

**Master in Political Ecology**  
**Academic year: 2018-2019**

## **COMMONS AND FEMINISM**

### **Instructors**

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### **Objectives**

In this module we will introduce basic ideas from the commons, social movements, feminism, and care scholarships. You will be familiarized with core concepts and arguments that belong to three different approaches to the commons, i.e. institutional analysis “à la Ostrom”, political ecology school and the digital studies. You will get a taste of current debates concerning commons in the social sciences, a feminist gaze of the commons and the technology-led digital commoning. By the end of this course, you should be able to understand the basic controversies and explain the core ideas behind these three strains of the commons. You will be able to debate their commonalities and divergences, and discuss them through a feminist lens.

### **Structure**

The module is formed of four courses of ten hours each: five sessions of two-hour classes. Each class will involve a mix of teaching, discussion and group work. To

participate in class, you should have read the assignments carefully in advance. Without this preparation, you will not be able to follow the class, and what you will get out of it will be limited. Instructors will assume that students have done the readings, and may ask relevant questions during the class.

All articles and reading material for the class are uploaded in a special Dropbox folder ([link: xxx](#)) and will stay there up to three months after the end of the class, after which it will be deleted. You don't need to buy books, go to the library or download anything.

## **Assignments and Exam**

### **1. Working and presenting in group**

For the class 10<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> you will be asked to prepare a presentation in a group of 3-4 students. Each group will select a topic that fits among the following themes: commons and social movements for the presentation during the class 10<sup>th</sup>; commons, feminist political ecology for the class 15<sup>th</sup>; commoning in digital environment and peer-to-peer production for the class 20<sup>th</sup>. The coordinator of the module (D'Alisa G. and the respective instructor responsible for each theme (Varvarousis A. for commons and social movement, Barca S. for feminist political ecology, Kostakis V. for P2P and digital commons) will attend to the presentation and decide a grade on the quality and content of the presentation as well as the different contribution of each student to the collective work. The objectives of the assignments are to train you also to read, think and present collaboratively. The three presentation sum up the 50% of the final mark.

### **2. Wikipedia entry**

For the remaining 50% of the mark, students in groups of 2-3 will write a new entry in Wikipedia. The topic of the entry has to be related with theories and practices of the commons, social movement, care, feminisms and peer-to-peer production. Each group will send the link of the new Wikipedia entry to the instructors that will decide the final grade based on the quality and content of the entry. The grade will be to the collective and each student accordingly. The teaching team will collectively assess the wikipedia entry.

## **PROGRAM OUTLINE**

### **PART 1. Commons and Care**

#### **1. Introduction the Institutional Approach to the commons (Giacomo D'Alisa)**

*Chapter 1 and 2 – Ostrom, Elinor. 1990. Governing the Commons : The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.*

## **2. Introduction to the Political Ecology of the Commons (Giacomo D'Alisa)**

Chapter 2, 3, 10, 11 and 17 – De Angelis, Massimo. 2007. *The Beginning of History: Value Struggles and global Capital*. Pluto Press

## **3. Introduction to the Digital Commons (Giacomo D'Alisa)**

Chapter 1 – Benkler, Yochai. 2006. *The wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom*. Yale University Press

## **4. Commons and Degrowth (Giacomo D'Alisa)**

*Commons* – Helfrich, Silke and Bollier, David. in In D'Alisa, G. Demaria, F. and G. Kallis (eds), *Degrowth: A Vocabulary for a New Era*. Routledge: Earthscan.

*Digital Commons* – Fuster, Mayo. in In D'Alisa, G. Demaria, F. and G. Kallis (eds) 2004. *Degrowth. A Vocabulary for a New Era*. Routledge: Earthscan.

*Carework as Commons: Towards a Feminist Degrowth Agenda*. Akbulut, Bengi. Blog entry. Available at [Degrowth media Library](#)

## **5. Caring for degrowth (Giacomo D'Alisa)**

*Care* - D'Alisa G., Deriu M. and Demaria F, 2014. In D'Alisa, G. Demaria, F. and G. Kallis (eds), *Degrowth. A Vocabulary for a New Era*. Routledge: Earthscan.

*Counter planning from the kitchen* - Federici S. and Cox N. 1975. In Federici S. (2012) *Revolution at Point Zero. Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle*. PM Press.

*Household work and energy consumption: a degrowth perspective* - D'Alisa G, Cattaneo C (2013) *Journal of Cleaner Prod* 38:71–79.

