



LUND
UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Social Sciences

MESS54, Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science: Resilience and Sustainable Development, 7.5 credits

*Miljö- och hållbarhetsvetenskap: Resiliens och hållbar utveckling,
7,5 högskolepoäng*
Second Cycle / Avancerad nivå

Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by The Board of the Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies on 2017-09-05 to be valid from 2018-09-03, autumn semester 2018.

General Information

The course constitutes a 3rd term elective (non-compulsory) course at LUMES, Lund University Master's Programme in Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science.

Language of instruction: English

Main field of studies

Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science

Depth of study relative to the degree requirements

A1F, Second cycle, has second-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Learning outcomes

Upon the completion of the course, the student shall

Knowledge and understanding

- Demonstrate critical understanding of the resilience concept and resilience discourse within sustainability science.
- Demonstrate knowledge and critical understanding of how the resilience concept is used and how resilience is understood, appropriated and measured in sustainability science.

Competence and skills

- Demonstrate skills and ability to critically evaluate the application of a resilience perspective in the context of sustainability policy and practice.
- Demonstrate consistent argumentation and logic, good structure and communication in presentations and course assignments.

Judgement and approach

- Demonstrate critical thinking in presentations and course assignments.
- Demonstrate creativity and well-grounded problem definition in presentations and course assignments.

Course content

The course examines perspectives on an emerging discourse in sustainability science, resilience, in the context of sustainable development. Resilience is society's ability to continue to develop during shock and stress. The course deals with how theories about the resilience concept have developed within sustainability science. The course starts with a historical overview of the resilience concept within development- and sustainability science. The course then goes on to critically examine resilience as a concept and as an approach. Resilience has come to mean many things. There is for example, a resistance among some to the idea that it is possible for societies to continue to identify a common desirable or stable level of greenhouse emissions, deforestation and overfishing. The course will examine questions about whether resilience can help researchers and practitioners improve their critical understanding of how societies can continue to develop under stressors caused by global environmental changes. For example, which political decisions and institutional changes occur under the threatening shadows of environmental changes? How can resilience as a model and an analytical tool help societies to rethink and generate ideas about change in ways that can avoid undesirable tipping points?

Global environmental changes bring about consequences for life and livelihoods for millions of people around the world. Uncertainty frames these environmental stressors and interacts with human vulnerability and poverty. Global climate change in particular pose significant consequences for resilience, community governance and livelihood of people in the global South. Climate change poses a challenge to handle extreme weather events, and will exacerbate existing problems such as water shortages, floods and loss of natural resources. The course focuses on these consequences.

The course consists of a series of lectures with the aim of providing a systematic evaluation of resilience both as a theoretical frame work and as a practical tool. In light of the resilience concept, existing theories of development, and how they address global environmental challenges and uncertainty, are reconsidered, with a specific focus on climate change and its consequences. Special importance will be given to highlighting that societal change is closely connected to how a society sees its relation to nature.

Course design

The teaching consists of different learning activities predominanty lectures, workshops, peer-teaching, and seminars.

Unless there are valid reasons to the contrary, compulsory participation is required in seminars. Students who have been unable to participate due to circumstances such as accidents or sudden illness will be offered the opportunity to compensate for or re-take compulsory components. This also applied to students who have been absent because of duties as an elected student representative.

Assessment

The course is examined through an individual take home exam (4,5 credits, 60% of final grade) and group work (3 credits, 40% of final grade). The individual assignment consists of an essay of 3000 words (max.).

Three opportunities for examination are offered in conjunction with the course: a first examination and two re-examinations. Two further re-examinations on the same course content are offered within a year of the end of the course. After this, further re-examination opportunities are offered but in accordance with the current course syllabus.

A student who has taken two examinations in a course or a part of a course without obtaining a pass grade is entitled to the nomination of another examiner, unless there are special reasons to the contrary. Students getting a passing grade cannot re-take an exam or re-submit a paper to get a higher grade.

The examiner, in consultation with Disability Support Services, may deviate from the regular form of examination in order to provide a permanently disabled student with a form of examination equivalent to that of a student without a disability.

Subcourses that are part of this course can be found in an appendix at the end of this document.

Grades

Marking scale: Fail, Three, Four, Five.

The highest grade for the course as a whole is 5 and the lowest passing grade is 3. The grade for a non-passing result is Fail. The student's performance is assessed with reference to learning outcomes of the course. The grade 5 denotes outstanding performance in all learning outcomes. The grade 4 signifies very good performance in all learning outcomes. To receive the grade 3, the student must obtain minimum criteria in fulfilling all course learning outcomes. The grade Fail signifies that the student has not fulfilled the learning outcomes of the course, or that additional work is required before the grade can be awarded.

At the start of the course, students are informed about the learning outcomes stated in the syllabus and about the grading scale and how it is applied on the course.

Overall course grade:

The grade for the whole course consists of the average grade of the two graded assignments (i.e. the written individual take home exam and group work). The individual take home exam is worth 60% of the final grade and group work (including presentation) is worth 40% of the final grade.

For a grade of 3 on the entire course the student must have been awarded at least 3 on all assessments. The student must also have actively participated in all compulsory components.

Entry requirements

To be admitted to the course, students must be admitted to Lund University International Master's Programme in Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science 120 credits, and have fulfilled course requirements of at least forty higher education credits in the programme.

Subcourses in MESS54, Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science:
Resilience and Sustainable Development

Applies from H18

- 1801 Individual take home exam, 4,5 hp
Grading scale: Fail, Three, Four, Five
- 1802 Group work, 3,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, Three, Four, Five