

PhD Course in The sociology of materiality and environmental interaction

Place: Aarhus University, Campus Emdrup, Copenhagen, Denmark

Time: 19-22 October 2015

Scope: 5 ECTS

Tuition fee: 200 €

Pre-registration before 24 June 2015 at https://auws.au.dk/PhDcourse_EnvSoc

Payment: in September

Background and rationale of the course

The purpose of the course is to familiarize participants with sociological theory and other social science approaches which include materiality in their understanding of the social. In particular the course examines sociological theories that enable analyses of *environmental* issues in modern societies – their context, sources, implications and possible management as located in the nexus between sociality and materiality.

Even though all social activities, dynamics and structures are embedded in and make use of material objects and environments, sociological theory tends to be blind to the materiality of reality. In contrast, *environmental sociology* addresses core themes in sociology based on the premise that materiality in the form of nature, bodies, artefacts, built structures and technology are not only central to social issues, processes and structures but integrated in the ontological basis and thus intertwined with the dynamics of the social. Materiality influences actors as well as institutions, and vice versa: social dynamics at both institutional and individual level shape the material world. This basic approach to sociological theory is of course particularly relevant in social science understandings of environment, climate and sustainability.

Learning outcomes

The PhD course examines basic as well as applied research areas based on theories and conceptual/analytical frameworks of environmental sociology. Different key theoretical approaches are introduced. Furthermore, the students will on the basis of cases (from ongoing research, literature and/or the students' PhD projects) discuss the philosophy of science, the field of application and the usefulness with respect to analysis of particular research areas and problems of the introduced theories and frameworks. In addition, the methodological challenges generated by including these theories in research are discussed.

In completing the course, each student will acquire the following competences:

- General knowledge of core theories in environmental sociology
- Ability to select and apply relevant theories in academic analysis of specific environmental research problems (with a social science perspective)
- Ability to discuss different relevant theories and their area of application within social science research
- Ability to synthesize theories of environmental sociology and apply them in the investigation of specific issues.

Requirements to pass the course

This PhD course takes the participants' on-going PhD research as point of departure. To pass the course, all participants are expected to:

- Read course literature
- Participate actively in discussions during lectures and exercises
- Present their PhD project and act as primary discussant of a fellow participant
- Submit a draft academic paper based on theoretical frameworks of the course literature used on their own PhD research.

Organizers and teachers

The course is organized by the GSST PhD school at Faculty of Science and Technology at Aarhus University, Denmark.

Teachers include (but are not limited to)

- Senior social scientist Anne Jensen, <http://pure.au.dk/portal/da/aj@envs.au.dk>
- Senior social scientist Lars Kjerulf Petersen, <http://pure.au.dk/portal/da/lkp@envs.au.dk>
- Professor Bente Halkier; <http://rucforsk.ruc.dk/site/person/bha>

For further information contact Anne Jensen (aj@envs.au.dk +45 87158633) or Lars Kjerulf Petersen (lkp@envs.au.dk +45 87158575)

For practical information please contact Klaus Condé Christensen (kcc@envs.au.dk)