



Research & Degrowth International

# INTRODUCTION TO DEGROWTH

## Online Course



Sixth Edition – April 2026

**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.



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

# COURSE DETAILS

The fourth edition of the “Introduction to Degrowth” online course will take place from **April 28th, 2026 to June 2nd, 2026, 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

Apr 28 - Introduction to Degrowth and Ecological Economics - Giacomo D’Alisa

Apr 30 - Decolonial Feminisms and Degrowth - Simona Getova

May 5 - Green Growth vs. Degrowth - Aljoša Slameršak

May 7 - Decolonizing Economics - Brototi Roy

May 12 - Commons and Degrowth - Angelos Varvarousis

May 14 - Capitalism, Colonialism, and Growth - Gabriela Cabaña

May 19 - Well-being and Degrowth - Filka Sekulova

May 21 - Strategies for Degrowth - Federico Savini

May 26 - Real-Existing Degrowth - Lucia Muñoz

June 2 - Communication of Degrowth - Michael 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).

**ALREADY FULL**

# Session 1 - April 28th, 2026 17:30 - 20:30 CET

## Introduction to Degrowth and Ecological Economics

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17:30 - 18:00: Welcome session

18:00 - 20:30: Normal session (Lecture)



**Instructor:** Giacomo D'alisa is a political ecological economist whose interdisciplinary, action-oriented research advances sustainability and environmental governance. With over 70 publications, including journal articles, book chapters, and landmark works on degrowth, he has significantly influenced both academia and policy. As Research Director at ICTA-UAB, he explores societal metabolic shifts, environmental justice, and the tensions between growth and degrowth. He also directs the Master's program in Political Ecology, Environmental Justice, and Degrowth, contributing to the field's consolidation and transformation.

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**Class Overview:** We examine the divergent common senses that underpin the imaginaries of growth and degrowth. After critically assessing the predicaments associated with economic growth, I offer a definition of degrowth and analyse how the societal transformations it requires can be articulated through concrete practices and policy frameworks across different scales. The second part of the session focuses on the concept of a universal care income, situating it in relation to universal basic income and clarifying the key distinctions between them.

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### Readings prior to class:

#### Mandatory

1-D'Alisa, Giacomo (2019), "Degrowth", Dicionário Alice.

2-Kallis G., Paulson S., D'Alisa G. and Demaria F. (2020). The case for Degrowth. Polity Press

#### Optional

1-D'Alisa G. and Sekulova F. Europe beyond growth: the proposal for a Universal Care Income. Policy Brief. RnDI (forthcoming)

## Session 2 - April 30th, 2026 18:00 - 20:30 CET

### Decolonial feminisms and Degrowth

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**Instructor:** Simona Getova is a decolonial ecofeminist political ecologist, climate justice organizer, facilitator, and educator from North Macedonia. Her research focuses on intersectional and decolonial praxis in grassroots organizing around Green Deals, studied at Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona. She envisions collective liberation by dismantling oppression and extraction to create just, joyful, climate-safe futures. Simona is currently the Director of Operations at Research and Degrowth International.

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**Class Overview:** This class explores how decolonial feminism and degrowth intersect, examining patriarchy, coloniality, extractivism, and racial capitalism. Through discussions and participatory exercises, we'll engage with feminist critiques and the knowledge and praxis of marginalized communities. Focusing on anti-extractivist struggles, especially in the Global South, we'll analyze degrowth through decolonial feminist lenses—rooted in history, territory, and lived experience. Finally, we'll consider transnational solidarity in building fairer, climate-safe futures.

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#### Readings prior to class:

1-Section 3.5. Feminist Critique (pp. 133-143) in Schmelzer, M., Vetter, A., & Vansintjan, A. (2022). *The future is degrowth: A guide to a world beyond capitalism*. Verso Books.

2-Abazeri, M. (2022). Decolonial feminisms and degrowth. *Futures*, 136, 102902.

Session 3 - May 5th, 2026 18:00 - 20:30 CET

## Green Growth Vs Degrowth

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**Instructor:** Aljoša Slameršak is a postdoctoral researcher at ICTA-UAB and a co-funder of Policy Lab. His research focus is a degrowth low-carbon energy transition. He received his undergraduate degree in Meteorology and Geophysics from the University of Ljubljana and MSc degrees in Climate Studies and Environmental Sciences from Wageningen University. In his PhD thesis, Aljoša explored the biophysical limits of continued growth in energy consumption.

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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.

TBC

Session 4 - May 7th, 2026 18:00 - 20:30 CET

## Decolonizing Economics

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**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 former 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:

Ingrid Harvold Kvangraven & Surbhi Kesar (2023) Standing in the way of rigor? Economics' meeting with the decolonization agenda, *Review of International Political Economy*, 30:5, 1723-1748,

Session 5 - May 12th, 2026 18:00 - 20:30 CET

## The Commons and Degrowth

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**Instructor:** Angelos Varvarousis is an urban planner, senior Ramon y Cajal researcher at ICTA/UAB, and co-director of the International Masters on Degrowth. His interdisciplinary research focuses on socio-spatial transformations, inspired by urban studies, commons management, island studies, and social economics. He authored the monograph *Liminal Commons* (Bloomsbury) and co-directs an international laboratory with Professor Arun Agrawal, advancing research on commons and commoning across various academic perspectives.

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**Class Overview:** The lecture explores the diverse terms related to commons, such as urban commons, digital commons, and liminal commons, questioning whether they are just academic jargon or a reflection of our times. It traces the philosophical, political, and geographical roots of these concepts, referencing key thinkers like Massimo De Angelis, David Bollier, Yochai Benkler, Silvia Federici, and others. Rather than focusing on institutional arrangements, the lecture highlights how the commons inspire social mobilization, connect social movements, and challenge ideas of property, identity, and economy. Concrete global examples illustrate the implications of this shift in contemporary politics and policy.

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### Readings prior to class:

Varvarousis, A. (2020). The rhizomatic expansion of commoning through social movements. *Ecological Economics*, 171, 106596.

## Session 6 - May 14th, 2026 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.

## Session 7 - May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026 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.

## Session 8 - May 21st, 2026 18:00 - 20:30 CET

### Strategies for Degrowth

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**Instructor:** Federico Savini is an Associate Professor in Environmental Planning, Institutions and Politics at the University of Amsterdam. He combines approaches of political sociology, spatial planning and critical geography to the study of institutions and socio-ecological change in the process of urbanization. In his works, he studies the relation between changing planning regulations and socio-ecological justice, and critically explores strategic planning approaches able to achieve social justice within planetary boundaries. Beside his research tasks, he is founder and coordinator of the Postgrowth Cities Coalition.

**Class Overview:** The class will deal with strategic thought in degrowth. It will explain the challenge of a degrowth strategy and the problematic insights available in mainstream degrowth strategic thought. We will define what a strategy is, and why it is important. We will reflect on the social, cultural and institutional challenges of a radical political project such as degrowth. We will address in particular the spatial perspective of a strategy rooted in places, able to mobilize counter-hegemonic coalitions of actors.

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#### Readings prior to class:

TBC

## Session 9 - May 26th, 2025 18:00 - 20:30 CET

### Real-Existing Degrowth

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**Instructor:** Lucía Muñoz Sueiro, a PhD candidate at ICTA-UAB, researches traditional popular culture, rural degrowth, and temporalities. With a background in anthropology, she holds master's degrees in International Affairs from The New School and Global Thought from Columbia University, funded by Fulbright and La Caixa scholarships. She is a member of Research and Degrowth (R&D) and has co-organized various socio-ecological routes, engaging in collective explorations of critical pedagogies while traversing territories marked by extractivism through walking and cycling.

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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:

Kallis, G., Varvarousis, A., & Petridis, P. (2022). Southern thought, islandness and real-existing degrowth in the Mediterranean. *World development*, 157, 105957.

## Session 10 - June 2nd, 2026 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:

TBA

# Contact

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**Lorenzo Lonardi** is a project coordinator 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 and the "Deep Dives" online courses, Lorenzo focuses on organizing and delivering a program that supports learning and collaboration around sustainable and just alternatives to growth-focused economics.

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**Federico Arcuri** is a project coordinator at Research and Degrowth. He is also an alumnus of the master's in Political Ecology at ICTA-UAB, with a thesis on a "Post-growth deal for Italy". He is interested in environmental conflicts, post-growth policy and geopolitics, especially with respect to EU-China relations. He co-organized the last two editions of the Degrowth Summer School, coordinating the bike caravan weeks and facilitating counter-cartography workshops. Co-organizer of the Beyond Growth conference Italia (April 2024), he is active in the Italian degrowth movement.

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If you have questions about the "Deep Dives" Online Course feel free to contact Lorenzo or Federico:

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