

Culture-Ecology-Change

Module Descriptions

Study Plan

1. Semester	Approaches to Ecological-Cultural Change 12 LP	Readings: Culture – Ecology – Change 6LP	Interdisciplinary Perspectives I 6 LP	Free Choice 6 LP
2. Semester	Diachronic Dimensions of Ecological-Cultural Change 12 LP	Science Communication 6 LP	Interdisciplinary Perspectives II 6 LP	Practical Experience 6 LP
3. Semester	Entanglements of Ecologies and Cultures 12 LP	Future Design/ Transformation 12 LP		Research 2 SWS, 6 LP
4. Semester	Master-Thesis 30 LP			

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First Semester

Approaches to Ecological-Cultural Change

Lecture and seminar (4 SWS)

Credit points: 12 ECTS/LP

Exam requirements: Report/Documentation, 8 weeks, 2000-3000 words

Responsible: Prof. Dr. Christian Schmitt-Kilb

Contents

Students are introduced to disciplinary core areas relevant for the analysis of the material and cultural dimensions of the global climate crisis, environmental degradation and their socio-cultural effects. The module consists of a collective lecture and a seminar in which students conduct in-depth discussions with the lecturers. Students will gain access to major topics and theories in the environmental and ecological humanities, literary ecocriticism, human-animal studies, Indigenous, postcolonial, and transcultural ecological studies. They will acquire knowledge about the disciplinary fields ecological economics; media and ecology/sustainability; landscape ecology; agrarian economics; education for sustainable development; and maritime ecology. The collaborative lecture series may be enriched with individual lectures by, and discussions/workshops with, external partners.

Upon completion of this module, students will be able to identify and distinguish core academic fields, topics, and concepts in the dynamic field of ecological sustainability and economic and cultural change.

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They will develop an understanding for the global complexity of these phenomena and the transdisciplinary quality of the presented theoretical approaches.

Theoretical Readings on Culture, Ecology, Sustainability

Seminar (2 SWS)

Credit points: 6 ECTS/LP

Exam requirements: oral exam, 20 minutes

Responsible: Coordinator (NN), Prof. Dr. Gesa Mackenthun

Contents

Students are familiarized with core texts on the topics ecology and sustainability in the humanities, especially literary and cultural theories, their history and their underlying philosophical assumptions. They gain an overview of intellectual and academic discussions about ecology and sustainability, as well as specific sustainability practices. They develop a critical understanding of (among others) modern theories of instrumental reason, human-animal relations and socioeconomic master narratives based on these epistemologies.

Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Sustainability I

Students find a course from a prepared list. Get in touch with course teacher!

2 SWS

Credit points: 6 ECTS/LP

Exam requirements: report/documentation, 8 weeks, 2000-3000 words (P/F) (to be assessed by CEC staff)

Responsible: Prof. Gesa Mackenthun, Prof. Christian Schmitt-Kilb, Prof. Kylie Crane (rotating)

Contents

The module offers transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives on ecology and sustainability from a variety of disciplinary fields, especially those outside cultural and literary studies. Students choose their courses from a course catalogue. They obtain knowledge e.g. about planetary ecological connectivity (global north/global south), sustainability and development policies, sustainability and questions of justice, biodiversity, marine ecology, and sustainability and agriculture/land management. They write a report reflecting on connections between the humanistic perspectives acquired in the other modules and the questions, knowledge and methods practiced in other sciences.

The following German-language courses are open to receive CEC students:

- Vorlesung „Ökologie – Global Change und Angewandte Ökologie“ aus dem Modul 2700110 „Ökologie“ (MNF);
- Vorlesung „Recht, Ethik und Governance der Nachhaltigkeit“ aus dem Modul 3150100 „Transnationale Nachhaltigkeits-Governance“ (JUF).
- „Seminar zu Rechtspolitik und Rechtsgestaltung“, Modul No. 3150100
- „Area Studies: Asien“ (3350010)
- „Agrar- und Umweltpolitik“ (1701210)
- „Meeresnaturschutz“ (2751270)
- „Theoretische Grundlagen der Biologiedidaktik“ (2780360)
- „Biodiversität, Natur- und Artenschutz“ (2700270/2700510)
- „Medienbildung und Medienarbeit“ (5150730)
- „Siedlungs- und Landschaftsarchäologie“ (5550470)
- „Wirtschafts- und Sozialarchäologie“ (5550490)

For English-language courses please consult the CEC colleagues!

