NRU-HSE, National Research University - Higher School of Economics, Moscow
Department of Sociology

Master Programme “Complex Social Analysis”
Course “Environmental Sociology (Social Ecology)”, 2016/2017
Course, 8 Credits

Title of the course:
Environmental sociology - human use of natural resources and environmental consequences
Time: January-March 2017

Author of the course plan and teacher:
Karl Bruckmeier
kbrukm@hse.ru

Language: English (examination essay can be written in English or Russian)

Course plan

1. Aims of the course

The course provides basic knowledge (part 1) and in-depth knowledge (part 2) about environmental problems in modern societies and the human use of natural resources (renewable and non-renewable resources). The perspective is interdisciplinary with environmental sociology as basic subject area. Knowledge from different disciplines is used to analyse and assess environmental and resource use problems (potential exhaustion of fossil resources, degradation of the global environment, availability of certain natural resources). The analysis of exemplary problems of human resource use and their environmental consequences (intended and non-intended) aims to understand the challenges of resource management, the relevance of natural resources for the further development of economy and society, and potential solutions to environmental problems.

After having finished the course students shall be able
(a) to understand the environmental problems in modern societies in the contexts of social, political and economic action;
(b) to understand the main problems with availability, use, management, recycling of natural resources;
(c) to analyze the problems of natural resource use in concrete local, regional or national contexts of economy and relevant policies;
(d) to argue individually and critically (orally and in written form) about main environmental problems in modern society (in the epoch of “the anthropocene”).

2. Course program (themes)

The course includes lectures, discussions and workshops (student presentations of course literature) and requires from the students individual reading of the course literature, group work for the workshop sessions, and an individual examination essay.

Part 1: Introduction – development of environmental sociology

Theme 1. Environmental sociology – overview: history/development, themes and methods
Origins/history - a new subdiscipline of sociology (since the 1970s in USA, UK, France, Germany): themes – environmental problems, environmental awareness, natural resources and resource use practices
Basic concepts, approaches and methods – knowledge generation

Theme 2. Main perspectives and authors
- William Catton and Riley Dunlap - the HEP/NEP-paradigms
- A. Mol and G. Spaargaren - ecological modernization and environmental movements
- Ulrich Beck - risk society
- Oleg Yanitzky - environmental movements in Russia
- John Hannigan et al - Social construction of nature (social constructivism)
- Immanuel Wallerstein and James Rice - World System Theory and ecologically unequal exchange

Theme 3. Neighbouring fields and overlapping discourses
Environmental sociology as part of a broader field of interdisciplinary environmental social sciences:
- Human, cultural and social ecology
- Natural resource management
- Environmental and Ecological Economics
- Environmental history
Part 2: Deepening – Problems and themes of environmental research

Theme 4. Environmental sociology – thematic perspectives
- Environmental awareness, value changes (“postmaterial values”) and changes of lifestyles, environmental movements (industrial countries, Southern countries – ecofeminism, environmentalism of the poor)
- Technological change and system change (ecological modernization, ”greening of the economy”, “dematerialization”)
- Poverty, population growth and development (Malthusian questions)
- Quantifying and measuring natural resource use and its impacts (social and environmental impact analysis; indicators for human resource use; risk, vulnerability and resilience)

Theme 5: Environmental sociology - problems and risks
- Problems of natural resource use in the history of human societies (scarcity, overuse, distribution)
- The emergence of environmental problems/risks in industrial/modern societies (industrial pollution of the environment, agricultural pollution of the environment, lifestyles and private consumption/households)
- Economic globalization and global environmental change: biodiversity reduction, climate change, land use change
- Ecological distribution conflicts and unequal exchange – industrialized countries and “the global South”

Theme 6. Global change – problems and solutions
- Social-ecological Systems/SES – Integration of World System, and Earth System
- Global environmental governance
- Sustainable development and the future global society – scenarios

The course program is specified in a detailed session/work plan for every year when the course is given (including an updating of the course literature and the themes)

3. Literature for the course

The literature used in the lectures, discussions and workshops includes English texts from environmental sociology, social ecology and neighboring disciplines. The literature will be handed out to the participants in form of electronic or paper copies.
4. Evaluation

The course is evaluated in the last session, in oral form (discussion in the class) and in written form (participants answer a questionnaire, anonymous answers).

The evaluation is made public by the teacher who suggests possible changes for the subsequent course.

5. Examination

The examination includes three parts, all required to pass the course. The first part is obligatory participation in all lectures and discussions of the course, including active participation in the discussions. The second part is a group work (presentation and discussion of texts from the course literature in a workshop session, done in small working groups). The third part is individual homework in form of an examination essay written at the end the course (essays can be written in English or Russian).

