UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Political Ecology

2627-2-F7603Q030-F7603Q03002

Aims

The course aims to develop a critical understanding of how social, political, and ecological processes shape contemporary urban environments. It equips students with analytical tools to examine the territorial consequences of these interactions and to interpret urban transformations through the lenses of political ecology, ecological economics, and environmental justice.

Knowledge and Understanding (Dublin Descriptor 1)
At the end of the course, the student understands:
• to acquire advanced knowledge of political ecology;
• the links with ecological economics and environmental justice;
• socio?ecological dynamics of urbanization in the Anthropocene;
• and recognizes key concepts such as valuation languages, governance, and justice;
• how territorial transformations emerge from socio?environmental processes.

Applied Knowledge and Understanding (Dublin Descriptor 2)
At the end of the course, the student will be able to:
• apply political?ecological theories to empirical urban case studies;
• use analytical tools to investigate interactions between social, political, and environmental processes;
• assess territorial consequences of urban development dynamics;
• interpret socio?ecological conflicts through concepts of power, resources, and governance;
• operationalize theoretical frameworks in real?world analyses.

Making Judgements (Dublin Descriptor 3)
At the end of the course, the student will be able to:
• critically evaluate socio?ecological problems in urban contexts;
• assess fairness and effectiveness of environmental policies and governance;
• judge valuation practices and their implications for justice;
• integrate political, ecological, and economic perspectives in decision?making;
• formulate independent, well?reasoned evaluations of territorial transformations.

Communication Skills (Dublin Descriptor 4)
At the end of the course, the student will be able to:
• communicate complex political?ecological arguments clearly and coherently.
• present theoretical insights and empirical findings to specialist and non?specialist audiences.
• use appropriate academic language and structure in oral and written communication.
• discuss environmental justice, governance, and urban transformations effectively.
• translate socio?ecological analyses into accessible narratives.

Learning Skills (Dublin Descriptor 5)
At the end of the course, the student will be able to:
• develop autonomy in studying political ecology and related fields;
• explore new case studies, debates, and methodological approaches independently;
• integrate insights from the Environmental History module into learning;
• maintain the ability to update knowledge on socio?ecological dynamics;
• build long?term learning strategies for continued study of territorial processes.

Contents

The module explores the main theories and concepts of political ecology and the connections with ecological economics and environmental justice. It then delves into some of the fields of analysis of urban political ecology, presenting some empirical case studies.

Detailed program

Theoretical bases:
• Urbanization and territorial transformations in the age of the Anthropocene.
• Political ecology: history of the concept, main definitions and applications.
• Ecological economics: nature and languages of valuations.
• Environmental justice: distributive, procedural, epistemological, and recognitional justice.
• Environmental politics and governance: actors, power, resources, and rules.

Fields of application and case studies to be decided and analyzed along with the Environmental History Module.

Prerequisites

Basic notions of ecology.

Teaching form

• 2.5 CFUs of theoretical lessons in the classroom (25 hours).
• 0.5 CFU of lectures of joint activity with module of Global Environmental History (5 hours)
• 10 two-hour lectures
-> 5 two-hour lectures, in person, reading and discussing scientific articles in aula, Mixed Didattics / Seminar;

-> 5 two-hour lectures, jointly with the colleague of other module, in person, reading and discussing scientific articles in aula, Mixed Didattics / Seminar.

Textbook and teaching resource

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- Tom Perreault, Gavin Bridge, James McCarthy (Edited By), The Routledge Handbook of Political Ecology (selected chapters).
- Simon, G.L., & Kay, K. (Eds.). (2024). Doing Political Ecology (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003165477 (selected chapters).
- Walker, G., Environmnental Justice. Concepts, evidence and politics. Routledge. https://www.routledge.com/Environmental-Justice-Concepts-Evidence-and-Politics/Walker/p/book/9780415589741
- Notes shown during lectures and additional material on selected topics, i.e., scientific articles, made available on the e-learning website of the course.

Semester

I semester (October - January)

Assessment method

The final exam consists of a single oral exam at the end of the course, with a score between 18-30 / 30, which comprises the discussion of various topics covered in the course, with an emphasis also on the connections between concepts and processes, such as to arrive at a critical evaluation of work from the point of view of sustainability in chemistry as a whole.

Assessment will be based on the following criteria:
(1) knowledge and understanding;
(2) ability to connect different concepts;
(3) autonomy of analysis and judgment;
(4) ability to correctly use scientific language.

Office hours

Always, after scheduling an appointment *via* phone or e-mail.

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG

INSTITUTIONS