

Master in Political Ecology
Academic year: 2018-2019

DEGROWTH ECONOMICS

Instructors

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<https://degrowth.org/2015/07/17/salvador-pueyo/>

Objectives

In this course we will introduce basic ideas from mainstream and heterodox economics and link them to degrowth theory. This course will familiarize you with core economic concepts and arguments used by degrowth researchers and practitioners, and give you a taste of current debates concerning growth in economics. By the end of this course you should be able to understand the basic controversies, explain the core ideas behind alternative economic proposals and feel comfortable to debate degrowth with a mainstream economist.

Structure

The course has ten, two-hour classes. Each class will involve a mixing of teaching, discussion and group work. To participate in class, you should have read the readings 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 related 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.

Homework

Before the 3rd, 6th and 9th class, you will be asked to hand in an assignment where you will respond to two questions, 250 words each, covering the material of classes 1-3, 4-6, and 7-9 respectively. You should hand in the assignment to us at the beginning of each class. The assignment will be returned in the next class with comments. The exam

will follow a similar style with the homework, so the assignments will serve as preparation. The objectives of the assignments are to train you also to read, think and write concisely.

Evaluation

This will be held in joint with the Political Ecology class. The material under examination will consist of all the articles read and discussed during the semester in the Political Ecology and Degrowth Economics classes. The style of the questions will be similar to those handed in the weekly homework, i.e. short questions, which you will have 250 words to answer. The exam will be “take-home”, and you will be expected to use whatever resources you wish to answer the questions. It will be sent by email to all of you at 9 a.m the day of the exam and should be handed in by email by 6 p.m. the same day. The exams will be graded anonymously.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

1. Introduction to Degrowth Economics (Giorgos Kallis)

Chapter 2 in Kallis, G. 2018. Degrowth. Agenda Publishing Ltd., Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, in press.

Kallis, G. 2017. The economics of degrowth. In Castells, M. et al. Another Economy is Possible. Cambridge, Polity Press.

2. The invention of the economy (Giorgos Kallis)

Polanyi, K. 1957. The Economy as an Instituted Process. In Trade and Market in the Early Empires: Economies in History and Theory, K. Polanyi, C. M. Arensberg, & H. W. Pearson (eds), 243–269. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Mitchell, T., 2014. Economentality: how the future entered government. Critical Inquiry, 40(4), pp.479-507.

3. Thermodynamics, ecology and economics (Salvador Pueyo)

Georgescu-Roegen, N. 1973. The entropy law and the economic problem. Pp. 37-49 in: Daly, H.E. (ed.), Toward a Steady-State Economy. W.H. Freeman and co., San Francisc.

Sec. 6.4 ('Is degrowth possible?') in: Pueyo, S. 2014. Ecological econophysics for degrowth. Sustainability 6:3431-3483.

4. Neoliberal economics and its faults (Salvador Pueyo)

Mirowski, P. 2009. The neo-liberal thought collective. Renewal 17:26-36.

Muradian, R., Martinez-Alier, J. 2001. Trade and the environment: from a "Southern" perspective. *Ecological Economics* 36:281-297.

5. Growth theories and macroeconomics without growth (Salvador Pueyo)

Sec. 2.1. ('Neoclassical growth theories') in: Lange S., Pütz, P., Kopp, T. 2018. Do mature economies grow exponentially? *Ecological Economics* 147:123–133.

Sec. 'The present global trend: growth', pp. 288-298 in: Randers, J., Meadows, D. 1973. The carrying capacity of our global environment: A look at the ethical alternatives. Pp. 283-306 in: Daly, H.E. (ed.), *Toward a Steady-State Economy*. W.H. Freeman and co., San Francisco.

Sec. 2 ('Ecological macroeconomics') in: Hardt, L., O'Neill, D.W. 2017. Ecological macroeconomic models: Assessing current developments. *Ecological Economics* 134:198–211

Dafermos, Y., Galanis, G., Nikolaidi, M. 2015. A new ecological macroeconomic model. New Economics Foundation, London.
http://b.3cdn.net/nefoundation/08ec800b159197d7a3_qlm6i2e5v.pdf

6. Marxian political economy (Giorgos Kallis)

Chapters 2 and 3, Kay, G. 1979. *The economic theory of the working class*. Mc Millan Press.

Chapter 2, 'Capital assembled' in Harvey, D. 2010. *The enigma of capital*. Oxford University Press.

7. Theories of value (Giorgos Kallis)

Sections on 'values, value and money' (chapter 2) and 'can value grow without growth in throughput' (chapter 6) in Kallis, G. 2018. *Degrowth*. Agenda Publishing Ltd., Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, in press.

Kallis, G., Gómez-Baggethun, E. and Zografos, C., 2013. To value or not to value? That is not the question. *Ecological economics*, 94: 97-105

8. Grassroots and solidarity economics (Salvador Pueyo)

Section 'Grassroots actions' (chapter 5) in: Kallis, G. 2018. *Degrowth*. Agenda Publishing Ltd., Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, in press.

Chapt. 20 ("Policy directions") in: Dow, G. K. 2018. *The Labor-Managed Firm. Theoretical Foundations*. Cambridge Univ. Press.

Cattaneo, C., Gavaldà, M. 2010. The experience of rural squats in Collserola, Barcelona: what kind of degrowth? *Journal of Cleaner Production* 18:581-589.

9. Economic policy for degrowth (Giorgos Kallis)

Section 'Policies and Action' (chapter 5) in: Kallis, G. 2018. *Degrowth*. Agenda Publishing Ltd., Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, in press.

O'Neill, D. 2017. A progressive economy.

<https://peg.primeeconomics.org/policybriefs/a-sustainable-economy>

10. Debating degrowth with a mainstream economist

This section will involve a playful debate involving instructors and students, simulating debates between mainstream and degrowth economists. To prepare for the positions of mainstream economists, the students should read the following:

Solow, R.M., 1973. Is the End of the World at Hand?. *Challenge*, 16(1), pp.39-50.

Ecologically Sustainable Growth Is Possible: An Interview With Economist Robin Hahnel. <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/36723-ecologically-sustainable-growth-is-possible-an-interview-with-robin-hahnel>

The Enduring Elixir of Economic Growth. Xavier Sala-i-Martin on the wealth and poverty of nations.

http://www.columbia.edu/~xs23/papers/WEC_00220_00701_Snowdon.pdf