RURAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Ph.D. Course organised by
SUM Research School at the Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM), University of Oslo

8-10 August, 2018
Application Deadline: 5 April, 2018

University of Oslo
Course description

The objective of this interdisciplinary course is to critically analyze – empirically and conceptually – processes of transformation in rural areas as related to access to and governance of resources and how these are reshaping the lives of people living there.

New resource frontiers are constantly expanding in rural areas across the world, for example in the form of agricultural commercialization, extractive industries, agro-industrial plantations, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation in Developing Countries (REDD+), tourism or nature conservation. While some areas become entangled in global capitalist circuits, others are abandoned, often with devastating consequences. In addition to the flow and ebb of capital, contemporary rural life is shaped by domestic and international migration, deagrarianization, state and non-state forms of governance, international trade as well as new forms of authoritarian populism.

Responses from rural people involve not only passivity or resistance but also other – at times contradictory – forms of agency. Such agency manifests in projects and processes that both involve agriculture and go far beyond it, intimately shaped by rural people's hopes, wishes and aspirations. Consequently, in the 21st century, ‘the rural’ is increasingly decoupled from ‘the agrarian’ in ways that warrant new critical rethinking of rural transformations.

Against this backdrop the course will address questions such as:

- How do rural people respond to new resource frontiers and their booms and busts?
- What forms of governance are emerging in the midst of, while giving shape to, contemporary rural transformations?
- How is contemporary rural life shaped by both transnational and global alliances of rural people and new authoritarian populist politics?

The course will bring together PhD students working with rural life and agrarian issues to contribute to expand their understanding of rural transformations in the 21st century by locating their own research within a wider context, including issues of governance, mobilization and legitimacy.

Learning outcomes

Students will:

- Obtain a nuanced understanding of processes of transformation in rural areas of the world in the 21st century, both empirically and theoretically;
- Be well acquainted with the major theoretical and empirical approaches to studying rural transformations at local, national and global levels;
Engage in critical discussion, become acquainted with the work of others on rural transformations, and build networks within their chosen field of research.

Lecturers

- **Marc Edelman**, Professor, The City University of New York
- **Amita Baviskar**, Professor, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi
- **Tor Arve Benjaminsen**, Professor, Norwegian University of Life Sciences
- **Kenneth Bo Nielsen**, Associate Professor, University of Oslo
- **TBC: Jun Borras**, Professor, International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague

Objectives and Focus

The course will enable doctoral students to better understand key concepts, debates and perspectives on rural transformations in the 21st century, based on up-to-date literature – and on recent developments 'on the ground'.

In addition to lectures, the course will allow those conducting Ph.D. research to present their own work and comment on that of others, guided by senior experienced academics who are themselves working in this field.

Course capacity: 18 students

Language of instruction: English

Syllabus: Approx. 1000 pages of compulsory readings.

Application

Who may apply?

The interdisciplinary nature of the course will be most suitable for doctoral students engaging with different disciplines within the social sciences – such as anthropology, sociology, political science, geography, and development studies.

Doctoral students will be prioritised, although other applicants may be considered only if space permits.

Funding

The course is free.

Lunches will be provided.

The organisers have some funds available to cover the cost of accommodation (meals not included) for selected students from outside Norway. Similarly, there is funding available for a limited
number of travel scholarships for selected students. Please consult point 3 under 'Application procedures'.

Application procedures

Interested students should state their motivation and upload the following via the Application Form:

1. **A cover letter** signed by your Ph.D. supervisor or another person at your institution/workplace, stating your academic background and academic degree(s) held, your research interests and current research projects (if any), including estimated date of submission of doctoral thesis.

2. **CV**

3. Students from outside Norway may apply for a modest travel scholarship and/or accommodation support, by **uploading a separate document** along with their course application. If you wish to apply for a travel scholarship, please also attach a **budget** based on minimum cost travel.

Applications are invited from **January 29, 2018**.

The application deadline is **5 April, 2018**.

An early application is highly recommended due to space constraints.

Successful applicants will be contacted by **18 April, 2018**.

Preparations

A major purpose of the course is to provide participants with comments on their on-going work. It is therefore obligatory for all participants to submit a draft paper which will be discussed during the course.

The paper should be approximately 10 pages long (4000 – 5000 words, excluding the bibliography). You should submit a paragraph attached to the paper where you specify what you need feedback on, where you are in the process and what your ideas for publishing are.

Students who are admitted to the course should submit their draft paper electronically to the course secretariat by **15 June, 2018**.

This paper may be revised and resubmitted for evaluation and approval after the course (please consult the section on ‘Credits’ below).

All draft paper submissions will be posted on the course’s password protected intranet site. All participants are required to read draft papers for their allocated working groups in advance and provide feedback during the course. (You may of course read others as you wish.)
Syllabus and programme

A complete reading list (with links to online publications, when possible) of approximately 1000 pages will be available on the course's intranet site by **18 April, 2018**.

Participants are expected to read the syllabus in advance of the course.

Participants are expected to attend morning and afternoon sessions, and evening sessions when relevant, on all three days.

**Credits**

Course participants will receive a Course Certificate, **recommending** either 10 or 3 ECTS credits, but your own institution must approve credits for the course. We therefore recommend that you contact your Ph.D. coordinator about the issue of credits prior to your participation.

For a Certificate recommending 10 credits, a revised paper of 15 – 20 pages (6000 - 8000 words) must be submitted to the course organisers no later than 8 weeks after completion of the course, and the paper must be graded with ‘pass’. (The paper will be evaluated by a course lecturer and assessed within eight weeks after submission).

3 ECTS credits will be recommended for those who participate in full but choose not to submit a revised paper for evaluation (or for those whose revised paper does not pass).

**Contact information**

Should you have any practical enquiries, please do not hesitate to email the course secretariat at rural2018@sum.uio.no

**Check for updates**

Please check for updated information at the Ph.D. course's web pages at the Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM).