugene F. Stoermer. 2000. The Anthropocene. *IGBP Global Change Newsletter* 41:17–18. (2 pages).

Chakrabarty, D. 2009. The climate of history: Four theses. *Critical Inquiry* 35:197–222. (25 pages).

Du Pisani, Jacobus. 2006. "Sustainable Development – Historical Roots of the Concept", *Environmental Sciences* 3(2): 83-96. (13 pages).

Daly, Herman, 1990, Toward some operational principles of sustainable development, *Ecological Economics* 2 1-6. (6 pages).

Haraway, D. 2015. Anthropocene, capitalocene, plantationocene, Chthulucene: making kin. *Environmental Humanities* 6:159–165. (6 pages).

Klaasen, J., 2018. "Khoisan identity: a case study in reconciliation, power and personhood", *Studia Historiae Ecclesisticae*, Vol. 44, No.2, (14 pages).

Klaasen, J., 2021, "Religion and Development: The idea of personhood for social change", *Religion & Theology*, Vol. 28, Issue 3-4, Brill Publishers, 179-205. (26 pages).

McAfee, Kathleen. "The Politics of Nature in the Anthropocene" In: "*Whose Anthropocene? Revisiting Dipesh Chakrabarty's 'Four Theses,'*" edited by Robert Emmett and Thomas Lekan, *RCC Perspectives: Transformations in Environment and Society* 2016, no. 2, 65–72. (7 pages).

Naess, Arne (1983) *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, Cambridge. pp. 1-32. (32 pages)

Vetlesen, A. J. 2017, Ethics and Value in Naess' Ecophilosophy A Realist Perspective *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology*, 21 (3): 251–261. (10 pages).

White, L. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis, 1967. *Science* 155: 1203-1207. 5 pages, See <http://www.cmu.ca/faculty/gmatties/lynnwhiterootsofcrisis.pdf>

Witoszek, Nina & Mueller Martin. 2017. Deep Ecology Life after Life? Special Issue: Deep Ecology in *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology*, 21 (3):209-217. (8 pages).

### **Contextual issues**

Bram Büscher & Elna de Beer (2011) The contemporary paradox of longterm planning for social-ecological change and its effects on the discourse-practice divide: evidence from Southern Africa, *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 54:3, 301-318, DOI: 10.1080/09640568.2010.506075

Bond, Patrick. 2011. Carbon Capital's Trial, the Kyoto Protocol's Demise, and Openings for Climate Justice, *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 22:4, 3-17, DOI: 10.1080/10455752.2011.621100

Fatheuer, Thomas, Fuhr Lili & Unmubig Barbara, 2016. Inside the Green Economy: Promises and Pitfalls. Munich: Oekom (a chapter of the book). (20 pages).

Gallo, I., Mbwana, J. 2022. *Kusintha Kwa Nyengo: Local Meanings of Climate Change*. In: Pullanikkatil, D., Hughes, K. (eds) *Socio-Ecological Systems and Decoloniality*. Springer, Cham: pp. 73-105. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-15097-5\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-15097-5_5). (28 pages).

Gudynas, Eduardo. 2017. Deep Ecologies in the Highlands and Rainforests. Finding Naess in the Neotropics, in *Worldviews* 21 (2017) 262–275. (14 pages)

Hickel, J. 2019, The contradiction of the sustainable development goals: Growth versus ecology on a finite planet, *Sustainable Development* 27(5) 1-12. (12 pages)

Hickel, Jason & Kallis, Giorgio, 2019. Is Green Growth Possible? *New Political Economy*, DOI: 10.1080/13563467.2019.1598964 <https://doi.org/10.1080/13563467.2019.1598964>

Nel, Hanna. 2015. An integration of the livelihoods and asset-based community development approaches: A South African case study, *Development Southern Africa*, 32:4, 511-525, DOI: 10.1080/0376835X.2015.1039706 (24 pages)

Nyahunda, L. Social Work Empowerment Model for Mainstreaming the Participation of Rural Women in the Climate Change Discourse. *J. Hum. Rights Soc. Work* 6, 120–129 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41134-020-00148-8> (10 pages)

Nyahunda, Louis, Jabulani Calvin Makhubele, Vincent Mabvurira, Frans Koketso Matlakala, Vulnerabilities and Inequalities Experienced by Women in the Climate Change Discourse in South Africa's Rural Communities: Implications for Social Work, *The British Journal of Social Work*, Volume 51, Issue 7, October 2021, Pages 2536 2553, <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcaa118> (17 pages)

Parrish, R., Colbourn, T., Lauriola, P., Leonardi, G., Hajat, S., Zeka, A., 2020. A Critical Analysis of the Drivers of Human Migration Patterns in the Presence of Climate Change: A New Conceptual Model. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 17, 6036.. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17176036>

Sullivan Sian (2009) "Green Capitalism, and the Cultural Poverty of Constructing Nature as Service Provider", *Radical Anthropology* 3: 18-27. (10 pages).

