



Research & Degrowth International

# INTRODUCTION TO DEGROWTH

## Online Course



First Edition Jan/ Feb 2025

Syllabus

# "INTRODUCTION TO DEGROWTH" ONLINE COURSE

"Introduction to Degrowth" is an introductory online course on Degrowth, developed and delivered by Research and Degrowth. The course is designed to introduce you to the foundational principles, critical debates, and transformative practices of degrowth.

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**Research & Degrowth** is a think-and-act-tank dedicated to the radical transformation of our economies and societies through research, advocacy, education, training and events around degrowth. For more than fifteen years, R&D has successfully organized summer schools and university master's programs focused on degrowth. The online course represents a new educational format to reach out to a broader audience. Upon successfully completing the online course, all participants will receive an **official certificate** issued by R&D.



We have been working hard to create this online course and are excited to be launching it to you. We're looking forward to this educational journey together!

# COURSE DETAILS

The first edition of the “Introduction to Degrowth” online course will take place from **January 14, 2025 to February 13, 2025, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 18:00 to 20:30 CET** (12:00 - 14:30 EST/ 9:00 - 11:30 WST).



The 25-hour course consists of **ten classes of 2.5 hours** each over the span of five weeks. Taught by a diverse group of experienced scholars and practitioners **via zoom**, the classes will cover a variety of topics, ranging from the foundations, historical context and intersectional perspectives to real examples and strategies forward.

With **35 students max**, this course fosters an interactive and collaborative learning environment, blending lectures, discussions, and practical exercises. It serves not only as a gateway to understanding degrowth but also as a community-building space for individuals passionate about addressing the challenges of our times.

## Timeline

Jan 14	- Ecological Economics - Giorgos Kallis
Jan 16	- Green Growth vs. Degrowth - Claudio Cattaneo
Jan 21	- Capitalism, Colonialism, and Growth - Gabriela Cabaña
Jan 23	- The Commons and Degrowth - Lorenzo Velotti
Jan 28	- Ecofeminism and Degrowth - Eva Navarro
Jan 30	- Decolonizing Economics - Brototi Roy
Feb 4	- Well-being and Degrowth - Filka Sekulova
Feb 6	- Real-Existing Degrowth - Marula Tsagkari
Feb 11	- Strategies for Degrowth - Ekatarina Chertkovskaya
Feb 13	- Communication of Degrowth - Micheal Mezzatesta

# PRICES

To ensure accessibility, we offer a solidarity price system. The standard course fee is €350. If this is beyond your budget, you can opt for the reduced fee of €150. Alternatively, if you are able to support others, you may choose to pay the solidarity fee of €550, helping make the course more accessible to others.



## Basic Fee: 350 Euros

The basic fee of 350 Euros covers all costs for the course.

## Solidarity Fee: 550 Euros

The solidarity ticket allows us to give away more reduced-fee tickets to people who really need it and helps us support R&D independent projects. If you are getting financed by an institution (e.g. PhD students, researchers, your workplace), or if you come from a higher-income background, we kindly encourage you to choose this option to help sustain the program and make it more accessible to others. We trust that you are honest with your capabilities and mindful of other's needs.

## Reduced Fee: 150 Euros

Apply for the reduced fee if you don't have the financial capacity to pay for a standard fee, because you are in a precarious work situation, live in a lower income country, are doing unpaid care work etc. There is only a certain number of reduced fees available. We trust your judgement. To apply for the reduced fee, please fill out the section in the application form.

## Two scholarships

The scholarships are intended for individuals who face significant financial barriers and would otherwise be unable to attend the course. To apply for a scholarship please explain your situation to us (see application form).

# Week 1: Foundations of Degrowth

Session 1 - Jan 14, 2025 18:00 - 20:30 CET

## Introduction to Degrowth and Ecological Economics

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**Instructor:** Giorgos Kallis is an ecological economist and political ecologist working on environmental justice and degrowth. He has a PhD in environmental policy from the University of the Aegean, and a Masters in economics from the Barcelona Graduate School of Economics. He is an ICREA professor since 2010. Before coming to Barcelona, Giorgos was a Marie Curie International Fellow at the Energy and Resources group at the University of California-Berkeley.

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**Class Overview:** In this class, Giorgos Kallis will show how a combination of ecological economics and political ecology, or what he calls political ecological economics offers new insights on our understanding of what economic growth is, how it works, and why it is facing limits. In other words he will propose a degrowth theory of economic growth.

