



FINAL ASSIGNMENT

"BECOMING A SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL ECONOMIST"

"SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS EXPLAINS HOW AND WHY THE MODERN MODE OF PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION IS SOCIALLY UNJUST AND ECOLOGICALLY UNSUSTAINABLE ... SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS IS THEN AN APPEAL TO RETURN TO THE ROOTS OF CONCERN FOR HOW SOCIETY IS STRUCTURED AND THE DIRECTION IT TAKES AS A RESULT" – CLIVE SPASH

Learning Outcomes

Related learning outcomes (depending on the scope of project), include the ability to:

- Describe and compare different ways to measure development, poverty and welfare;
- Describe and analyse the relation between economy and gender, class, politics, resources, trade, migration and legislation;
- Explain and evaluate historical and idea-historical perspectives on economic thinking and economic development;
- Critically analyse corporations' roles and social responsibility from a global sustainability perspective;
- Evaluate global power relations and apply a justice perspective on the sustainability challenge;
- Analyse the global economic system and its institutions, actors and trends from a perspective that spans different disciplines;
- From a multidisciplinary perspective compare and critically analyse the basic assumptions, explanatory models and proposed solutions of different economic theories in relation to the present sustainability challenge.

Social Ecological Economics

For an overview of social ecological economics please refer to previous lecture material, readings and the following book chapter by Clive Spash.

Spash, C. L. (2017) 'Social Ecological Economics', in *Routledge Handbook of Ecological Economics: Nature and Society*. Routledge, pp. 3–16.

Assignment Overview

Economists are important political informants. However, our current economic system has resulted in gross inequality and ecological crises. Economists of the future need to reconnect with social issues and realise the importance of operating within our planetary boundaries and ecological thresholds.

You have been selected as part of a group of new world economists that realise the importance of placing the economy within its biophysical limits, while recognising the need for the conduct of human society to respect others both present and future, human and non-human. Hence, your task is to help enrich others' understanding of the global economy by **offering a social ecological economist's account of a present-day case study of your choice**.

With this being said, it's important to familiarise yourself with social ecological economic theory and we **strongly recommend** that you review previous course material and additional sources before diving straight into your case study analysis. This will not only increase your understanding of the issue but enhance your ability to think outside the conventional economics' box. It will also become quite obvious when reading your final products.

You will select a case study from the list (see below) and work to **(1) prepare a 5-minute individual presentation** on the topic during the final mandatory seminar session and **(2) an individual written report** to be submitted approximately **four weeks after** this presentation. This also includes providing feedback for other students' draft assignments as part of a **peer-reviewed process** (see below).

Social-Ecological Economics in Practice

Below you find the list of topics with a few examples to guide you through the case-selection process. There is freedom to choose beyond these recommendations, though please inform us if you intend to do so. However, you must ensure that there is a clear link and analysis between your chosen topic and **at least one** of the courses subheadings: **environment**, **development** and/or **globalisation**. You must also refer to one of the related course books - Klein (Environment), Hickel (Globalisation) or Jackson (Development). Feel free to ask lecturers or course coordinators questions regarding your chosen topic.

Potential Topics

1. Economic Crises

Examples: 2008/09 Global Financial Crisis, Great Depression, market speculation, Wall Street.

2. Tragedy of the Commons

Examples: Fisheries, air pollution, deforestation, ocean dead zones.

3. Conflict

Examples: Arms trade, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, oil, market liberalisation, economic sanctioning: Iran, Venezuela.

4. Corporations

Examples: Money laundering, corruption, loop holes, tax evasion/havens, working conditions (including exploitation of works)

5. Trade and Neocolonialism

Examples: exploitation, free trade agreements, military interventions, predatory lending, World Trade Organisation (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, United Nations.

6. Gender and inequality

Examples: Gender pay gap, modern day slavery, education and empowerment of women, conditional aid (eg: blocking of contraceptives).

