

Professional Masters in Political Ecology

(with a specialization in degrowth and environmental justice)

This a new Masters, the first internationally on Political Ecology, offering courses in core competencies of our group in Barcelona: the theory and practice of degrowth, environmental conflicts and justice, and commons and the solidarity economy. The Masters builds on a successful 7-year series of Summer Schools on Environmental Justice and Degrowth, and two ongoing ERC projects on global and urban environmental justice.

This is a master propio and on its own does not lead to doctoral studies. The program focusses on the theoretical, methodological and professional capacity building for young people who want to work in the Social and Solidarity Economy, public administration, Environmental Justice Organizations, think tanks and consultancies. The courses are of the highest academic level, taught by well published and active in research academics, so it can also be pursued by people who already have a masters (or even a doctorate), and want to shift towards research on degrowth and environmental justice.

It will run with 20 up to 35 students and will cost 3960 EUR for 60 ECTS

Organization

The first term will consist of theoretical/foundational courses on degrowth, environmental justice, alternative economics, political ecology, and the theory of the commons.

The second term will provide specialized courses on methodological tools such as Q-methodology, metabolic analysis, multi-criteria evaluation, alongside professional development courses, such as courses on setting up a social business, writing for the press, running an NGO campaign, or facilitating a group process.

The third term will consist of the final project. This will be conducted in groups and consist of making a movie, writing an article for a newspaper, preparing a business plan for a social enterprise, or organizing an NGO campaign.

FALL TERM (October – January 15 weeks - 100 hrs) FUNDAMENTALS (21 ECTS)

Module 1: Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations of Degrowth

6 ECTS, 30 hours

What is degrowth (Federico Demaria, Francois Schneider, Filka Sekulova)

This course will lay out the theoretical foundations of degrowth, surveying various contributions from various schools of thought. We will discuss writings of the French authors writing in the field of anti-utilitarianism, critics of development and progress (Latouche, Aries, Mauss.), as well as the conceptual foundations of degrowth related to the notions of voluntary simplicity, ecology, deepening democracy, decoloniality, social and biophysical limits to growth. The course will include interactive and deliberative workshops as well as field visits where some of the theoretical concepts studied in class are used as a source of inspiration for practical applications.

Evaluation: 50% of the mark through a work presented in class and 50% through a take home exam or essay.

Module 2: Environmental Justice: Origins, Theory, Issues and Movements

6 ECTS, 30 hours

1. ***Urban Environmental Justice*** (Isabelle Anguelovski) 15 hours

This course lays the foundation for some of the key themes in environmental justice, including origins and theories of environmental justice. The course addresses specific topics such as urban environmental justice, relationship between gentrification and social classes, health and greening of cities.

2. ***Environmental Justice and Introduction to the EJ Atlas*** (Beatriz Rodriguez-Labajos, Joan Martinez-Alier) 15 hours

The course focusses on the study of the rise of the global movement for environmental justice, and issues of environmental justice in natural resource management. It presents the Environmental Justice Atlas as a tool to address and give concrete visibility to these themes and finally deals with conflicts on access to different types of ecosystem services

Evaluation:

Urban Environmental Justice: 50% of the mark through a work presented in class and 50% through a take home exam or essay.

Environmental Justice and Introduction to the EJ Atlas: As a practical approach to the study of environmental justice conflicts you are required to fill in one cases in the EJAtlas and a form to analyse the cultural and artistic manifestations analysed in the conflicts (min 5 per conflict), thereby learning about the causes of the conflicts, the social actors and their forms of mobilization, the companies involved, the visible or potential impacts of the projects causing the conflicts, and the outcomes. The results of this work will be shared by the class in the weekly discussion on progress. At the end of the course, each student will present a 1-page document (max) specifying the case introduced in the EJAtlas and the cultural and artistic manifestations analysed in the conflicts (min 5 per conflict). This work will represent 100% of the grade in this course

Module 3: Political Ecology and Degrowth Economics

9 ECTS 40 hours

1. **Political Ecology** (Marta Conde, Diego Andreucci) 20 hours

The course offers a critical introduction to Political Ecology, the study of ecological distribution conflicts and the ways in which power affects access over resources as well as opportunities for human-centred development. Drawing from a range of approaches—particularly, ecological economics, post-structuralism and neo-Marxism—the course will examine key concepts and theoretical frameworks that underlie the contemporary critique of development and growth.

2. **Degrowth Economics** (Giorgos Kallis, Salvador Pueyo) 20 hours

An introduction to the classics and foundational texts of ecological economics, followed by a discussion of political economy, and their application to the understanding of the growth process, and contemporary debates about degrowth.

Evaluation: 50% of the mark through a work presented in class and 50% through a take home exam or essay.

WINTER TERM (February – May 14 weeks – 140 hrs) - SKILLS (24 ECTS)

Module 4: Commons and Feminism

6 ECTS, 40 hours

1. **Commons and care** (Giacomo D'Alisa, Aggelos Varvarousis) 20 hours

The course offers an introduction to the study of Commons by drawing on three different perspectives; the Institutional School, Political Ecology and Digital Commons. Subsequently, it will focus on the relation between Commons, Social Movements, Solidarity Economies and other contemporary forms of Commoning. Lastly, it will introduce a feminist approach of the commons by focusing on the theory of Care.

2. **Feminism** (Amaia Pérez-Orozco) 10 hours

This course provides a basic understanding of core feminist concepts and analytical tools that are needed to (a) explore the hetero-patriarcal dimensions of the socioeconomic system and the growth society; and (b) examine the gender dimensions of environmental justice and conflicts. Ecological economics is revisited from a feminist economics perspective. And ecofeminist contributions are used to enrich and expand degrowth both as a discipline and as a social movement

3. **Peer-to-Peer: Capitalism, Commons and Future Scenarios.** (Vasilis Kostakis) 10 hours

This course is a theoretical as well as hands-on exploration of the theory and practice of online and offline collaboration and sharing. The goal is to engage in a critical discussion of the Internet-enabled collaborative initiatives. You will engage multi-disciplinary literature about what commons/digital commons is; what are the hidden socio-environmental costs of digital technologies etc. Readings will explore various business models, including mainstream social media platforms and commons-oriented organizations, as well as discuss incentives of cooperation, and potentialities for conviviality transitions. This course will employ techniques from non-formal education for a hands-on exploration of the sharing economy. Through role-playing games and improvised group presentations, you will build on and interplay with the ideas discussed with the aim to face practical problems

Evaluation: 50% of the mark through a work presented in class and 50% through a take home exam or essay.

Module 5: Methodological Applications for Action-Research

9 ECTS, 40 hours:

1. **Case study research and Q methodology** (Christos Zografos, Diego Andreucci) 10 hours

The purpose of this module is to familiarize students with principles and techniques of qualitative social research. The course will be divided in two parts. The first (4 hours, Diego Andreucci) will provide an introduction to basic principles of social research design and qualitative investigative methods, focusing specifically on the case study method and its application to the investigation of concrete social situations. The second part of the course (6 hours, Christos Zografos), will introduce Q methodology and explain how it can be used to explore conflicting views in collective decision-making processes. One class will focus on explaining the method, its steps/process, and what it serves, and another class will illustrate key applications and empirical case examples using Q methodology.

2. **Surveys** (Filka Sekulova) 10 hours

The course first offers the basic tools on how to design, test and execute a survey in different contexts and fields. Next, some techniques for data collection, processing and analysis are presented, all in the context of multiple practical examples

3. **Social metabolic analysis** (Arnim Scheidel, Anke Schaffartzik) 10 hours

The course "Analyzing social metabolism" provides an introduction into the conceptual foundations of social metabolism and an overview of how to apply the most common approaches to its quantitative analysis

4. **Social Multi-criteria Evaluation** (Gonzalo Gamboa) 10 hours

The course presents the combination of participatory approaches and multicriteria evaluation methods applied to public policies. The course will introduce theoretical and practical characteristics of multicriteria models and their suitability in public decision making. The course will balance conventional lecturing and case study development by the students.

Evaluation: a group project with one of the tools studying an environmental conflict from the EJ Atlas, an urban conflict in Barcelona, or an alternative economic project socio-environmental conflict in Catalonia or in Barcelona to be presented in a poster format during the last class of the course which will simulate an academic mini-congress in which each group will have 30 minutes to present the work and the methodology applied

Module 6 – Professional skills in Environmental Justice and Degrowth

9 ECTS, 60 hours

The professional module will teach students in concrete skills necessary in work environments: group facilitation; writing policy briefs and consultancy reports; writing for the press; setting up a SSE; organizing an NGO campaign. The speakers will be practitioners and will share with students also their experience from their work environments (e.g. think tanks, NGOs, consultancies, newspapers) and what it takes to work there, what skills are necessary and how is the working day. Each course will be initiated by a core member of the masters faculty who will position the professional skill within current debates about degrowth and environmental justice, making links between theoretical issues debated in the Fundamentals module, and the practical skills.

1. **Legal Tools for Environmental Justice** (Isabel Pont-Castejon) 10 hours

The objective of the course is familiarize with the essential legal instruments for allowing Environmental Justice from an applied standpoint. In particular the course will focus on the following topics: access to environmental information; the right to participate in relevant environmental policy- and decision-making; environmental litigation (International and European law; Civil Rights; Administrative, Criminal and Private law)

2. **Working with groups** (David Villota, Filla Sekulova) 10 hours

The course presents the practical aspects of dealing with groups, with the goal of learning to facilitate group processes (such as decision-making, collective exploration of ideas, conflict-resolution, cohesion and communication)

3. **Contributing to policy** (Giacomo D'Alisa) 10 hours

This course will teach students how to communicate to and write for policy makers. It will involve a class and workshop on how to make policy briefs, how to write a policy report and assessment. It will introduce also to the art of lobbying for the implementation of public policies.

The course will include tips on how to approach the politicians as an outsider, establish relations with key person in political parties; as well as insiders' views for those who want to work professionally in the policy arena, and on the everyday realities of policy makers today and how to best prepare oneself for getting a job there. Case studies and examples will focus on environmental justice and alternative economies stories

4. **Media and Communication** (Federico Demaria) 10 hours

This course will teach students how to communicate in and write for printed and digital media such as newspapers or blogspots. It will involve a class and workshop on how to make a press release, how to write a opinion piece, and how to organize, research and write a longer investigative report. The course will include tips on how to approach the media as an outsider, establish relations with journalists and pitch pieces; as well as insiders' views for those who want to work professionally on a newspaper on the everyday realities of journalists

today, the market, and how to best prepare oneself for getting a job there. Case studies and examples will focus on environmental justice and alternative economies stories

5. ***The New Economy*** (Claudio Cattaneo) 10 hours

The goal of this course is to learn the practical aspects of setting up an enterprise in the social, solidarity or collaborative sector. Professionals from the sector will be invited to participate

6. ***Activism and Campaigning*** (Marta Conde) 10 hours

This course aims at teaching the crucial aspects for setting up an activist campaign. Professionals from the sector will be invited to participate

Evaluation: 10 page proposal in a group of three in one of the six themes of the Module.

SPRING TERM (May-June or September) – FINAL PROJECT (15 ECTS)

By February 2019 we will offer a number of master projects on degrowth and environmental justice in which we are interested, including work in the EJ Atlas. Students might also come up with their own proposals. Projects will be worked in groups of three and consist of one of the following (in brackets the name of the person(s) from the core faculty responsible for this type of projects):

- Consultancy: a consultancy report with a policy brief on a specific environmental or social problem (Kallis, Cattaneo)
- Research: a research paper using one of the methodologies of module 1 (Gamboa, Kallis)
- Investigative newspaper article + blog (Demaria) (students familiar and trained in film making can choose to do a documentary instead)
- A degrowth or EJ-related campaign (Sekulova, Conde)
- Collection of data and analysis for the EJ Atlas (DelBene)
- A plan for setting up a social and solidarity economy enterprise. (D'Alisa, Cattaneo)