

Course syllabus for PhD course
Course part of the research school: People, Society and Sustainability
Department of Economics/Department of Urban and Rural Development

Environmental communication 1

Swedish title Miljökommunikation 1

Higher education credits

4.5 HEC

Subject

Environmental Communication

Possible Additional subject/subjects (optional)

Other social science

Course type

Subject course

Language

English

Prerequisites (Subject(s) could be specified, but not masters level)

Accepted as a PhD student

The course is open to all PhD students working in the social sciences, humanities and environmental sciences.

Objective (formulated as learning goals)

In this course, environmental communication is understood as the joint construction of meaning through social negotiation of knowledge, values, emotions and embodied experiences related to environmental and sustainability issues. It is the first part of a set of two courses: Course 1 (November-December 2023; 4.5 credits) explores the diversity of approaches within the field of environmental communication and situates environmental communication in relation to the wider environmental social sciences as well as to communication science. Course 2 (3 credits) builds on Part 1, engages with five key ideas in environmental communication and it includes a writing task (see separate syllabus).

The overarching aims of the course are to:

- (a) highlight diversity in environmental communication and related research and encourage critical reflection of the different approaches and perspectives
- (b) facilitate discussion between researchers engaging with different aspects of environmental communication in their work
- (c) support the participating PhD students in situating and contextualising their own research in the spaces of inquiry delineated by these different approaches, and to

reflect on their perspectives and contributions to academic and applied debates in environmental communication.

While the framing of the course refers to environmental communication, the exploration and critical discussion of the above-mentioned principles will also be of relevance to PhD candidates in related fields, such as environmental governance, rural development or landscape planning.

Upon completion of the course, the PhD students shall be able to:

- Situate their research in relation to the perspectives and debates on environmental communication covered in the course
- apply the concepts, theoretical standpoints and considerations covered in the course to their own and other scholars' research
- critically reflect on the contribution of their work to current academic debates in environmental communication and related research.

Content (Keep it general for future occasions)

The course will include 3 modules (6 weeks at 50%):

1. *Contextualising environmental communication: EC in environmental social sciences, EC in communication research*

PhD students will engage with key concepts and theories in environmental communication and situate these in wider debates and schools of thought within the environmental social sciences and communication research.

2. *Different perspectives on environmental communication*

PhD students will explore three different theoretical lenses on (environmental) communication: interaction, ideas and practices, and their relationships to another as well as conceptual, methodological and applied implications.

3. *Unpacking complexity in environmental communication*

PhD students will map empirical studies and conceptual approaches to environmental communication in terms of their different relationships to governance and the ways in which the environment is being treated. We will jointly develop our theoretical thinking to organise this complexity and reflect on the implications of different approaches.

The course includes lectures and discussions with SLU-based teachers as well as environmental communication scholars from other universities (such as the University of Colorado, US) as well as workshops, which teachers and participating PhD students will prepare together.

Throughout the course, participants will discuss implications of their perspectives for their choice of methods, and the question what might make environmental communication different from other types of communication (e.g., health or science communication) - and how the research field relates to the environmental social sciences more generally.

A reading list will accompany the different parts of the course, and the participants will use the list to prepare contributions to the sessions.

Examination

To successfully complete the course, the PhD students will:

- Engage in the reading assignments (e.g., in preparation of the lectures and discussion sections)
- Contribute a short talk (5-10 min) on a key concept in (environmental) communication (Part 1), selected from the concepts proposed on the reading list
- Co-plan one session together with one of the teachers and champion the literature related to that session (Parts 2 or 3)
- Contribute by reading and summarizing relevant literature to the mapping exercises conducted in Part 3 (to be examined through participation in the activities in Part 3).

If a student fails a test, the examiner may give the student a supplementary assignment, provided this is possible and there is reason to do so.

If a student has been granted targeted study support because of a disability, the examiner has the right to offer the student an adapted test or provide an alternative form of assessment.

If this course is discontinued, SLU will decide on transitional provisions for the examination of students admitted under this syllabus who have not yet been awarded a Pass grade.

Contact for application and further information (One person only)

Anke Fischer

Literature

Required reading will be assigned to students four weeks before the course starts.

Additional Information

This course is part of the research school People, Society and Sustainability, a joined research school between the Department of Economics and the Department of Urban and Rural Development.

Participating teachers:

- Lars Hallgren
- Klara Fischer
- Sara Holmgren
- Anke Fischer
- Malte Rödl
- Visiting teachers (Leah Sprain, Robert Craig)

Time table:

- Weeks 45-48 (November): Part 1 - Introductory session, reading assignments (self-study), 3 seminars by Viktoria Wibeck, Leah Sprain and Robert Craig,

workshop on key concepts and models, reflection session, preparation of co-teaching

- Week 49 (December): Part 2 – Three thematic sessions on communication as symbolic interaction, ideational perspectives in environmental communication, and environmental communication as a social practice – reading assignments and co-teaching
- Week 50 (December): Part 3 – Two thematic sessions unpacking complexities in the relationships between environmental communication and governance, and the role of the environment in environmental communication (research) – reading assignments and co-teaching