

**Environment and Society**

Code: 102805  
ECTS Credits: 9

Degree	Type	Year	Semester
2501915 Environmental Sciences	FB	1	1

**Contact**

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**Use of languages**

Principal working language: catalan (cat)  
Some groups entirely in English: Yes  
Some groups entirely in Catalan: Yes  
Some groups entirely in Spanish: No

**Other comments on languages**

Llengua vehicular Grup 2

**Teachers**

Josep Gili Prat  
Josep Espluga Trenc  
Xavier Delclòs Alió  
Mario Padial Iglesias  
Guillem Sala Lorda  
Pau Avellaneda Garcia  
Elena Domene Gomez  
Joan Cristian Padró García

**Prerequisites**

Not established.

*(in the case of the English group: knowledge of english, level of "Cambridge First Certificate")*

**Objectives and Contextualisation**

This subject is taught by professors of the area of Social Sciences (Sociology and Geography).

The main goal is to provide an adequate knowledge of the main tools and concepts for the study of the relationship between environment and society that have been developed in Social Sciences.

Specifically, the following dimensions will be addressed:

a) History and recent evolution of environmental social movements. The main theoretical models will be introduced in order to explain the existing relationships between environment and society, with special insight in the analysis of the socio-environmental conflicts.

b) The main geographical and social dimensions of the global world, with an special attention to the globalization process, the development and the environmental impact that the human activity generates on the planet. Emphasis will be given to the aspects of the globalization related with the economy and in the debate on the dynamics of growth in the world economy and the environment limits.

c) Analysis of the main world demographic dynamics, specially the study of the population growth processes, now and in the near future. This growth has generated a strong debate on the capacity of the planet to absorb and sustain this population and the tensions that arise between population and resources.

d) The growth of the population has originated the need to feed a growing mass of people and the hunger situation persist despite the green revolution and the so-called 'new green revolution' based on transgenic crops. The intensification of the world rural production has an important impact on the planet's biodiversity and on the rise of the pollution levels and soil destruction.

e) Finally, attention will be given to the urban dynamics (cities) and the main environmental problems that are associated to the human concentrations derived from the population growth and land use consumption.

The theory classes will be combined with practices in GIS lab as well as with seminars, where the different concepts exposed in the theory classes will be addressed through hearings, video fragments and debates on diverse texts. It is in the scope of these classes to promote the student active participation in debates with the objective to gain reasoning capacity from a critical and informed perspective.

## **Skills**

- Adequately convey information verbally, written and graphic, including the use of new communication and information technologies.
- Analyze and use information critically.
- Collect, analyze and represent data and observations, both qualitative and quantitative, using secure adequate classroom, field and laboratory techniques
- Demonstrate adequate knowledge and use the tools and concepts of the most relevant social science environment.
- Demonstrate concern for quality and praxis.
- Demonstrate initiative and adapt to new situations and problems.
- Quickly apply the knowledge and skills in the various fields involved in environmental issues, providing innovative proposals.
- Teaming developing personal values regarding social skills and teamwork.
- Work autonomously

## **Learning outcomes**

1. Adequately convey information verbally, written and graphic, including the use of new communication and information technologies.
2. Analyze and use information critically.
3. Demonstrate concern for quality and praxis.
4. Demonstrate initiative and adapt to new situations and problems.
5. Describe the history and recent developments of the movements \* ambientalistas.
6. Describe the main geographical and sociological dimensions of the global world.
7. Distinguish major global industry dynamics.
8. Distinguish the major world agricultural dynamics.
9. Identify the areas where you have to apply sociological processes in the environmental surroundings and to value properly and originally.
10. Identify the main characteristics of the urban environment.
11. Identify the major global demographic dynamics.

12. Observe, recognize, analyze, measure and properly and safely represent geographic and sociological processes.
13. Teaming developing personal values regarding social skills and teamwork.
14. Work autonomously

## **Content**

### **1 Relationships between environment and society**

Nature and culture. Between the geographical determinism and the biological reductionism.

Environment and social theories. Main tendencies.

Discussion about realism and constructivism in the definition of environmental problems.

The theories of the 'risk society' in the age of globalization.

### **2 The social perception of environmental risks**

Definition of environmental risk.

Science and policy roles in the definition of environmental risks.

Discussion on the acceptable risk and studies on social perception of risk.

Information and communication of environmental risks.

### **3 Social responses to environmental risks**

Social movements: conservationism and environmentalism in political ecology.

Socio-environmental conflicts and citizen participation.

Sustainability and public policies.

The debate about the precautionary principle.

### **4 Globalization and inequality**

World system theory.

Globalization: main features.

Conceptualization and measurement of global inequality: GDP and HDI

### **5 Development**

Definition and discussion of the concept.

Rostow theory of modernization and alternative proposals.

External debt and ecological debt.

Environmental criticism and the proposal of degrowth.

### **6 World population**

Demographic transition and demographic explosion.

World population structure. The contrasts between countries: growth, mortality and fertility.

The debate resources / population.

