**Climates of Violence: Gender, capitalism and coloniality**

**Course description**

**Instructor**

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The course introduces students to the relationships between gender, the global political economy, and the climate crisis, while attending to the relevant theories, methodologies, and debates.

Using violence against both humans and other-than-humans as an entry point, the course examines the role of the global political economy and specifically (green) extractivist regimes in perpetuating gendered and environmental violence. While green energy transition(s) offer benefits such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, minimizing pollution, and enhancing energy independence, scholars warn that current approaches to the climate crisis might perpetuate existing inequalities and environmental limits. This phenomenon is conceptualized as “green extractivism“ that scholars have linked to climate necropolitics” (Deberdt & Le Billon, 2021), “climate coloniality” (Sultana 2022, 2024) and/or “green colonialism” (Dorn, 2022) that may lead to “green wars” (Megan Ybarra, 2017) and reproduce “green violence”. Altogether, current appraoches to the climate crisis might risk reproducing the commodification of nature, externalizing environmental costs, and reinforcing colonial patterns of exploitation, and thus lead to potentially violent outcomes for marginalized groups in (green) extractivist regions.

To understand the complex interplay of economic, ecological, and political power relations that underly and underpin gendered and environmental violence, the course draws on Feminist (post/decolonial) International Relations (IR), International Political Economy (IPE), and (Feminist) Political Ecology. These approaches challenge the separations between politics and economics, states and markets, and nature and society, emphasizing their interactions and differences. Feminist and post/decolonial scholarship further critiques gendered and racialized violence, labor divisions, social reproduction, and care economies. It challenges the universalized notion of ‘woman’ and ‘nature‘ and explores the intersections of gender, class, race, and other categories of difference and inequality in the production of violence, critiquing ‘White,’ middle-class feminism and advocating for broader struggles for justice and (critical) sustainability.

Through selected readings and empirical examples from both the Global South and Global North, students will discuss main debates to examine the production, dynamics, and resistance to gendered and environmental violence. The course addresses questions such as how gender informs the political economy of environmental violence, the role of gendered and racialized constructions in this context, and the insights gained by thinking gendered and environmental violence within the same theoretical framework.

By deepening theoretical, methodological and empirical knowledge, students will critically understand the tensions between conflicts, resource politics, and natural resource extraction, the power relations underlying these structures, and the socio-ecological and politico-economic consequences and resistances that emerge. This will enhance analytical skills in using gender concepts and conducting political economic analyses, envisioning appraoches to the climate crisis as an emancipatory project centered on environmental and intersectional justice.

**Objectives**

The course uses gender, the environment and the political economy as an entry point to explore broader conceptual and empirical issues around the struggle for justice and redistribution, as well as to deepen students’ understanding of different meanings of gender, approaches to gender research, and levels of gender analysis, building on and advancing their knowledge basis.

The specific objectives of the course are for students to:

* acquire a basic understanding and overview of the field of political economy and gender
* learn to compare and contrast different conceptual and empirical perspectives on the subject
* understand and evaluate different meanings of ‘gender’, different ways of thinking the interrelations of gender and political economy, as well as different sites and levels of gender analysis in relation to the global political economy
* improve argumentative and writing skills in academic and non-academic genres (i.e., essay)
* independently formulate questions and arguments drawing on the course readings in discussions, exercises, and written assignments

**METHOD**

Each class follows a guided reading concept that uses each week to introduce a specific perspective on violence through a short input by the teacher guided by the assigned literature to familiarize students with various, partly contradictory approaches to the study of gender equality frameworks in general and of gender and security specifically. Engagement with the literature and subsequent class discussion will be guided by three questions:

* How does each text conceptualize gender? What does gender mean and refer to? (men/women; masculinities/femininities; gender relations; gender orders; intersectionality; de/postcoloniality; etc.)
* How do the texts understand the relationship between gender and security? Where do they locate it? (institutions, actors, national-international-everyday level, policies, practices, discourses, ideologies, meanings, etc.)
* How do they *do* gender analysis? Which methods are employed?

The course combines two general elements:

1. Close reading and discussion of key texts from different disciplines to develop theoretical and methodological foundations
2. Development and presentation of students’ own writing projects, accompanied by feedback from the group and the course instructor

The course is taught twice weekly. In the first unit of the week, we will have a presentation and on this basis, be discussing the assigned readings and engage with the arguments made therein. In the second unit, we will continue the discussion and possibly conduct practical exercises that teach students how to apply the acquired knowledge on theories, methodologies, research designs, and findings toward their own projects. Exercises include e.g. mapping/visualizing different theoretical approaches and debates; and formulating questions from different theoretical perspectives.

**TRIGGER WARNING:**

The content and discussion in this course will explore topics related to violence, conflict and insecurity. Some of it may be emotionally and intellectually challenging to engage with. The teacher will work with the students to make the classroom a space where we can engage openly, empathetically and thoughtfully with difficult content.

**METHOD OF PRESENTATION:**

* Lectures
* Plenary and Group Discussions
* Visual demonstrations, such video inputs

**REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:**

* Class participation + class discussion -15%
* Oral presentation - 35%
* Final exam - 50%

**Presentation**

Depending on the class size, students will either work individually or in groups. Students will be preparing 10-15 min presentations on case studies of their choosing (**country case studies**, e.g. Iraq, Colombia, Austria, etc.; **institutions and actors**, e.g. NATO, the African Union, IMF or the World bank, private security companies; **policy fields**, such as environmental and/or gender policy). They will conduct their own independent research, give short inputs on their case studies, and guide class discussions. They will prepare slides to go with the presentation. Presentations will take place in unit 11 and students will receive feedback from the class and teacher. This assignment strengthens presentation as well as research skills. An input on ‘how-to’ will be given in unit 6. The teacher will support the decision on a topic, formulation of guiding questions, and case study structure.

**Final Paper: Reflection on case study**

Students will be writing a reflection on the case study presentation of 2500-3000 words, to be uploaded to moodle by the end of the final week. This reflection piece fosters the connection between the academic literature and the discussion of current events. Input on ‘how-to’ will be given in unit 6 and students will be supported in formulating an overarching question. Feedback will be given via moodle with the grading.

**Class Participation Grading Rubric**

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| **A** | **Excellent participation**  The student’s contributions reflect an active reading of the assigned bibliography. Skillfully synthesizes the main ideas of the readings and raises questions about the applications and implications of the material. Demonstrates, through questions and comments, that they have been capable of relating the main ideas in the readings to the other information discussed in the course, and with his or her own life experience. The student makes informed judgments about the readings and other ideas discussed in class, providing evidence and reasons. They respectfully state their reactions about other classmates’ opinions, and are capable of contributing to the inquiry spiral with other questions. The student gets fully involved in the completion of the class activities. |
| **B** | **Very good participation**  The student’s contributions show that the assigned materials are usually read. Most of the time the main ideas are identified, even though sometimes it seems that applications and implications of the information read were not properly reflected upon. The student is able to construct over others’ contributions, but sometimes seems to interrupt the shared construction to go over tangents. They are respectful of others’ ideas. Regularly involved in the activities but occasionally loses concentration or energy. |
| **C** | **Regular participation**  The participant evidences a regular reading of the bibliography, but in a superficial way. They try to construct over others’ ideas, but commonly provides comments that indicate lack of preparation about the material. Frequently, contributions are shallow or unarticulated with the discussion in hand. |
| **F** | **Insufficient participation**  Consistently, the participant reads in a shallow way or does not read at all. Does not participate in an informed way and shows lack of interest in constructing over others’ ideas. |

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

Attendance will be taken for every class. If a student misses more than two classes without an excuse, the final grade will be reduced by one-third of a letter grade (for example, A- to B+) for every additional unexcused absence.

