**Master in Political Ecology**

**Academic year: 2020-2021**

**DEGROWTH ECONOMICS**

**Room:** ?

**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, if conditions permit. 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 (LINK) 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 4-6 people. The project will focus on a specific degrowth-oriented policy in a national or regional or urban context. It should follow the standards and style of the reports of the New Economics Foundation (<https://neweconomics.org/search/publications>). You should each write a separate chapter of the report, not longer than 3 pages each, and not less than 2 pages (A4, font 12). You can decide yourselves how to divide the chapters, but possible chapters include: an argument in favour of the policy from a degrowth perspective, drawbacks from a degrowth perspective, different policy designs and justification of the one you chose, a literature review of past implementations, a proposal of implementation for the context you are choosing, an identification of research requirements or pilot schemes for testing the policy first, etc. Please write at the beginning of the report who wrote what, and also mention if someone took over certain caring/coordinating tasks for the group.

**PROGRAM OUTLINE**

**Class 1 – Introduction to Degrowth Economics (Giorgos Kallis)**

**19/1**

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 (Giorgos Kallis)**

**21/1**

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 – Neoclassical economics and neoliberalism (Salvador Pueyo)**

**26/1**

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 4 – Thermodynamics and ecological economics (Salvador Pueyo)**

**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 5 – Ecological macroeconomics and degrowth (Salvador Pueyo)**

**2/2**

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.

**Class 6 – Marxian political economy (Giorgos Kallis)**

**4/2**

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 7 – Diverse economies and feminist economics (Giorgos Kallis)**

**9/2**

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 8 – Growth imperatives and cost-shifting. The case of pandemics (Salvador Pueyo)**

**11/2**

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

Pueyo, S. 2020. Jevons' paradox and a tax on aviation to prevent the next pandemic. SocArXiv, <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/vb5q3>

**Class 9 – Economic policy for degrowth (Giorgos Kallis)**

**16/2**

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>

**Class 10 – Grassroots and solidarity economies (Salvador Pueyo)**

**18/2**

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 rurban squats in Collserola, Barcelona: what kind of degrowth? Journal of Cleaner Production 18: 581-589.

**Seminars**

There will be two seminars on the 10th and 17th of February on topics complementing the course such as debt and inequality. Speakers and reading material to be confirmed.