Wlokas, Holle L., Peter Westoby, Sue Soal. Learning from the literature on community development for the implementation of community renewables in South Africa. *Journal of Energy in Southern Africa* 28(1): 35–44  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/2413-3051/2017/v28i1a1592> (10 pages)

### ***Policies and action-oriented approaches***

Bluhdorn, Ingolfur. 2014. Post-ecologist Governmentality: Post-Democracy, Post-Politics and the Politics of Unsustainability. In Swyngedouw, E. & Wilson, Japhy (eds.) *Post-political and its Discontents: Spaces of Depoliticisation, Specters of Radical Politics*. Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 146 – 166. (11 pages)

Connors, Phil & McDonald Peter. 2011. Transition Communities: Community, Participation and the Transition Town Movement, *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (October 2011), pp. 558-572 (14 pages)

Fiskio, Janet. 2017. «Dancing at the end of the world: The poetics of the body in indigenous protest». In Monani, Salma and Joni Adamson, eds., *Ecocriticism and indigenous studies: Conversations from earth to cosmos*. New York: Rutledge: 101-118 (17 pages)

Glasmier. And Susan Christopherson. 2015. 'Thinking about Smart Cities', *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* (special issue on Smart Cities) 8:3-12. (10 pages).

Gómez-Baggethun, Erik and José Manuel Naredo. 2015. 'In Search of Lost Time: The Rise and Fall of Limits to Growth in International Sustainability Policy', *Sustainability Science*. 10:385-95. (10 pages).

Hopkins, Rob, 2019, Transition Movement, in Kothari et. Al, *Pluriverse. A Post-Development Dictionary*, Tulika books, India, p. 317-320 (4 pages)

Kapa, Pietari. 2017. «Cyclial conceptualizations of time: Ecocritical perspectives on Sámi film culture.» In Monani, Salma and Joni Adamson, eds., *Ecocriticism and indigenous studies: Conversations from earth to cosmos*. New York: Rutledge: 136-153 (17 pages)

Kraft, S.E., 2020. Spiritual Activism. Saving Mother Earth in Sápmi. *Religions* 11, 342..  
<https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11070342>

March, Hug. 2018. 'The Smart City and Other ICT-Led Techno-Imaginaries: Any Room for Dialogue with Degrowth?' *Journal of Cleaner Production*. 197 (2):1694-1703. (8 pages).

Approximately 808 pages.

### ***Recommended readings:***

Benveniste, E. (2016 [1969]) *Dictionary of Indo-European Concepts and Society* (E. Palmer, trans). HAU Book.

Boff, Leonardo (1995) *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, New York: Orbi Books,  
[https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si\\_en.pdf](https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si_en.pdf)

Dawson, Jonathan. 2013. 'From Islands to Networks: The History and Future of the Ecovillage Movement', in Joshua Lockyer and James R. Veteto (eds). *Environmental*

*Anthropology Engaging Ecotopia: Bioregionalism, Permaculture and Ecovillages*, New York: Berghahn Books

Epstein HaLevi, D.Y., Misiaszek, G.W., Kelly, H., Shah, S., Mugarura, C., Walsh, L.J. (2020). Building Eco-social Resilience in Rural Communities: Benefits of Permaculture Pedagogy and Praxis. In: Leal Filho, W. (eds) *Handbook of Climate Change Resilience*. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-93336-8\\_104-1802-1841](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-93336-8_104-1802-1841) (38 pages)

Klaasen, J. 2019. "Theology and development: Taking personal responsibility for community development", *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 75(2), 1-7.

Klaasen, J., 2020. "Narrative and personhood: The quest for triad community development". *Theology Journal Stellenbosch* Vol 6, No 2, 295-312.

Meadows, D. et al. 2005. *Limits to Growth: The 30-Year Update*. London. Earthscan. Chapters 1-3 (127 pages)

Monani, Salma and Joni Adamson. 2017. *Ecocriticism and indigenous studies: Conversations from earth to cosmos*. New York: Routledge.

Raworth, Kate. 2017 *Doughnut Economic. Seven ways to think like a 21st-Century Economist*. London. Random House Business books – Chapters 1-2 (79 pages)

Sachs, Wolfgang (2017) "The Sustainable Development Goals and Laudato Si': Varieties of Post-Development?", *Third World Quarterly* 38(12): 2573-2587. (14 pages).

Wilhite, Harold Langford. 2015. "The Problem of Habits for a Sustainable Transformation", in Karen Victoria Lykke Syse & Martin Lee Mueller (eds) *Sustainable Consumption and the Good Life*. Abingdon: Routledge.