**Excused Absences are permitted only when:**

1)    a student is ill (health issues),

2)    when class is held on a recognized religious holiday traditionally observed by the particular student, or

3)    in the case of a grave incident affecting family members;

4)    Exceptions may be made for conflicting academic commitments, but only in writing and only well in advance of missed class time.

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| **Week 1: Introduction**  **Week 1/Unit 1:** Introduction of course themes, schedule, requirements; brainstorming/mind mapping of course themes and topics  **Week 1/Unit 2:** Introduction to gender, the political economy and environmental violence |
| The first class draws heavily on joint brainstorming and mind-mapping exercises to provide an entry point to the complex field of gender, the global political economy and environmental violence. Asking the basic questions ‘What is violence? How does gender relate to violence and to the global political economy of environmental violence, and how does the environment relate to gendered violence?’, we will explore prior experiences, knowledges, and understandings of the main concepts and their links. This provides a shared basis from which to venture into the thematic classes that follow.  By the end of the class, we will have compiled a visualization of the different concepts of gender that students are already aware of (men/women, masculinities/femininities, gender relations, etc.) and how they intersect with different concepts and sites of the global political economy (broad/narrow, institutions, power relations, policies, practices, etc.).  To document the learning process and have a ‘take-home’ output from the course, we will come back to this chart by the end of the class, locate the different approaches we are learning about within it, or amend and change it, if needed. |

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| **Week: 2: Introducing Capitalism and Climate Crisis** |
| Unit 1   * Park, Jonathan T. “Climate Change and Capitalism.” *Consilience*, no. 14, 2015, pp. 189–206. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/26188749. * Naomi Klein This Changes Everything: Capitalism Vs. The Climate, Introduction   Unit 2   * Chakrabarty, D. (2017). The Politics of Climate Change Is More Than the Politics of Capitalism. *Theory, Culture & Society*, *34*(2-3), 25-37. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276417690236> |
| **Week 3: Approaching Environmental Violence** |
| In this class, we will explore approaches to Environmental Conflicts, Activism and Violence.  Required reading:  UNIT 1   * Arnim Scheidel, Daniela Del Bene, Juan Liu, Grettel Navas, Sara Mingorría, Federico Demaria, Sofía Avila, Brototi Roy, Irmak Ertör, Leah Temper, Joan Martínez-Alier (2020). Environmental conflicts and defenders: A global overview, Global Environmental Change, Volume 63, [Environmental conflicts and defenders: A global overview - ScienceDirect](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959378020301424) * Marcantonio, R. (2022). Approaching Environmental Violence. In Environmental Violence: In the Earth System and the Human Niche (pp. 1-24). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.   UNIT 2   * Pessina, Gloria (2022). Environmental Violence. Chapter 25 (pp. 347- 361), In Handbook of Critical Environmental Politics,  [Luigi Pellizzoni](https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_1?ie=UTF8&field-author=Luigi+Pellizzoni&text=Luigi+Pellizzoni&sort=relevancerank&search-alias=books), [Emanuele Leonardi](https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_2?ie=UTF8&field-author=Emanuele+Leonardi&text=Emanuele+Leonardi&sort=relevancerank&search-alias=books), [Viviana Asara](https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_3?ie=UTF8&field-author=Viviana+Asara&text=Viviana+Asara&sort=relevancerank&search-alias=books), Edward Elgar Publishing * Barca, Stefanie (2014). Telling the Story Right: Environmental Violence and Liberation Narratives, Environment and History, 20: 535-546 |

