

Egenvurdering på emne- og programnivå

Emnenivå: Fylles ut av emneansvarlig

Programnivå: Fylles ut av programstyreleder (fagkoordinator)

Emne/program	AHKR203 Introduction to the Environmental Humanities
År	Vår 2025
Emneansvarlig/ Programstyreleder (fagkoordinator)	Tina Paphitis
Samlet vurdering av gjennomføringen av emnet/programmet	<p>This was the first time this course had been taught. The number of students on the course was limited to a maximum of 20, to ensure good quality of student participation in seminars and fieldwork. Since the course coordinator taught all seminars and fieldwork herself, it would have been an exceptionally high workload to repeat these activities with a larger class split into smaller groups. Students were required to fill out a short application form explaining their interest in the course and its relevance to their studies/future work plans. Over 20 students applied for the course. Some of these were rejected due to a poor application (lack of required information, insufficient interest in/dedication to attending the course) or not enough study points). Students were required to have a minimum of 60 ECTS credits, since it was important that they had a firm grounding in their own disciplines before engaging in a multidisciplinary field. A total of 18 students were offered a place on the course. Two students withdrew before the course began; one never showed up to any classes; and three dropped out during the course. Twelve students therefore completed the course and submitted the exam.</p> <p>The majority of students were international (9/12). Two of the home students were taking the course extraneous to study programmes (one was a continuing education student, the other a completing MA student). The students therefore comprised a combination of level 2 and 3 bachelors students, masters students, and informal students. Students came from a range of disciplinary backgrounds (of those who completed: political science, gender studies, international relations, geography, anthropology, history/archaeology, philosophy, psychology, and applied English) and countries (France, Japan, Spain, UK, Netherlands, Columbia, Finland, Jordan, and Norway).</p> <p>The course ran in block 2, two classes per week, except for one week which had one scheduled class. The course was taught through a combination of lectures, seminars and</p>

fieldwork. Students were actively encouraged to participate through comments, questions, and discussions in both seminars and lectures. One of the fieldwork components was a self-directed obligatory task, whereby students were instructed to sit outside in a place of their choosing for a minimum of two hours to undertake a non-participatory observation of human-nature relationships. Various readings and guidelines were provided to support them in their task. They were required to write up field notes, which were to be submitted to the course coordinator for feedback, before being written up as a thick description that would form one component of the assessment. The inclusion of fieldwork thus requires this course to be scheduled at particular times of the year, to maximise the chances of fair weather.

Obligatory attendance was required for all seminars and fieldwork in this course, since they directly contributed to the final assignment. Students were assessed on this course through a portfolio comprising critical reflections on each of the seminars/fieldwork, plus a summary reflection at the end. By undertaking the preparations for the seminars, and by participating in seminars and fieldwork, the students would effectively be drafting their entries for their portfolios, meaning that the portfolio was a cumulative assessment of their learning and that the entire assessment would not have to be undertaken at the end of the course. All students were given thorough feedback on their final assessment.

Extensive use was made of Canvas to support the teaching of this course. Every class had its own page with a short description of the class, obligatory and recommended readings, additional resources for those who wished to study a particular topic in more depth, PDF uploads of the lecture slides, and the name of the instructor for that class. These were 'living' pages, with content being fed into them throughout the course. The obligatory task and the portfolio assessment also each had their own pages.

The course coordinator taught the majority of the classes for the course: most lectures (6/10), all seminars and fieldwork (5). Four guest lecturers taught on the course: two from AHKR, one from UiB's Department of Foreign Languages, and one from the Oslo Centre for Environmental Humanities (IKOS, UiO). This allowed for more specialist study of particular topics, and further broadened the diversity in disciplines and background for the course.

The preparation for, and delivery of, this course was heavy and intense, but allowed for richer content and student engagement.