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### Readings prior to class:

Kallis, G. (2023). Degrowth and the Barcelona School. In: Villamayor-Tomas, S., Muradian, R. (eds) The Barcelona School of Ecological Economics and Political Ecology. Studies in Ecological Economics, vol 8. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-22566-6\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-22566-6_8)



# Week 1: Foundations of Degrowth

Session 2 - Jan 16, 2025 18:00 - 20:30 CET

## Green Growth vs. Degrowth

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**Instructor:** Claudio Cattaneo is an ecological economist with a PhD from ICTA-UAB and a senior member of Research and Degrowth. He has been teaching ecological economics and degrowth for more than 20 years to a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate students in universities across the globe. He has been the initiator and director of the masters in political ecology, degrowth and environmental justice and of the online masters in degrowth at UAB. He has also research, teaching and consulting experience in doughnut economics for Barcelona.

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**Class Overview:** This class compares green growth, as framed within a mainstream economics perspective, with the degrowth narrative. It examines the impossibility of green growth: while any absolute decoupling between the economy and its environmental impacts may occur, it is happening far too slowly. The class also explores the degrowth perspective, highlighting how (green) growth is socially and culturally undesirable.

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### Readings prior to class:

Fanning, A.L., O'Neill, D.W., Hickel, J., Roux, N. (2022). The social shortfall and ecological overshoot of nations. Nature sustainability.

# Week 2: Key Contexts

Session 3 - Jan 21, 2025 18:00 - 20:30 CET

## Capitalism, Colonialism and Growth

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**Instructor:** Gabriela Cabaña is a sociologist and anthropologist, with a PhD from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Her doctoral work was on the relation between work, energy and nature in the Chiloé archipelago (South of Chile). She is currently a researcher at Fundación Tantí (Chile) studying the impacts of the emergent green hydrogen industry in the north of Chile, and a member of the Pacto Ecosocial e Intercultural del Sur.

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**Class Overview:** This lecture introduces the relation between capitalism, colonialism and growth from a degrowth and anti-colonial perspective. It also introduces the concepts of unequal ecological exchange, extractivism and green extractivism as a Latin American critique of the growth ideology. It draws from current research on energy “transitions” from a Global South perspective.

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### Readings prior to class:

Cabaña Alvear, G., & Vandana. (2023). Only for the Global North? Questioning the ‘who should degrow’ issue. Degrowth.

Fernandes, S. (2024). “Just” Means “Just” Everywhere: How Extractivism Stands in the Way of an Internationalist Paradigm for Just Transitions.

# Week 2: Key Contexts

Session 4 - Jan 23, 2025 18:00 - 20:30 CET

## The Commons and Degrowth

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**Instructor:** Lorenzo Velotti is a sociologist and anthropologist currently finishing his PhD at the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences at the Scuola Normale Superiore, where he is a member of the Centre on Social Movement Studies (COSMOS). He is also a member of Research & Degrowth. He is interested in commons, social movements, care, class, and degrowth. Lorenzo holds a MSc with Distinction in Anthropology and Development from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

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**Class Overview:** This class explores the concept of the commons and their pivotal role in advancing degrowth. We begin with a historical overview of the commons, followed by an examination of various analytical frameworks, from Elinor Ostrom's institutionalist approach to more critical perspectives, including autonomist theories and their intersections with political economy, feminism, and political ecology. Contemporary case studies will be introduced and analyzed interactively. The class concludes with a discussion on the significance of the commons as a cornerstone for degrowth.

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### Readings prior to class:

TBC



# Week 3: Intersecting Perspectives

Session 5 - Jan 28, 2025 18:00 - 20:30 CET

## Ecofeminism and Degrowth

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**Instructor:** Eva Navarro is a project manager and researcher working at the intersection of Ecofeminism, Degrowth and Political Ecology. With a background in Psychology and Political Philosophy, her interdisciplinary knowledge enriches her practice. She coordinates ecofeminist educational programs for female entrepreneurs, with a focus on strengthening rural communities, and runs the association GENS (Grup d'Experimentació en Naturisme i Sostenibilitat).

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**Class Overview:** This class introduces the foundations of Ecofeminist thought, a critical response to patriarchal, andro-anthropocentric, and neoliberal systems of domination that have led us to the current polycrisis. It will explore the diverse theoretical and practical currents within Ecofeminism, highlighting its rich and situated perspectives. Additionally, the course will examine intersections between Ecofeminism and Degrowth, investigating how these movements can build alliances to resist oppression, violence and exploitation, and together envision a just and livable future for all living beings.

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### Readings prior to class:

TBC

# Week 3: Intersecting Perspectives

Session 6 - Jan 30, 2025 18:00 - 20:30 CET

## Decolonizing Economics

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Class Overview:



**Instructor:** Brototi Roy is a postdoctoral researcher based at ICTA-UAB. Her research engages with socio-ecological justice and equity, with a focus on India and energy. She is also the president of Research & Degrowth International (R&D) and co-founder of the Degrowth India Initiative.