## **PART 2. Commons and social movements**

## **6. From Commons to Commoning (Angelos Varvarousis)**

On the Commons: A Public Interview with Massimo De Angelis and Stavros Stavrides. Available at: <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/17/67351/on-the-commons-a-public-interview-with-massimo-de-angelis-and-stavros-stavrides/>

Stavrides, S., 2016. *Commons space*. London: Zed Books (*Introduction*)

## **7. The Openness versus Closure debate (Angelos Varvarousis)**

Harvey, D. (2012) *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. London: Verso (Section 1, Chapter 3)

Simmel, G. (1994). Bridge and door. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 11(1), 5-10.

Stavrides, S. (2015). Common space as threshold space: Urban commoning in struggles to re-appropriate public space. *Footprint*, 9-19.

Hardt, M., Negri, A. (2009) *Commonwealth*. Boston: Harvard University Press (Of Love possessed)

### **8. Commons and Social Movements (Angelos Varvarousis)**

De Angelis, M. (2017) *Omnia Sunt Communia. On the Commons and the Transformation to Postcapitalism*. London: Zed Books (Chapter 10)

Varvarousis, A., Asara, V., Akbulut, B., (Forthcoming) Commons: the Social Outcomes of the movement of the squares. Paper accepted for publication in *Social Movement Studies*

### **9. Commons and Societal Transformation (Angelos Varvarousis)**

Hardt, M., Negri, A., Harvey, D. (2009) Commonwealth: an exchange. *Artforum* 48: 3: 210-221

De Angelis, M. (2017) *Omnia Sunt Communia. On the Commons and the Transformation to Postcapitalism*. London: Zed Books (Chapter 9)

### **10. Students' presentations - Commons and Social movements**

## **PART 3. Feminist Political Ecology**

### **11. – Production / reproduction / ecology: fundamentals of ecofeminist political economy (Stefania Barca)**

Mellor, Mary (2017). "Ecofeminist political economy. A green and feminist agenda", in *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment*

Biesecker Adelheid and Sabine Hofmeister (2010). "Focus: (Re)productivity. Sustainable relations both between society and nature and between the genders." *Ecological Economics*, 69: 1703-11

Bauhardt, Christine (2014). "Solutions to the crisis? The Green New Deal, Degrowth, and the Solidarity Economy: Alternatives to the capitalist growth economy from an ecofeminist economics perspective." *Ecological Economics* 102: 60-68

### **12. Global environmental justice: an ecofeminist perspective (Stefania Barca)**

Isla, Ana (2017). "Whose debt for whose nature? gender and nature in neoliberalism's war against subsistence", in *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment*

Di Chiro, Giovanna (2017). "Welcome to the White (M)Anthropocene? A feminist-environmentalist critique", in *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment*

### **13. Care and commoning as (gendered) labour (Stefania Barca)**

Salleh, Ariel (2010). 'From metabolic rift to metabolic value', *Organization & Environment*, 23: 205-19

Singh, Neera (2013). 'The affective labor of growing forests and the becoming of environmental subjects: Rethinking environmentality in Odisha, India.' *Geoforum* 47:189-98

Littig, Beate (2017). "Good green jobs for whom? a feminist critique of the green economy", in *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment*

### **14 Students' presentations - Caring and feminist political ecology**

## **PART 4. Peer-to-Peer: Capitalism, Commons and Future Scenarios**

### **15. The political ecology of technology (Vasilis Kostakis)**

Stallman, R. (2014). Why Software Should Not Have Owners. Retrieved from: <https://www.gnu.org/philosophy/why-free.en.html>

The P2P Value Project. (2016). Promoting the Tech Commons. Retrieved from: <https://vimeo.com/174899444>

### **16 The rise of the digital commons (Vasilis Kostakis)**

Kostakis, V., and Drechsler, W. (2018). Utopia is Now. *Aeon*. Retrieved from: <https://aeon.co/essays/why-the-utopian-vision-of-william-morris-is-now-within-reach>

Kostakis, V., and Roos, A. (2018). New Technologies Won't Reduce Scarcity But Here's Something That Might. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from: <https://hbr.org/2018/06/new-technologies-wont-reduce-scarcity-but-heres-something-that-might>

### **17. The rise of cosmopolitanism (Vasilis Kostakis)**

Bauwens, M., Kagel, E., and Dönnebrink, T. (2017). Michel Bauwens on the Commons & on Systemic, Organisational, Personal Transformation. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GVgZczNFcpE>

**18. Students' presentations "What lies ahead?"**