<p>Emne: Er emnet student-evaluert? Hva kom i så fall fram der?</p> <p>Program: Funn i eventuelle programsensorrapporter sist år.</p>	<p>The course was evaluated by students through verbal feedback in class and through an anonymous evaluation form at the end of the course. A complete summary of the results of the evaluation form is appended at the end of this course assessment. Of the 12 students, seven completed the evaluation, amounting to 58% of the class.</p> <p>Students found the teaching of the course highly effective, with good instructional materials and methods. All the students who completed the evaluation form indicated that they had made full use of the materials on Canvas, indicating that the extra work undertaken for this was worthwhile. The instructors were rated highly.</p> <p>The course content was similarly given positive feedback. In verbal feedback in the final seminar, students commented that the following aspects of the course were most important/interesting/helpful to them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fieldwork/methods: many students found this very enlightening, whether because they had never undertaken fieldwork before (since their main disciplines do not utilise it), because they had learned about fieldwork as part of their disciplinary learning but not had the opportunity to apply it practically, or because they were applying fieldwork that they were somewhat familiar with in a different way. Also, the teaching of various approaches to examine, engage with, and act on the environmental crisis. - Environmentalism in literature/ecocriticism: analytical dimension of engaging with texts was found to be helpful and inspiring. - Mourning nature: allowed students to express their emotional engagement with environmental change and gave hope. - Feminism and gender: students were sympathetic to feminist and queer ideas but were previously unsure how such theories could be applied found this class incredibly helpful and eye-opening. - Narrative: different ways of telling environmental stories and the narrative of the course itself. - Activism and importance of the work: gave some hope and guidance in how to apply their learning and engage with environmental activism. - Companion species: learning about particular environmental humanities perspectives on how to engage with the more-than-human world was a key aspect students said they would take with them and that changed the ways they engaged with/experienced the world. - 'Horizontality of class': an environment where everyone was welcome to contribute their perspectives that felt collaborative (including with the instructor).
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiple perspectives: the diversity of backgrounds of the students and instructors was seen as an asset to the course and one students thoroughly engaged with. - 'Filled missing gaps': helped give context to the current environmental crisis as well as enhance their learning in their own disciplines. <p>Students also appreciated the smaller class size, which allowed all students the opportunity to contribute and effectively engage in discussion. Some students commented at the beginning of the course that this was appealing to them, as was the assessment using a portfolio, which they found interesting and different. Results of the student evaluation also indicated that the portfolio was a successful and enjoyable form of assessment, with one student expressing that it supported their learning more than a regular essay/exam would. Having the opportunity to express their academic learning creatively, in the spirit of the environmental humanities as a field, was also a positive aspect of the assessment.</p> <p>In the evaluation form, students replied that they would like to see more environmental humanities courses developed at higher levels (to build on the introductory course) and focused on specific themes (to go into more depth with particular topics). This suggests a strong appetite for learning in this field, that was engendered or enhanced by this course. Students also noted how important this field is, and how useful it would be for those outside of academia (such as those in politics) to take this course. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the course in articulating its broader relevance and applicability outside of academia, as well as within it. It is thus hoped that a course such as this could support students in their careers beyond their studies.</p>
<p>Var det noe som ikke fungerte godt nok? Er det behov for å foreta justeringer eller sette inn tiltak for å forbedre emnet/programmet? Hvilke?</p>	<p>One comment from a student after a class (and one in the evaluation form) was that they would like for some topics to go 'deeper', since topics were explored and then moved away from. Unfortunately, this is the way of 'introductory' courses: it was explained that, as a level 2 introduction, it is there to give the fundamental foundations of the field, and that there were not enough teaching hours to engage in each topic in depth (the student was a masters-level student). It was also explained that this is what the 'additional materials' in Canvas were there for: to allow students interested in a particular topic to delve into it beyond what was possible in class or as part of the course. These things could be emphasised more at the beginning and during the course.</p> <p>Overall, feedback from students indicate that the course was highly successful, both in content and delivery. However, courses could always be improved. Reflecting on</p>

the portfolio, it is considered that this could have the summary reflection removed and integrated with the entry for the final seminar, since these effectively go together in any case. This would free up some more space for the students to explore each entry in more detail. More space could also be made if the thick description were written up as the obligatory activity submission, rather than the notes being submitted and the final thick description integrated into the portfolio. However, beginning the portfolio with this entry is highly effective and relevant. The course coordinator will assess this in the coming months.

Very detailed instructions were provided to students on how to complete their portfolios, including structure and content, and what aspects will be looked out for by the examiners. However, this could also be improved by providing a rubric for assessment of the portfolios. It might thus be useful to add this to the assessment instructions, stating that examiners will be assessing the effectiveness of the following in the portfolio: argument, knowledge, evidence, analysis, sources, academic integrity, and visuals. An explanation of each of these criteria can be provided to ensure students complete their portfolios to the best of their abilities.

Content and teaching materials for every class, and the course as a whole, will be reconsidered when planning the course for spring 2026, with some readings, for example, revised, but for the most part these were helpful, relevant, interesting, and effective.

One thing that often happened in class was that there was not enough time to cover everything planned. This was partly due to the fact that students were actively engaged in discussion of the topics, which on the whole is immensely positive and arguably indicative of the success of the content and structure of the class. It is important to ensure that there is enough material for a class in case students do not participate so actively and enthusiastically, but the course coordinator will more strictly assess the time management of the class, without curtailing lively discussion.

Of course, it was often the case that some students dominated discussion in class, despite all students having the opportunity. The course coordinator structured some discussions to ensure everyone in class could contribute, especially if they were shy or uncertain, and this will be utilised more. Both group work and individual contributions were utilised; they were both effective, and their use in the future will be maintained, but which approach will be used for which task will be assessed in the next round of course planning and delivery to improve effectiveness.