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**Class Overview:** This class will provide an introduction to the core assumptions of economics and the problems associated with it. It will then delve into the early and contemporary critiques from within the discipline to transform the discipline. Finally, the class will conclude with the why and how of decolonizing economics.

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**Readings prior to class:**

TBC

# Week 4: Real Degrowth

Session 7 - Feb 4, 2025 18:00 - 20:30 CET

## Well-being and Degrowth

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**Instructor:** Filka Sekulova is a senior researcher based at the University of Barcelona, and part of the IN3 institute. Her work is placed at the intersection of (ecological) economics (PhD, MS, BS), psychology (BS), and social sciences, with focus on degrowth, tourism and urban nature, through the perspectives of justice, community organizing and subjective well-being. Filka is an affiliated member of BCNUEJ lab and a co-founder of Research and Degrowth.

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**Class Overview:** This session will guide you through the well-being stream of degrowth scholarship. We will discuss the multiple approaches to conceptualising and measuring human well-being, along with their critiques. Next, we will explore the economics of happiness, including the latest discussions on the empirical evidence behind the Easterlin paradox, and discuss its relevance for degrowth. The last part of the session will be dedicated to the concept of meaningfulness, the empirical approaches to its measurement and the relation it bears with simplicity, materialism, community action and social mobilization.

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### Readings prior to class:

[Sekulova, F., Anguelovski, I., & Argüelles, L. \(2023\). Redefining success in organizing towards degrowth. Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions, 48, 100764.](#)

# Week 4: Real Degrowth

Session 8 - Feb 6, 2025 18:00 - 20:30 CET

## Real-Existing Degrowth

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**Instructor:** Marula Tsagkari is a political ecologist from Athens, Greece. She is currently a Margarita Salas postdoctoral researcher at ICTA-UAB. Her work focuses on energy communities, energy self-sufficiency, technology, and values. Marula holds a Ph.D. from the University of Barcelona and MSc in Environmental Science Policy and Management from Central European University and the University of Lund. In 2022-2023 she was a postdoctoral researcher at TU-Delft.

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**Class Overview:** This session explores the "real-existing degrowth" (RED) concept, including its origins and evolution. Students will learn a framework for understanding RED and apply it to various case studies. The interactive class encourages students to present their own examples of RED, analyze them using the framework, and propose methodological approaches.

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### Readings prior to class:

TBC

# Week 5: Strategies and Communication for Degrowth

Session 9 - Feb 11, 2025 18:00 - 20:30 CET

## Strategies for Degrowth

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**Instructor:** Ekaterina Chertkovskaya is a researcher based at Lund University (Sweden), working on degrowth and critical organisation studies. She has been writing on corporate violence, problems with work/employability and the plastic crisis, on the one hand. On the other, she has been focusing on degrowth as a vision for transformation, its political economy and strategies, as well as alternative modes of organisation and work.

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**Class Overview:** This session will address strategy in relation to degrowth, to foster our thinking on how we can bring about socio-ecological transformation. Drawing on the analytical vocabulary of Erik Olin Wright, she will introduce interstitial, ruptural and symbiotic modes of transformation and their corresponding strategic logics, in relation to degrowth, and outline a canvas for thinking about strategy analytically.

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### Readings prior to class:

Chertkovskaya, E. (2022). A strategic canvas for degrowth: In dialogue with Erik Olin Wright.



# Week 5: Strategies and Communication for Degrowth

Session 10 - Feb 13, 2025 18:00 - 20:30 CET

## Communication of Degrowth

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**Instructor:** Michael Mezzatesta is a communicator and educator using social media to spread ideas for a better future. His fast-paced videos on Instagram and TikTok present social issues (like inequality and climate change) through the lens of political economy, and highlight the reasons these problems are so difficult to “solve” in the context of a neoliberal, growth-based capitalist system. By presenting systemic causes and solutions, Michael encourages people to imagine better ways our society could work.

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**Class Overview:** In this session, Michael Mezzatesta will explore the power of communication in advancing the Degrowth movement. Through his expertise in using social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, he demonstrates how to engage audiences with complex social and environmental issues such as inequality, climate change, and the unsustainable nature of growth-based capitalism.

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### Readings prior to class:

TBC

# Contact



**Course coordinator:** Lorenzo Lonardi is a project manager at Research and Degrowth with a master's degree in Political Ecology, Degrowth, and Environmental Justice from ICTA-UAB. He is passionate about promoting degrowth ideas and creating accessible educational programs. As the coordinator of the "Introduction to Degrowth" online course, Lorenzo focuses on organizing and delivering a program that supports learning and collaboration around sustainable and just alternatives to growth-focused economics.

If you have questions about the "Introduction to Degrowth" Online Course feel free to contact Lorenzo:

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