GEO431.3

REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

Course Syllabus

Course Organization

This course is offered in Module GEO 431 “Vertiefungsblock Regional- und Stadtentwicklung” available to students in the MSc programme in Geography or other Master programmes. The lectures are complemented by seminar classes to work on case studies in smaller groups of students.

Classes

Fridays 10.15-12.00


Room to be announced

Course Language

English

Lecturer

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Research Group Regional Economics and Development
**Course Outline**

The course provides an overview of dominant and emerging trends in the theory and practice of environmental governance. The course addresses environmental issues as policy problems and explores how the environment is regulated, controlled, and contested by a range of actors and institutions. The course focuses on the spatial dimension of environmental change and uses key concepts from geography (scale, region, network) to advance regional environmental governance thinking.

**Learning Goals**

Course participants will develop a theoretically as well as practically informed understanding of recent issues and debates in contemporary regional environmental governance. On completion of the course, successful participants will be able ...

- to describe selected environmental problems as policy challenges and to analyze the related political processes using basic concepts and techniques from geography and political science;
- to better understand the evolution of environmental policies and environmental policymaking and being familiar with the key elements of regional environmental governance;
- to identify the main challenges and opportunities for regional environmental governance and to critically discuss them with reference to various practical policy examples.

**Expectations**

**Reading**

There is no script available for this course. Copies of mandatory readings as well as lecture slides will be provided on the online learning platform OLAT. Students are encouraged to read the following textbook: Evans, J.P. (2012): Environmental Governance. London: Routledge.

As readings and discussions form the basis of the learning experience at Master level, students are expected to complete the indicated readings prior to each session and be prepared to discuss them in class. Each student is expected to thoroughly prepare herself/himself for the individual session by reading the indicated texts for the corresponding week. You should expect a weekly assignment of one or two texts of approximately 10-20 pages each.

**Exam**

The final exam will cover all the lectures (incl. guest lecture) and seminar sessions of the whole course.
Group work

This course will be run in both a lecture and a seminar format. You will be working in small groups of 2-3 persons. These groups will work on case studies on regional environmental governance. Each group will prepare a home assignment including an input presentations for the course and a short paper.

Task and scope of home assignment:

1. Describe briefly a selected environmental issue in a specific policy area in Switzerland or other countries. Use and refer to available ecological and socio-economic data, e.g. as reported by the Federal Office for the Environment (Swiss Federal Council 2015).

2. Characterize the environmental issue as a policy problem. What policy problems exist to address the selected environmental issue in a more effective way? Make use of available policy reports and reviews by applying the analytical perspectives discussed in the course.

3. Select one specific governance element as discussed in lectures 3 and 4 (policy integration, multi-level governance, participatory governance; new environmental policy instruments) that seems suitable for addressing the policy problem described in (2). Describe how the selected governance element contributes to the policy problem.

4. Explain to what extent the selected governance element did or could improve the identified policy problem situation and why.

Input presentation:

Inputs will be presented and discussed in groups in the seminar.

Short paper:

Write a short paper of max. 9 pages (including title, author names, headers, main text, figures, tables and references) referring to your home assignment. The paper should not exceed 3,000 words (indicate word count at the end of your paper). More information about the group work will be given at the beginning of the course.

Assessment

Each student will be assessed consisting of group work (50% of final mark) and a final exam (50% of final mark).
# Course Programme

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Session</th>
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| 25.9.15 | 1       | **Course overview and introduction:** From conventional environmental policy to environmental governance  
Governancing the environment; Environment as a policy problem; tragedy of the commons; external costs/effects and market failure; political agenda setting and policy failure; ‘planet boundaries’; government vs. governance; governance as social coordination; new governance; types of governance |
| 2.10.15 | 2       | **Guest Lecture**  
Douglas Bardsley, Senior Lecturer in Geography, Environment, and Population, University of Adelaide, Australia |
| 23.10.15| 3       | **Policy integration and multi-level governance**  
Environment as cross-sectoral issue; policy integration vs. fragmentation; horizontal and vertical coordination; problems of fit (misfits between institutions and socio-ecological systems); politics of scale; rescaling environmental governance |
| 30.10.15| 4       | **Participatory governance and new environmental policy instruments**  
Policy cycle; stakeholders and their roles in policy making; trust and social capital in policy processes; types of participatory governance; (dis)advantages of ‘old’ environmental policy instruments; internalization of external costs through environmental subsidies; environmental taxes; tradable emission permits; self-regulation, voluntary agreements and informational instruments |
| 20.11.15| 5       | **Group work:** Input presentation |
| 27.11.15| 6       | **Local and regional adaptation to global environmental change**  
Resilience; vulnerability; adaptation; adaptive capacity and its determinants; changes in governance regimes as learning processes |
| 11.12.15| 7       | **Exam** |


**Literature**


