



**LUND**  
UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Social Sciences

## **MESS23, Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science: Geographies of Sustainability, 7.5 credits**

*Miljö- och hållbarhetsvetenskap: Hållbarhetens geografi, 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 2022-06-09 to be valid from 2023-01-16, spring semester 2023.

### **General Information**

The course is a second term compulsory course within Lund University Master's Programme in Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science (LUMES), 120 credits.

*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 the ability to discuss and compare different geographical approaches and their relevance for analysing social and environmental processes from a sustainability perspective
- demonstrate the ability to analyse how social and environmental change and natural resource use at the local scale is intertwined with economic, political and social conditions and processes at other scales
- show a deepened understanding of the complex flows between urban and rural systems as well as the ability to analyse how and why these flows cause social differentiation and unequal distribution.

### **Competence and skills**

- show an understanding for the spatial dimensions of social, economic, and environmental processes and their importance for natural resource use and sustainability challenges in different geographical contexts
- demonstrate the ability to identify and discuss drivers of social and environmental processes in specific places and on various scales
- demonstrate the ability to critically and independently identify problems and to formulate and present analysis and conclusions, orally as well as in writing
- demonstrate the ability to constructively and respectfully engage in group work to successfully complete defined tasks.

### **Judgement and approach**

- based on a sustainability perspective, be able to identify and critically evaluate assumptions, values, and aims connected to different approaches towards natural resource use in specific places as well as analyse the conflicts and trade-offs between these approaches
- demonstrate an advanced ability to analyse to what extent case studies may be relevant beyond their particular contexts and for wider sustainability debates
- demonstrate the ability to formulate possible societal responses to sustainability challenges in specific geographical contexts in ways that integrate environmental, social, economic, and political aspects.

### **Course content**

The course provides interdisciplinary perspectives from the field of environmental geography aimed at studying the dynamics of social and environmental change in particular places. It covers perspectives from a variety of research fields, such as land-change science, landscape geography, and political ecology. It aims to advance students' understanding of the spatial dimensions of social, economic, and environmental processes and their importance for sustainability challenges in different geographical contexts, urban as well as rural.

A focal point of the course is to recognise the geographies of place and how different forms of natural resource use and environmental change at the local scale is influenced by structures and processes cutting across scales.

Another key point is the engagement with empirical cases and real-world settings in the study of how place-bound sustainability challenges connected to land use and urbanisation impact natural resource use in, for example, agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. The selected cases will seek to integrate approaches and perspectives from both human and physical geography, highlighting the interdisciplinary focus of the course.

Throughout the course, processes of unequal distribution and uneven development, for instance within cities, between urban and rural spaces, and between different geographical regions, will be explored as well as their effects on social equity.

### **Course design**

The course consists of lectures, seminars, student presentations, and study visits. Individual and group-based exercises and assignments are combined to stimulate and allow students to demonstrate a range of skills and competencies to identify, understand and analyse geographical processes across settings. Students should apply

conceptual and theoretical knowledge introduced in the course to concrete empirical cases, both in the group-based exercise and in the written individual take-home exam.

Unless there are valid reasons to the contrary, compulsory participation is required in the oral presentation of the written group take-home exam. 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 applies to students who have been absent because of duties as an elected student representative.

## Assessment

Course assessment is based on:

- Written group take-home exam (3 credits)
- Written individual take-home exam (4,5 credits)

The course includes opportunities for assessment at a first examination, a re-sit close to the first examination and a second re-sit for courses that have ended during that school year. 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.

## Grades

Marking scale: Fail, Three, Four, Five.

The highest grade for the course is Five and the lowest grade for passing is Three. Grades for a non-passing result is Fail. The student's results are assessed with reference to learning outcomes of the course. For grade Five, the student must show an excellent result in all learning outcomes. For the grade Four, the student must show a very good result in all learning outcomes. For the grade Three, the student must show a sufficiently good result in all learning outcomes. The grade Fail means that the student has not reached the learning outcomes of the course.

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

The grade for the entire course consists of the average grade of the two exams that are assessed according to the Fail-5-4-3 grading scale. The written group take-home exam is worth 40% of the final grade. The written individual take-home exam is worth 60% of the final grade. For a grade of 3 on the entire course the student must have been awarded at least 3 on both exams.

Exam	Credits	Grades	Part of final grade for the course
Written group take-home	3	Fail-3-4-5	40%

exam			
Written individual take-home exam	4,5	Fail-3-4-5	60%
Oral presentation of written group take-home exam	-	Fail-Participated	-
Total	7,5		100%

Example: The student got the grade 3 on the written group take-home exam and the grade of 5 on the written individual take-home exam (and participated in the compulsory component). The final grade is  $4 \left( (3 \cdot 40) + (5 \cdot 60) \right) / 100 = 4.2 < 4.5$  is rounded down and  $4.5 >$  is rounded up.

## Entry requirements

To be admitted to the course, the student must have fulfilled course requirements of at least 22,5 higher education credits in the programme.

A good command of spoken and written English, equivalent to English 6/B (advanced) proficiency in the Swedish secondary system, is required. Equivalent assessments will be made according to national guidelines.

## Further information

The course cannot be included in a degree together with MESS35, Urban and Rural Systems and Sustainability, 10 credits, or MESS13, Rural Systems and Sustainability, 7,5 credits, or MESS14, Urban Systems and Sustainability, 7,5 credits.