Andre kommentarer eller innspill	
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AHKR203 Introduction to the Environmental Humanities Spring 2025
Student evaluation

Total responses: 7 (58% response rate)

Free responses unedited

Question	Responses
1. How satisfied are you with the knowledge you gained from the course overall?	Very satisfied [highest rating] = 6 Satisfied [second highest] = 1
2. Do you feel you achieved the learning outcomes for the course?	Yes = 7 No = 0
3. How effective were the following aspects in this course? a. Instructional materials (reading list, lecture slides, additional resources) b. Learning activities (lectures, seminars, fieldwork) c. Use of technologies in the class	a. Extremely effective [highest rating] = 6 Somewhat effective = 1 b. Extremely effective = 6 Somewhat effective = 1 c. Extremely effective = 6 Somewhat effective = 1
4. How useful were the MittUiB/Canvas pages for this course?	Extremely useful [highest rating] = 5 Useful [second highest] = 2
5. Did you use any of the additional materials uploaded to Canvas?	Yes = 7 No = 0
6. How would you rate the main instructor's (Tina Paphitis) overall teaching performance?	5/5 = 7
7. How much do you agree with the following statements? a. The instructor prepared well at the start of each class b. The instructor communicated clearly on course expectations c. The instructor delivered course in a clear and easy-to-understand approach d. The instructor encouraged students in-class participation e. The instructor maintained my interest throughout the whole course f. The instructor thoroughly answered questions from students g. The instructor was available to answer questions/chat about the course	a. Extremely agree [highest rating] = 7 b. Extremely agree = 7 c. Extremely agree = 7 d. Extremely agree = 7 e. Extremely agree = 7 f. Extremely agree = 7 g. Extremely agree = 7

<p>8. Any comments on any of the guest lectures/instructors? (Petrocultures) (Policy) (Colonialism & Indigeneity) (Ethics & Justice)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To Colonialism & Indigeneity, could you make a slide to understand the class? - I think every guest lecture was very relevant to the course. Sometimes, especially with the lectures about colonialism & indigeneity and ethics & justice, the information was not really in depth. I didn't learn much in these 2 lectures. But maybe that is also because of my own background knowledge that I gained during my studies. - every guests lectures were really relevant to the class - Very good presentations and clear told from all lectures. - No : everything was very interesting, and it was nice to have different approaches through these different guest lectures. I really appreciated ! - All amazing, more next time
<p>9. What do you think about the assessment for this course (Portfolio)? Choose all that apply.</p>	<p>Interesting = 7 Inspiring = 7 Different from other course assessments I've had = 7 Challenging = 6 [Other] "I'm very happy with this assignment. I have the feeling it makes me learn more about the field than a essay would have. And I like the creative aspect of it." = 1 [Other] "a new experience" = 1</p>
<p>10. Which aspects of the course were most interesting to you?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Every field is interesting to me, but Petrocultures is the most interesting because I learned we have to reduce the use of oil for the environment, but it is hopelessly rooted in culture, society - inter-disciplinarity - The fieldwork seminars; the book "an introduction to the environmental humanities"; the class about multispecies worlds; that everyone (students&teacher) had different backgrounds; writing the portfolio - The fact that it is an introduction to an inspiring new field, that's extremely promising - Creativity and Activism - The fact to have an overview of the different approaches which exist in the Environmental Humanities. The fact to have a little group in this class : it is easier to participate, to engage in the

	<p>course, and it is interesting to hear the point of view of everybody</p> <p>The fact to have a clear evolution of the course (from some classes about the environmental crises we are embedded in to a class on the sources of hope for the future and the different possibilities to take action. The fact to have so many advices of readings to enrich our knowledges on the different topics outside of the courses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The heated discussions
<p>11. Which aspects of the course were least interesting to you?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (post)colonialism because it was difficult to understand - none - I already had knowledge about the Antropocene, posthumanism and some other topics of the course. For me it could have been more indepth. But in the end, this was only an introductory course. - None honestly - None - I don't know. Perhaps the part on the Anthropocene, but only because I already had a lot of courses about that in my studies (but it is always nice to refresh its own knowledges). - The readings (not my learning style)
<p>12. Did you find this course useful to your studies/work/personal interests?</p>	<p>Yes = 7 No = 0 Not sure = 0</p>
<p>13. How likely are you to recommend this course to a friend or classmate?</p>	<p>Extremely likely [highest rating] = 6 Likely = 1</p>
<p>14. This was a BA-level introductory course to the Environmental Humanities. Do you think more courses in the Environmental Humanities should be developed at UiB (e.g. at higher levels, with specific thematic foci, etc.)?</p>	<p>Yes = 7 No = 0 I don't know = 0</p>
<p>15. Any final comments?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I appreciate your help, Tina. I joined every class, not only because the content was interesting, but also because you always answered my questions with a smile and welcomed me as a part of the class, which made it fun for me to participate in class. thank you so much (: - An enlightening class. Everyone citizen of the world should be sensibilize as we have been. The way the teacher shared it was exceptional. - Special thanks to the teacher

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- it was one of the best class I have ever had of my life, and all of the other students as well were so interesting, contributing to a really great atmosphere in the class.- A course like Environmental Humanities should have been mandatory for politicians and policy makers! Maybe they would have made better decisions then?- For the last question, I think that the Environmental Humanities are a field which should be developed in all universities. It is interesting, very relevant to deal with the environmental crises we are now living, and very useful to be more open-minded, to take conscious of a lot of different realities and perspectives you didn't know previously. It is the most interesting course I had in the UiB this year, despite the class of Ocean Anthropology (first semester). Thank you for having proposed it!- Keep up the great work (and give her a pay rise) !
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