Session plan and course literature for academic year 2016/2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Sessions, themes and texts for reading</th>
<th>Time, room</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 1:</td>
<td>Environmental sociology – history and development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 11, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction:</strong></td>
<td>course themes, discussion and questions – literature, work, examination</td>
<td>15.10h-17.00h</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lecture 1:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Environmental sociology - origins/history of the subdiscipline:</strong> <em>research themes</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- multiple origins; North America and Europe</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- nature and society: interaction and change (human ecology)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- environmental awareness and action/resource use</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Session 2</td>
<td>Time</td>
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| Wednesday January 18, 2017 | **Lecture 2:** Environmental sociology, approaches and methods: research and knowledge generation  
- basic concepts and perspectives: Catton and Dunlap  
- theories  
- research methods  
- epistemological approaches: constructivism, realism | 15.10h-17.00h |
|                         | **Discussion 2:** texts 10 (11, 12)                        |            |
| Wednesday January 25, 2017 | **Session 3**                                              | 15.10h-17.00h |
|                         | **Lecture 3:** Perspectives and authors  
- environmental reform and ecological modernization: Buttel, Mol, Spaargaren  
- risk society and reflexive modernity: Beck, Giddens  
- treadmill of production: Schnaiberg, Foster  
- critical environmental sociology: York, Rosa, Rice |            |
|                         | **Discussion 3:** texts 6 (9, 24)                          |            |
| Wednesday February 1, 2017 | **Session 4**                                              | 15.10h-17.00h |
|                         | **Lecture 4:** Perspectives and authors  
- European environmental sociology  
- Environmental sociology in Russia: Yanitsky |            |
<p>|                         | <strong>Discussion 4:</strong> text 2                                   |            |
| Wednesday February 8, 2017 | <strong>Session 5</strong>                                              | 15.10h-17.00h |
|                         | <strong>Lecture 5:</strong> Neighbour disciplines and overlapping discourses: interaction society/nature |            |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Discussion / Training session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday February 15, 2017</td>
<td>Session 6</td>
<td>Lecture 6: Neighbour disciplines and overlapping discourses: cultural, social, economic and environmental changes</td>
<td>Discussion 6: texts 21 (7, 22)</td>
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<td>Wednesday February 22, 2017</td>
<td>Session 7</td>
<td>Introduction part 2:</td>
<td>Lecture 7: Environmental sociology – themes: sociological fields of research</td>
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<td>- Themes</td>
<td>- environmental awareness, value changes</td>
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<td>- Oral presentations in workshops</td>
<td>- life-styles and private consumption (households)</td>
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<td>- Basic academic writing: the examination essay</td>
<td>- environmental movements (Northern and Southern countries)</td>
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<td>- technological change and system transformation</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(ecological modernization),</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>”greening of the economy”, “dematerialization”, “degrowth”)</td>
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<td>Training session:</td>
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<td>Basic academic writing (abstracts, research questions and essay plan)</td>
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<td>Wednesday March 1, 2017</td>
<td>Session 8</td>
<td>Lecture 8 (15.10-16.10h): Environmental sociology – themes: interdisciplinary</td>
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</table>
**themes**
quantifying and measuring natural resource use and its impacts (social and environmental impact analysis; indicators for natural resource use (risk, vulnerability, resilience, sustainability); poverty, population growth and development (Malthusian questions)

**Workshop 1:** student presentation – working group (text 34)

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<tr>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Session 9</th>
<th>15.10h-17.00h</th>
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<tr>
<td>March 8, 2017</td>
<td>Lecture 9: Environmental sociology - problems and risks historical and modern societies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- problems of natural resource use in historical societies (scarcity, overuse, distribution)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- environmental problems in industrial/ modern societies: industrial and agricultural damages to the environment (pollution, deforestation, desertification)</td>
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<td><strong>Workshop 2:</strong> student presentation – working group (text 24)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Session 10</th>
<th>15.10h-17.00h</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- global economic and environmental change: biodiversity reduction, climate change, land use change;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- ecological distribution conflicts and unequal exchange - industrialized countries and “the global South”</td>
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<td><strong>Workshop 3:</strong> student presentation – working group (text 23)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Session 11</th>
<th>15.10h-17.00h</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- global governance and integration of world system</td>
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and earth system (social-ecological systems)  
- energy systems and renewable energy sources  
- sustainable development and the future global society, scenarios

**Workshop 4, 5:** student presentation – working group  
(text 26, 12)

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session/Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
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| Wednesday March 29, 2016      | **Session 12**  
**Lecture 12:**  
The future of environmental sociology  
- interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity  
- sociology and practice  
- international trends and developments  
**Final discussion** of the course, evaluation  
**Delivery of examination essays**                  | 15.10-17-00h   |
| Wednesday March 8 – March 29, 2017 | Writing of the individual examination essay (3 weeks)                      | -             |

**Literature for the course**

The literature is available in electronic copies for the participants before the course starts.

**Literature/texts for the lectures, discussions and workshops**

(a) **Books (only selected chapters to read):**


(b) **Articles:**


Additional literature (non-obligatory)