7. Migration

a. Examples: Economic/climate refugees, colonial legacies (eg: borders, trade, religion, etc).

Minimum requirements

Be sure that you choose a case study that is both **relevant and interesting** for an alternate economics discussion. Also keep in mind how this new view of the global economy could possibly **inform a more sustainable approach to economics in practice** (beginning to consider potential solutions). You may structure the presentation and report as you please. However, we **require that you address the following aspects of your chosen case study**:

- **Relevance of Case Study**
 - Discuss why your chosen case study is relevant to social-ecological economics.
- **A new view on stakeholders**
 - Explore who does your new theory pay attention to. Why are these actors important? What effect does it have on them? Does it consider who the winners and losers are? How?
- **A new view on the system**
 - What structures or processes does the social-ecological approach to the economy reveal that might otherwise go unseen? What forgotten assumptions does it highlight? What does it say about the possible incentives for different groups' or individuals' behaviour?
- **Consequences for the global economy**
 - What does this new view say about the sustainability of the global economy? Is there scope for reform within the system or is systemic change required? What kind of change is needed to solve your problem, from this perspective? What solution(s) would you recommend? How might these solutions be implemented?

You may include additional material but it is essential that these four aspects are included in both your presentation and written response.

Peer Review Process

Students must submit a draft bullet point essay plan to two class members by **Monday 6th January @ 9.00**. The recipients will then provide feedback in the form of written comments returned via email and oral feedback during the discussion after the presentation. **The review is expected to take at least one hour per submission**. The purpose of the peer-review is to give feedback that helps the author to improve their assignment before the final submission. Keep in mind that giving good feedback is a time-consuming process, as it includes reading the submitted work more than one time and reflecting on several questions as outlined beneath. However, good feedback does not only help the author, but also yourself, as you will need to critically reflect on good academic writing during future academic/professional work.

These questions can help you with that task:

- **Completeness.** Has the author followed the instructions and fulfilled the objectives as laid out by the assignment? This also includes the formal requirements, such as sufficient references, paper length, spacing, etc. Are any of the central and relevant views/perspectives/standpoints in the literature left out of the paper?
- **Clarity / Precision.** Is the paper comprehensible, well structured, easy to follow and written at a sufficiently high academic level?
- **Argumentation.** Is there a clear line of argumentation? Are the arguments relevant and presented in a concise and coherent way?
- **Academic.** Are arguments and proposals anchored in scientific and analytical sources?

A note on giving feedback: a very unfortunate tendency when giving feedback is to only focus on the aspects of a paper that can be improved. Remember that commenting on the strengths of a paper is equally useful to the writer (perhaps even more) in understanding which elements to keep and which to continue working on. Keep in mind, feedback should never be directed to the person writing it (ad hominem) but directed to the text. Furthermore, the author should not take feedback as a personal offence but see it as an opportunity to improve his or her skills!

Instructions

1. Oral Presentation (15 minutes each)

- 5 minutes: Individual oral presentation on one of the above topics
 - i. **Note:** This is an exercise in condensing information into an informative and easy to follow format.
- 10 minutes: Critical analysis discussion and reflection led by the remaining peer-review group members. There will also be a short time (~5 minutes) for the presenter to respond to questions.
- Be concise and aim to take multiple questions with multiple group members answering
- Presentations will take place on **Tuesday 17th December**
- **Grading Format:** Pass/Fail (dependent on submission and class participation)

2. Peer-Reviewed Feedback

- Submit presentation AND draft bullet point essay plan (½ to 1 page) to 2-3 class members for peer-review. **This should include what specific case study and theory you are using.**
- This is also a space for you to add any questions you may have concerning the presentation or final written assignment to be answered by your fellow classmates.
- Submit to 2-3 class members by **Monday 6th January @ 09:00.**
- Email feedback back by **Wednesday 8th January @ 17:00.**

3. Individual Written Report

- Word Count: 2000 words +/- 200 words
- Size: 12. Spacing: 1.5. Font: Times New Roman. Margins: 25mm
- Final Assignment Due Date: **Sunday 17th January 2020 @ 23:59**
- Assignment graded by external examiner
- The paper should follow the rules and meet standards of **academic writing**
- Grading criteria below
- The submission must be in **WORD** format.
- Name the file in the following way: `firstname.lastname.final` (example: `nick.fitzpatrick.final.doc`)
- Upload files to Studentportalen
- **Grading Format:** Graded (fail, 3, 4 or 5) and marked by an external examiner

References to course literature and other literature

1. You will have to refer to course literature when writing your article, even if you focus on problems and challenges not mentioned in the course. **Make reference to at least ONE course books AND SIX other academic references from the course readers.** You may of course reference the same book or article several times, but this will only count as one reference. Beyond this you are free to refer to lectures and other literature. Don't forget to include a bibliography.
2. Support your claims with reasons and evidence. Make sure to make it clear to the reader when you express

your own ideas and opinions, and reference your sources when you write about other people's opinions or ideas. Be aware to use only credible sources. The [Harvard College Writing Program](#) provides a useful overview on how to evaluate your sources.

○ **For example:**

- In text: (Steffen et al., 2015)
- Bibliography: Steffen, W., Richardson, K., Rockström, J., Cornell, S. E., Fetzer, I., Bennett, E. M., Biggs, R., Carpenter, S. R., de Vries, W., de Wit, C. A., Folke, C., Gerten, D., Heinke, J., Mace, G. M., Persson, L. M., Ramanathan, V., Reyers, B. and Sörlin, S. (2015). Planetary boundaries: Guiding human development on a changing planet. *Science*, 347(6223), 1259855.

Timeline/Deadlines

Tuesday 10th December @ 14.00-16.00: Open consultation hours for presentations (if field trip does not go ahead, otherwise organise alternate times, please email course coordinators to book time!)

Tuesday 17th December @ 13.00-17.00: Individual oral presentation

Monday 6th January @ 9.00: Email essay for peer-review feedback to 2 reviewers

Tuesday 7th January @ 14.00-16.00: Open consultation hours for final assignment (please email course coordinators to book time!)

Wednesday 8th January @ 17.00: Email peer reviewed feedback to 2 submitted assignments

Thursday 9th January @ 14.00-16.00: Open consultation hours for final assignment (please email course coordinators to book time!)

Sunday 19th January, 23.59pm: Upload the final copy of your assignment on Studentportalen

Syllabus, Course Goals and Assessment Criteria

This assessment conforms to the section in bold in the syllabus extract below.

The Global Economy - Environment, Development and Globalisation: Assessment – The student is examined through **written preparation for (4 credits)** and **active participation in seminars and workshops (3 credits)**, and **through written documentation (7 credits) and oral presentation (1 credit) of a project.**

The following grading criteria will be used for assessment. Note that the written assignment is graded and will determine your grade for the course. For attaining a higher grade than 3, the criteria should be met to a high degree or a very high degree. For attaining a pass/3 the criteria should be sufficiently met. The ability of the student to meet the assignment deadline is part of the assessment.

- **Analysis and discussion:** Coherent argumentation, with relevant arguments that are supported by the literature and/or other relevant sources. Relevant different perspectives and interpretations are analysed and discussed. The student shows capacity of independent analysis and critical reflection on referenced material. Most or all of the questions in the specific guidelines above are addressed.
- **Connection to theory and literature:** Sufficient connection to core/central theoretical frameworks.

There are relevant references to the literature and/or lectures or other relevant sources. Key perspectives and viewpoints are discussed.

- **Originality and creativity:** Expression of original connections between (and/or development of) different (scientific) perspectives and experiences. The student argues well for his/her opinions and choices.
- **Completeness, clarity and precision:** The language is clear and comprehensible. References and other formal aspects of the text are satisfactory and in accordance with the requirements of the assignment. The course goals that the assignment relates to are met. The student answers the question(s) fully.