

Master in Political Ecology
Academic year: 2019-2020

DEGROWTH ECONOMICS

Room: Aula 1, Escola de Postgrau

Instructors:

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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 one 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 shared folder (<https://cloud.degrowth.net/s/tqnCRgHMf77wmfy>) 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.

Evaluation

Your grade will be derived by a final project for which you should work in a group of 3. The project will focus on a specific degrowth-oriented policy in a national or regional or urban context that you will define (e.g. reducing working hours in Spain, or a New Green Deal without growth for the city of Barcelona). You should write a 15 page report - 5 pages each. The report should follow the standards and style of the reports of the New Economics Foundation (<https://neweconomics.org/search/publications>). At the end of the report you should identify who did what in the project and who wrote which part.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

Part I (Giorgos Kallis)

Class 1 – Introduction to Degrowth Economics

5/12

Kallis, G. 2017. Economics without growth. In Castells, M. et al. Another Economy is Possible. Cambridge, Polity Press.

Class 2 – The invention of the economy

12/12

Sections on ‘the invention of the economy’ (chapter 2) in Kallis, G. 2018. Degrowth. Agenda Publishing Ltd., Newcastle upon Tyne, UK.

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

Class 3 – Marxian political economy

19/12

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.

Class 4 – Diverse economies and feminist economics

7/1

Gibson-Graham, J.K., 2005. Surplus possibilities: postdevelopment and community economies. Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography, 26(1), pp.4-26.

Federici S. (2012), Revolution at point zero: Household, reproduction and the feminist struggle, p. 15-40

Class 5 – Economic policy for degrowth

14/1

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

O’Neill, D. 2017. A progressive economy. <https://peg.primeeconomics.org/policybriefs/a-sustainable-economy>

Part II (Salvador Pueyo)

Class 6 – Neoclassical economics and neoliberalism

21/1

Boerger, L., Exploring Economics Team 2016. Neoclassical Economics. Network for Pluralist Economics.

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

Class 7 – Thermodynamics and ecological economics

28/1

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 Francisco.

Class 8 – Ecological macroeconomics and degrowth

4/2

Chapt. 1 (“Introduction”, pp. 17-22) in: D’Alessandro, S., Dittmer, K., Distefano, T., Cieplinski, A. 2018. *EUROGREEN Model of Job Creation in a Post-Growth Economy*. The Greens | EFA.

Pueyo, S. 2015. Introduction to ecological econophysics for degrowth. Proceedings, 11th International Conference of the European Society for Ecological Economics.

Class 9 – Growth imperatives

6/2

Richters, O., Siemoneit, A. 2019. Growth imperatives: Substantiating a contested concept. *Structural Change and Economic Dynamics* 51: 126–137.

Class 10 – Grassroots and solidarity economies

13/2

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

Pages 65-66 and 78-79 (+ 2 lines of p. 80) in: Dow, G.K. 2018. The theory of the labor-managed firm: Past, present, and future. *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics* 89: 65-86.

Section 'Qualitative description' (pp. 584-586) in: Cattaneo, C., Gavaldà, M. 2010. The experience of rural squats in Collserola, Barcelona: what kind of degrowth? *Journal of Cleaner Production* 18: 581-589.