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| **Week 4: Gender, climate and violence** I |
| In this session, we shift the attention away from environmental violence to learn how a feminist political ecology frameworks engage with questions of how violence both reflects and reproduces gendered and intersecting power relations; who is able to claim protection and who is more frequently a focus of violence; how our definitions of violence and victimhood are shaped by gender and intersecting oppressions; and, how these dynamics enter the political and geopolitical spheres.  UNIT 1   * Tran, D., Hanaček, K. A global analysis of violence against women defenders in environmental conflicts. *Nat Sustain* **6**, 1045–1053 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-023-01126-4> * https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2020-002-En.pdf   UNIT 2   * Gender and Climate Change: An Introduction, <https://books.google.de/books?hl=de&lr=&id=7pr8xyafPi0C&oi=fnd&pg=PR3&dq=gender+and+climate+change&ots=bU1lz8pdSn&sig=HPpXQA1uOP4AFdlpXYEXrGkPCwg&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=gender%20and%20climate%20change&f=false>   **Week 5: Gender, climate and violence** **II** |
| UNIT 1   * Resurreción, B. Gender and Environment in the Global South. From Women, Environment and Development to Feminist Political Ecology. Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment, Chapter 4.   UNIT 2   * Mollett, C. (2017). Gender’s Critical Edge. Feminist political ecology, postcolonial intersectionality, and the coupling of race and gender. Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment, Chapter 1. * Meer, Shamim (2021): Extractivism’s intrinsic violence: the domination of women and the domination of nature, In: Redirecting Security from Feminism, 39: 59-69.   **Activities**   * Think about the different ways environmental violence enters the world: through acts, threats, allegations and punishment. How are these gendered, classed and raced? What systems do they legitimate and maintain? * Create a mind map: how could we develop a theory of environmental violence that encompasses both the gendered and racialized reality of its prevalence and the many harms it causes, and how the spectre of danger is used to demonise racialised, classed and other groups?   **Week 6: Methods and Methodologies**  Introduction to qualitative research methods in the field of gender and the global political economy and ecology & developing a research question and research design  UNIT 1   * Jones, Gareth A. and Rodgers, Dennis (2019) Ethnographies and/of violence, *Ethnography* 20(3), 1-23.   UNIT 2   * Thambinathan, V., & Kinsella, E. A. (2021). Decolonizing Methodologies in Qualitative Research: Creating Spaces for Transformative Praxis. *International Journal of Qualitative* Methods, 20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211014766> * Charter of Decolonial Research Ethics <https://decolonialityeurope.wixsite.com/decoloniality/charter-of-decolonial-research-ethics>   **Additional literature**   * Lupton, D (ed) (2020): Doing Fieldwork in a Pandemic (crowd-sourced document): <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1clGjGABB2h2qbduTgfqribHmog9B6P0NvMgVuiHZCl8/edit#heading=h.ze8ug1cqk5lo> * Hoover Green, A and D Kay Cohen (2021): Centering Human Subjects: The Ethics of “Desk Research” on Political Violence, Journal of Global Security Studies 6(2), <https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogaa029> |
| **Week 7: Panel discussion, mid-term evaluation, feedback and input** |
| **Panel discussion** |
| **In the first unit**, we are holding a panel discussion with one leading international scholar on gender and the global political economy and/or practitioners who are working with gender broadly defined in the context of climate crisis and violence. This will provide insights into the real-world challenges faced by those working for gender equality and enable conversations about the relations, but also gaps between academic scholarship and application in the political process. |
| **The second unit:**   * gives general feedback * takes stock of the contents and organization of the course so far and which adjustments might be needed to better achieve learning goals and create a more productive and inclusive learning environment. Students will be asked to fill in a short, anonymous questionnaire in preparation * provides space for follow-up discussions   **Activities**   * Think about a topic you would like to write your essay on * Free-write for 10 minutes on your possible or chosen essay topic and then in pairs or small groups by possible topic, to discuss potential questions and approaches   **Small group discussions**   * What are the differences between descriptive and critical writing? * What does it mean to write theoretically? * What does a good essay question look like? * How is it best to plan an essay?   **Week 8: Green Extractivism and the Coloniality of Violence** |
| Unit 1:   * [Judith Shapiro](https://www.routledge.com/search?author=Judith%20Shapiro) & J[ohn-Andrew McNeish](https://www.routledge.com/search?author=John-Andrew%20McNeish) (2021) Our Extractive Age. Expressions of Violence and Resistance <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/48472/9781000391589.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> (p. 19- 29) * Alimonda, Hector (2011/2019): The Coloniality of Nature: An Approach to Latin American Political Ecology.   Unit 2:   * Diego Andreucci, Gustavo García López, Isabella M. Radhuber, Marta Conde, Daniel M. Voskoboynik, J.D. Farrugia, Christos Zografos, The coloniality of green extractivism: Unearthing decarbonisation by dispossession through the case of nickel, Political Geography, Volume 107, 2023, 102997, ISSN 0962-6298, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2023.102997. * Dorn, Felix. (2022). Green colonialism in Latin America? Towards a new research agenda for the global energy transition. Revista europea de estudios latinoamericanos y del Caribe = European review of Latin American and Caribbean studies. 137-146. 10.32992/erlacs.10939. |
| **Week 9: Climate Coloniality and Climate Necropolitics** |
| Unit 1:   * Farhana Sultana, The unbearable heaviness of climate coloniality, Political Geography, Volume 99, 2022, 102638, ISSN 0962-6298, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2022.102638>.   Unit 2:   * Meredith J. DeBoom, Climate coloniality as atmospheric violence: From necropolitics toward planetary mutuality, Political Geography, Volume 99, 2022, 102786, ISSN 0962-6298, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2022.102786. |