## **7 Agriculture and food**

Agrarian systems

World food production and trade

Hunger and Green Revolution

Biotechnology and the New Green Revolution

Alternatives to the current agro-food system

## **8 Cities**

The Urbanization of the world population

Socioenvironmental challenges of urbanization and global change

## **Methodology**

### **1. Theoretical classes**

The faculty will make an exposition of the main concepts and theoretical proposals in each study unit. Specific cases will be explained that exemplify the studied concepts. The intention is to promote debate and discussion on the treated topics.

### **2. Seminars**

Sociology (first part of the course)

Seminars will consist of the discussion, exposition and debate of a series of readings selected on environmental issues, and the proposal of different activities. At the beginning of the course the professor will provide these readings and the calendar of expositions and debates.

Group discussions will be done and each student will make a brief reflection on some of these readings (specific instructions will be provided at the beginning of the school year).

Geography (second part of the course)

Seminars will be based on:

- a) conferences on relevant environmental issues,
- b) exhibition of videos to be debated at class,
- c) discussion about mandatory readings. All the readings deal with aspects related to the list of topics and the main concepts worked at theory classes. The student will prepare a brief report of the information contained by the book based on a script that will be previously given.

The report will contain three questions to debate with the class. The reports will have to be prepared in groups of 2-3 students.

With such activities the students will consolidate what's been learned in the theory classes and work group dynamics will be promoted through a reading exercise, the information selection and discussion.

### **3. Practices (Laboratory and fieldtrip)**

During the first part of the course (sociology), it is previewed a fieldtrip to visit a place and analyze a social-environmental conflict. Through the data collected in the trip it will be made a study on the actors, resources, evolution and real reasons of the conflict.

During the second part of the course (geography) practices will be done in the GIS lab. In the case of the lab practices belonging to the geography/territory area the cartographic representation of the social, physical and environmental phenomena will be studied, as well as to introduce the student in the handling and the possibility of the representation of the information through the informatics based on a series of practices in the specific programs ArcGis and MiraMon.

#### 4. Tutorials

The process of learning and the acquisition of competences will be overviewed by the professor through individual and / or group tutorials. The faculty of the subject will be at the disposition of the students to resolve the doubts and to follow-up the evolution of the said learning process of the students.

#### 5. Campus Virtual (Moodle)

Most of the graphic information used by the professor in the theory classes and seminars, as well as the different materials made by the students will be available in the Virtual Campus. The Campus will also be communication tool between professors and students.

### Activities

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning outcomes
<b>Type: Directed</b>			
Fieldtrip	5	0.2	2, 9, 12
Lab	10	0.4	4, 3, 6, 8, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 1, 14, 13
Seminars	20	0.8	2, 4, 3, 6, 8, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 1, 14, 13
Theoretical lectures	40	1.6	2, 4, 3, 5, 6, 8, 7, 9, 10, 11, 14, 13
<b>Type: Supervised</b>			
Tutorials	16	0.64	4, 3, 6, 8, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14
<b>Type: Autonomous</b>			
Lab activities	26	1.04	4, 3, 6, 8, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 13
Problems	52	2.08	4, 3, 6, 8, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 13
Report (seminars)	26	1.04	2, 4, 3, 6, 8, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 13
Study	21	0.84	4, 3, 6, 8, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 13

### Evaluation

Evaluation will consist of:

a) Theory lectures. 50% of the total grade:  
- 2 partial written exams including concepts treated in the theory classes and seminars and lab practices: 20% first partial (6th November 2018) and 15% second partial (22nd January 2019).  
- 1 exercise per topic in Geography (Topics 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8) in the classroom and in class time. Each exercise will represent a 3% of the total grade (15% in total).

b) Seminars (40% of the total score: 15% social issues, 25% geography issues). Active participation in sessions will be valued and quality of the reports on the lectures and exercises. Regular assistance will be valued.

c) Laboratory (10% of the total note: 5% social topics, 5% geography topics). Active participation and regular assistance at each session of the laboratory will be valued. It is considered that a student will obtain the 'non-appraising qualification' when he/she has not provided a set of activities equivalent to a minimum of two thirds of the total score. It is also considered that a student will obtain the 'non-appraising qualification' when even approving the continued evaluation does NOT present to the two partial exams.

It is necessary to obtain a minimum of 5 points in the average of the theory part, in the seminars and in the lab practices in order to pass the course.

On the theory part, students that have not passed some of the partial exams and/or do not obtain a minimum of 5 in the average of the exercises will have to retake the exam

In order to retake the exam the student needs to be previously evaluated in the set of activities, the importance of which is equivalent to at least two thirds of the total grade.

## Evaluation activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning outcomes
Exams	35 %	4	0.16	5, 6, 8, 7, 9, 10, 11
Exercises (theory)	15 %	5	0.2	2, 8, 7, 10, 11, 1
Lab	10	0	0	2, 4, 3, 14, 13
Seminars	40	0	0	12, 1

## Bibliography

At the beginning of the course, English bibliography will be given