Second Semester

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Diachronic Dimensions of Ecological-Cultural Change

Seminar (4 SWS) (2 classes in literature, linguistics or culture studies)

Credit points: 12 ECTS/LP

Exam requirements: term paper, 8 weeks, 6000-7000 words

Responsible: Prof. Dr. Gesa Mackenthun

Contents

In this module, students will acquire knowledge of temporal aspects of ecological crisis and social change in a global context. Central to this module is the capacity to transform familiarity with the history of anthropogenic incursions into the environment, including industrialization in its global colonial framework, into an understanding of contemporary phenomena of climate crisis, ecological degradation, sociocultural change, together with notions of the future. Students will be able to describe, analyze and assess the interdependencies between the ecological aspects of past infrastructures, historical technologies and economies, everyday practices (from food to leisure cultures), human-animal relations, and ideologies of progress and development, including literary and cultural texts. Historical knowledge is mobilized to think creatively about solutions to the current ecological and social situation and to develop ecologically viable ideas and practices towards sustainable futures. Knowledge of diachronic perspectives will facilitate reflection on the social and cultural dynamics and causalities of ecological policies such as industrialization, colonialism, forms of agriculture and land management. Students will train their capacity for reflecting on the social, cultural and intellectual dimensions of ecologically relevant practices and the transformations they caused within shorter and longer time scales reaching from antiquity to imagined futures.

Science Communication

Seminar (2 SWS)

Credit points: 6 ECTS/LP

Exam requirements: practical exam, 8 weeks, P/F

Responsible: Prof. Dr. Kylie Crane

Contents

The aim of this module is to furnish students with the knowledge and skills for translating scientific content relating to ecological sustainability, culture, and change into more accessible forms, with the aim of reaching larger audiences in the fields of culture, administration, education, politics, and the economy. Contexts, methods, and problems of science communication are explicitly addressed. Students train their ability to communicate academic knowledge to a variety of different addressees.

Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Sustainability II

Students find a course from a prepared list. Get in touch with course teacher!

2 SWS

Credit points: 6 ECTS/LP

Exam requirements: report/documentation, 8 weeks, 2000-3000 words (P/F) (to be assessed by CEC staff)

Responsible: Prof. Gesa Mackenthun, Prof. Christian Schmitt-Kilb, Prof. Kylie Crane (rotating)

Contents

This is the second module offering interdisciplinary perspectives on ecology and sustainability from a variety of disciplinary fields. Students intensify their understanding of the transdisciplinary interwovenness of cultural, literary-aesthetic, and generally humanistic themes and perspectives with fields outside their purview.

The following German-language courses are open to receive CEC students:

- Vorlesung „Ökologie – Global Change und Angewandte Ökologie“ aus dem Modul 2700110 „Ökologie“

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(MNF);

- Vorlesung „Recht, Ethik und Governance der Nachhaltigkeit“ aus dem Modul 3150100 „Transnationale Nachhaltigkeits-Governance“ (JUF).
- „Seminar zu Rechtspolitik und Rechtsgestaltung“, Modul No. 3150100
- „Area Studies: Asien“ (3350010)
- „Agrar- und Umweltpolitik“ (1701210)
- „Meeresnaturschutz“ (2751270)
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For English-language courses please consult the CEC colleagues!

Third Semester

Entanglements of Ecologies and Cultures

Seminar (4 SWS) (2 classes in literature, linguistics or culture studies)

Credit points: 12 ECTS/LP

Exam requirements: term paper, 8 weeks, 6000-7000 words

Responsible: Prof. Dr. Kylie Crane, Prof. Dr. Christian Schmitt-Kilb

Contents

In this module, students will gain insight into the plurality of primarily cultural-, literary- and language-specific scientific perspectives and theoretical approaches to social-ecological phenomena and their transformation in a global context. They investigate interdependencies and synchronicities between the different forms and theories of eco-cultural sustainability. They test different perspectives and knowledges in (predominantly anglophone) ecocriticism (literature, culture, language). A focus will be on the representations of the relationships between human cultures and more-than-human life forms and ways of being. Further themes encompass the Anthropocene, anthropocentrism and biocentrism; dialectics and cognitive dissociation; environmental ethics; sustainable governance and environmental justice; environmental and resource economics; human-animal studies; ecofeminism; ecolinguistics. “Western” epistemologies will be compared with non-Western, Indigenous, and transcultural forms of ecological knowledge (e.g. Native American/First Nations; Aboriginal; Polynesian).

Experience and Reflection on Culture-Ecology-Change

Meetings and consultations: 2 SWS

Credit points: 6 ECTS/LP

Exam requirements: report/documentation, 8 weeks, 2000-3000 words (P/F)

Students take the initiative and find a placement for practical experience. 135 hours practical work (c. 3-4 weeks; possibility to split between two placements). They plan this in cooperation with the study course coordinator and the colleague responsible for this module. A list of recommended placements will be provided.

Responsible: Coordinator (NN), Prof. Christian Schmitt-Kilb

Contents

In this module, students will be given the opportunity to engage in “hands-on learning.” The module offers field-work and excursions that feed back into sustainability studies and ecological humanities. Placements

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may be within Rostock University, other academic institutions, and non-state initiatives and organizations, communal administrations, businesses involved in future technologies, art and architecture projects, etc. Internships outside Germany are accepted.

The module begins with an orientation meeting and ends with a one-day workshop in which students present and exchange their experiences. They subsequently write a theory-inspired report.

Transformation: Designing Futures

Seminar (2 SWS)

Credit points: 12 ECTS/LP

Exam requirements: pre-exam work: Documentation of group project work in a portfolios (10-15 pp., 8 weeks); presentation (20 min.); exam: oral exam (20 min.)

Responsible: Prof. Dr. Gesa Mackenthun, Coordinator (NN)

Contents

This module consists of a reading section and a self-organized project.

Seminar part: Students acquire knowledge about theories of transformation (studies on crisis, transition, rebuilding, agency, resilience, future planning). Through readings and class discussion, they will critically assess sociological, economic, legal, and pedagogical approaches within future sciences and think creatively about established utopian frameworks and narratives. They will be familiarized with philosophies of change, methods of social and ecological repair and resilience, theories of cooperation and reciprocity, and cultural-literary utopian and dystopian fictions.

Group Work: Based on the knowledge gained from the seminar part, students will collaborate in groups (in the form of a “creative lab”), designing more sustainable worldly practices and sketching the path toward their realization. The designs – presented in form of a group portfolio – aim at imagining and presenting middle- and long-term change in a number of social and cultural fields, such as travel and mobility, city and landscape planning, education, contemplation, entertainment, food/nutrition, fashion, communication and global connectivity. Students design a project (portfolio) of which they assume a transformative energy in the sense of social-ecological sustainability. Besides a text presentation, this can take the form of videos, blogs, exhibitions, installations, live projects (e.g. school gardens; educational tours). The specific form will be discussed at the beginning of the module with the whole class.

The oral exam documents the project and reflects on the theoretical and methodical ideas inspiring it.

Research: Culture and Sustainability

1 SWS

Credit points: 6 ECTS/LP

Exam requirements: report/documentation, 8 weeks, 2000-3000 words (P/F)

Responsible: Prof. Gesa Mackenthun, Prof. Christian Schmitt-Kilb, Prof. Kylie Crane (rotating)

Contents

In this module, students will gain insights into current academic research in the field of anglophone sustainability studies and environmental humanities. They are offered the possibility to engage in cutting-edge research at their chosen institute, including (first) encounters with academic research and project management. Students will formulate their own research subject/question (with a view to the MA thesis). The process of their research will be critically reflected in a number of class meetings. They will write a report mapping the research field of their chosen topic.

Fourth Semester

Master Thesis Culture-Ecology-Change

Students choose their supervisor and prepare their thesis (consultations).

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Credits: 30 ECTS/LP

Exam requirements: 1. Master thesis (60-80 pp., 20 weeks); 2. colloquium (50 minutes = 20 mts. report + 30 mts. discussion)

Responsible: Prof. Gesa Mackenthun, Prof. Christian Schmitt-Kilb, Prof. Kylie Crane

Contents

The final module consists of the MA thesis, written in English, on a self-chosen topic from the fields of anglophone cultural studies, literary studies, or linguistics. A regular exchange with the supervisor is mandatory. Students are expected to formulate a cutting-edge research question from the field of the environmental humanities, ecological and/or humanistic sustainability studies and/or the field of transformation studies. The thesis rests on a critical in-depth assessment of the extant research and is inspired by the methodical and theoretical questions discussed during this study course. Students present and discuss their chosen argument in a methodically and theoretically substantial way and defend their thesis in an oral colloquium.