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| **Week 10: Resistance against gender and environmental violence** |
| This class discusses feminist struggles and resistance movements in several (post)colonial settings.  UNIT 1   * Muñoz, Enara Echart, and Maria del Carmen Villarreal (2019). Women’s struggles against extractivism in Latin America and the Caribbean. *Contexto Internacional* 41: 303-325.   UNIT 2   * Cireffice, V. and Lynda Sullivan (2019). Women on the Frontlines of Resistance to Extractivism. *Policy & Practice*: A Development Education Review 29. |
| **Week 11: Degrowth & Peacebuilding**  Exercise: How can we make peace? Developing ways for sustainable peace |
| In this class, we will explore the reasons for violence, against who it is primarily directed, and what needs to be done to achieve sustainable peace by applying a feminist political economic and ecological lens, in (post)conflict contexts.  UNIT 1   * <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-022-04412-x> * <https://www.annualreviews.org/docserver/fulltext/energy/43/1/annurev-environ-102017-025941.pdf?expires=1721051202&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=8EF4D8EEC128AF8C13AA2E7FFF9384C1>   UNIT 2   * Nicoson, C. Towards climate resilient peace: an intersectional and degrowth approach. *Sustain Sci* **16**, 1147–1158 (2021). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-021-00906-1 * Keina Yoshida, Lina M Céspedes-Báez (2021). The nature of Women, Peace and Security: A Colombian perspective, International Affairs, 97 (1). 17–34.   Additional reading:   * Marcantonio, R. (2024). The glaring gaps: environmental violence and peace research and practice. Peacebuilding, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21647259.2024.2355765> * Cohn, C. and C. Duncanson (2020). Women, Peace and Security in a changing climate, International Feminist Journal of Politics, 22(5): 742-762, DOI: [10.1080/14616742.2020.1843364](https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2020.1843364) |
| **Week 12/1:** |
| **Group presentations** of case studies |

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| **Week 12/2: Recap and consultations** |
| The final class evaluates contents, activities, and learning outcomes of the course, looking back at the objectives formulated in the beginning of the semester and the mid-term evaluation. We will reflect on the subject areas covered during the semester and address potential gaps that have remained open. If there is demand, we will have extra time for individual feedback and consultations, particularly for any questions related to the final essay.  What have you learned from the module?   * Prepare some notes or a sketch before the session and then compare in small groups together during the session * