



Wageningen School
of Social Sciences

Political Ecologies in/of the Anthropocene: value, life and critique

Annual Political Ecology PhD summer school, Wageningen University

Coordination

Prof. Bram Büscher and Dr. Robert Fletcher

Lecturers

Prof. Bram Büscher (Wageningen University)

Dr. Robert Fletcher (Wageningen University)

Dr. Mindi Scheider (Institute of Social Studies)

Dr. Clemens Driessen (Wageningen University)

Dr. Neera Singh (University of Toronto)

Dr. Wolfram Dressler (University of Melbourne)

Dr. Chizu Sato (Wageningen University)

Prof. Rutgerd Boelens (Wageningen University / University of Amsterdam)

21-27 June 2017

Application deadline: 21 May 2017

**Course organised by the Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS),
Wageningen University**

Introduction and objectives of the course

The five-day intensive PhD summer school '*Political Ecologies in/of the Anthropocene: value, life and critique*' precedes the inaugural Centre for Space, Place and Society (CSPS) conference on '*the Value of Life*', held from 28-30 June in Wageningen, the Netherlands. The summer school gives motivated PhD students the chance to deepen their knowledge on political ecologies in the Anthropocene, and to interact with several conference speakers and other interesting invited scholars. In line with the theme of the conference, the course covers two broad and interrelated thematic areas of interest in contemporary political ecology:

1. The emergence of the 'Anthropocene' and its competitors

It is increasingly asserted that we have entered a new phase in world history, namely the so-called 'Anthropocene'. The term 'Anthropocene' was invented to signal 'humanity's' enormous – even geology-changing – footprint on the earth; yet for many is a profoundly unsatisfying term. Jason Moore and others have recently started talking about the 'capitalocene' instead, while yet others talk about many different 'o-cenes' in designating this new era. Among other issues, such critics suggest that the term Anthropocene obscures the role of political economy in environmental impact as well as distinctions among the types and degree of impact caused by different groups of people.

The terms Anthropocene and capitalocene thus raise new yet somewhat familiar challenges for political ecology, for instance, in terms of longstanding questions of how to deal with the 'ecology' now that this is (again) being defined on a dramatically expanded geological level and timescale. The course will engage these issues in exploring how political ecology should/could address the Anthropocene discussion.

2. The value of life in the Anthropocene

If the Anthropocene signals a profound shift in the conditions of life on earth, how can we understand this shift, and what meanings does it give to human and non-human life? How does it change the governance of life, and how do we conceptualise this in terms of power, politics and ecology? How does this relate to growing discussions concerning how to 'properly' value life vis-à-vis, for instance, newfound promotion of ecosystem service valuation and natural capital accounting? The course will thus wrestle with the politics of how to value life in the Anthropocene as well.

These two themes are both complex yet intricately and intrinsically connected. The PhD course aims to provide students with an advanced introduction to these two themes, their interconnections, and recent academic thinking on both. In the introductions and discussions, the theme and practice of 'contestation' will be central. Theories on the Anthropocene are, of course, contested. We will delve into these contestations and employ them productively to get a handle on different trends and traditions in political ecology. Special emphasis will be placed on identifying contestations between and among different theoretical traditions, empirical settings, material resources and political objectives that inform, or form the subject of, various political ecology studies. What consequences do different choices with regard to these 'ingredients' have for the types of political ecology presented in the literature and presentations? And how can we employ

the contestations inherent in them to inform our own understanding and use of political ecology? One of the outcomes of the course, then, is to answer the question how to start thinking about a political ecology of the Anthropocene.

Besides looking for contestations in the literatures and presentations, we will also *practice* contestation. In group-discussions (for which we have scheduled ample time during the course of the week), we will aim to stimulate intellectual debate through various strands of argument and critique and contest these from various angles. In this way, the course also explicitly incorporates development of academic debating skills.

Altogether, the workshop and these debates are also meant to support the second objective of the workshop and the conference that follows, namely to contribute to a broader understanding of the meaning and nature of political ecology in the 21st century.

Target group and learning outcomes

The summer school “*Political Ecologies in/of the Anthropocene*” is intended for PhD students across the social and environmental sciences, especially anthropology, geography, political science, sociology and development studies, with an interest in political ecology. In this course, we will move between close reading of texts, workshops, lectures, and discussion. Students following this course will not only learn about contestations in relevant themes and new dynamics in political ecology, but will also become part of and interpret these contestations.

Students participating in this course are expected to write a short statement (max. 1 page A4) to: i) introduce who they are in terms of disciplinary background and education ii); outline how they (intend to) engage with the two identified themes in political ecology (conflict, violence / capitalism and the environment); iii) outline questions or issues on these themes with which they would like to engage; and iv) offer expectations from the course.

After successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a thorough knowledge of new dynamics in the links between value, capitalism, the environment, the Anthropocene/Capitalocene and the intersections among these;
- Critically reflect on different political ecology approaches to these themes and employ these in social science research;
- Broadly understand some of the main contestations around these themes in relation to theoretical traditions, empirical emphases, political projects and material resources;
- Formulate whether and how elements of these discussions and contestations could fit on and contribute to their own research projects;
- Engage in active learning, critical thinking and academic debating, especially by positioning oneself in (relation to) academic contestations.

Assumed prior knowledge

MSc in social sciences: anthropology, geography, political science, sociology or development studies.

Course fees

For PhDs of WASS, SENSE and PE&RC there is a fee of 250 euros. For all other participants and for staff members (fellows/post docs), there is a fee of 500 euros for the whole course (including drinks, lunches, and course materials).

Session Times/ Outline of the Course in Hours

The first days of this course entail self-study (19-21 June 2017). The students are expected to read the course-material and write a 3-4 page annotated bibliography or 'reflection document' on the readings and how these (potentially) relate to their own research. In the remaining days we will have lectures, group-work and discussions (22-27 June 2017). We have reserved what we call 'discussion afternoons', where we don't have speakers but where we allow space for general discussions and participant presentations, if they want. The idea is to have space to reflect on the sessions so far, and to explore their relevance for participants' own research. The space can also be used to work on assignments.

Program

Date	Topic	Lecturer
Thursday, 22 June	<u>Morning:</u> From Anthropocene to Capitalocene and beyond	Prof. Bram Büscher and Dr. Robert Fletcher
	<u>Afternoon:</u> Value of life in the Anthropocene: towards convivial conservation?	Prof. Bram Büscher and Dr. Robert Fletcher
Friday, 23 June	<u>Morning:</u> Meat, Metabolism and the Value of life in the Anthropocene	Dr. Mindi Scheider
	<u>Discussion afternoon:</u> the value of life in the Anthropocene	Prof. Bram Büscher and Dr. Robert Fletcher
Saturday, 24 June	<u>Morning:</u> The muddy waters of the Anthropocene	Prof. Rutgerd Boelens
	<u>Afternoon:</u> a more-than-human Anthropocene?	Dr. Clemens Driessen
Sunday, 25 June	FREE DAY (social activity in town)	
Monday, 26 June	<u>Morning:</u> Rural Livelihoods in the Balance	Dr. Wolfram Dressler
	<u>Afternoon:</u> Feminism and the Anthropocene	Dr. Chizu Sato

Tuesday, 27 June	<u>Morning: A post-capitalist anthropocene?</u>	Prof Neera Singh
	<u>Discussion afternoon: the value of life in the Anthropocene Closure.</u>	Prof. Bram Büscher and Dr. Robert Fletcher

(A detailed program including readings will be communicated later)

Teaching methods

The course offers combination of different educational activities:

- i) *Lectures* to introduce and explain new dynamics and theoretical approaches
- ii) *Self-study* to further develop the understanding of the new dynamics and theoretical approaches discussed.
- iii) *Assignments* that address contestations regarding the new dynamics and theoretical approaches and apply these to the student's own research:
 - a. *Personal statement* prior to course.
 - b. *Annotated bibliography/reflection paper* prior to class sessions
 - c. *Revised paper* following class sessions
- iv) Plenary discussions of literature and assignments.
- v) *Final papers* by the participants

Requirements and ECTS

4 credits (according to European Credit Transfer System).

Receipt of these credits requires completing all readings, attending all class sessions, and completing all written assignments as specified above.

Location

The sessions will be held in building "De Leeuwenborch", Hollandseweg 1 in Wageningen, The Netherlands. The exact rooms will be announced later.

Registration

Registration is possible electronically via the WASS courses page:

<http://www.wur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/PhD-Programme/Graduate-Schools/Wageningen-School-of-Social-Sciences/Courses/Registration.htm>

The maximum number of participants is set at 25, the minimum at 10.

Please make sure that you provide the most recent contact details so that in case of any changes you will be notified promptly. After your internet registration you will receive a short notification that your name has been registered. At least two weeks before the course you will receive a confirmation about the location and the schedule. WASS will also send an invoice to the address indicated in the registration form.

Please e-mail to Marcella.Haan@wur.nl in case you have not received the second confirmation two weeks before the course.

Cancellations

Cancellations may be made free of charge until 1 month before the start of the course. Cancellation fee of 100 % applies if participants cancel the course less than 1 month prior to the course. The organisers have a right to cancel the course not later than 1 month before the course starts. The participants will be notified of any changes at their e-mail addresses.

Further information

On course content please contact the course organiser, Prof. Bram Büscher (SDC). He can be reached through mail at bram.buscher@wur.nl or marielle.takes@wur.nl

On WASS: www.wageningenur.nl/wass

For details about the logistics, accommodation, registration, fees, study materials, etc. please contact

Marcella Haan

Tel +31 317 484126

Marcella.haan@wur.nl

Contact addresses:

Wageningen School of Social Sciences

Wageningen University

Hollandseweg 1

6706 KN WAGENINGEN

The Netherlands

Useful information on accommodation for participants from outside Wageningen

Wageningen International Centre,
Hof van Wageningen: 75 euro for 1
person room, 98.50 euros for 2 persons
room (including breakfast)

<http://www.hofvanwageningen.nl/>

Hotel de Wageningseberg: 62.50 euro 1
person room, 97.50 euro for 2 persons
room (including breakfast)

www.wageningseberg.com

Hotel Nol in 't Bosch: 83,50 euro for 1
person room, 110 euro for 2 persons
room, also including breakfast;

<http://www.nolintbosch.nl/>

Hotel de Nieuwe Wereld (Hotel School):
50-60 euro for a 1 person room.

<http://www.denieuwewereld.nl> (only in
Dutch)

Bed&Breakfast De Heksenspeeltuin:

25 euro for a 1 person room

Eindhovenstraat 15, 6706JA Wageningen

Phone: +31 317-418161

E-mail: callyd@zonnet.nl

www.heksenspeeltuin.nl

Villaria Bed en Breakfast:

32-38 euro for a 1 person room

Nassauweg 21, 6703CG Wageningen

Phone: +31 317-419636

Emai: villaria@hari.demon.nl

Ons Bakhuus Bed & Breakfast:
25 euro for a 1 person room
Dolderstraat 64, 6706 JG Wageningen
Phone.:+31 317-411994
E-mail: janny.wijbo@chello.nl

Knollywood Bed & Breakfast:
35 euro for a 1 person room
L. Roggeveenstraat 39, 6708 SL
Wageningen
Phone: +31 317-420970
E-mail: Knollywood@hetnet.nl

De Herbergh Bed & Breakfast:
45 euro for a 1 person room
Generaal Foulkesweg 8, 6703 BR
Wageningen
Phone: +31 317-410747
E-mail: glindenbergh@wanadoo.nl

Het Torentje Bed & Breakfast:
60 euro for a 1 person room
Nassauweg 19, 6703 CG Wageningen
Phone: +31 (0)6 55 802 865
e-mail: info@het-torentje.nl
website: <http://www.het-torentje.nl>

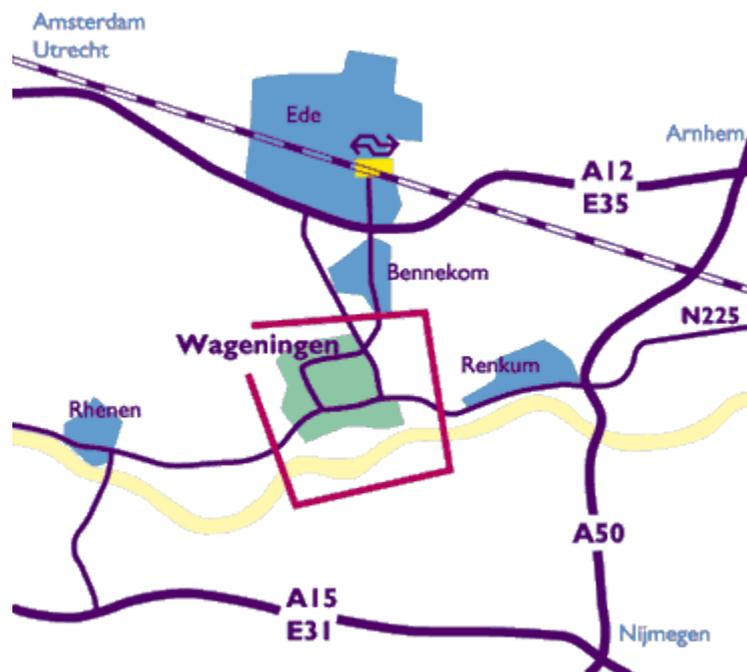
From Schiphol Amsterdam Airport to Wageningen

At the Airport you can buy a train ticket in the 'arrivals' area by the baggage claims. You will see the sign "Train tickets" near the exit. Then follow the signs 'Nederlandse Spoorwegen' (NS) or 'Trains and busses' to the railway station.

Purchase a one-way ticket to the Ede-Wageningen train station, this will cost €14,10 (plus a service charge if you buy the ticket at the ticket counter). It is also possible to buy the ticket from the ticket vending machines in the station.

There are direct connections from Schiphol Amsterdam Airport to Ede-Wageningen every 30 minutes. Additionally, twice an hour there is a connecting service from Schiphol to Ede-Wageningen where you have to change trains in Utrecht. The destination boards on the platform will indicate the different stations where the train will stop. Check for the names Ede-Wageningen or Utrecht and board the train and when necessary change in Utrecht. The trip from Schiphol to Ede-Wageningen takes you a bit more than one hour.

For Dutch train connections use www.ns.nl, www.thalys.com, www.db.de



The train station is not located directly in Wageningen. This lack is fully compensated by fair means of transportation by buses and taxis. From railway station Ede-Wageningen you can take a taxi (approx.15 min.). Taxis leave at the north side of the station. You can also come by bus: line 52 (direction Wageningen/ Arnhem) departs from the north side of the station or bus line 88 (Valleilijn, direction Wageningen) leaves from the south side of the station. You have to purchase a ticket from the driver in the bus, which will cost about 2 euros.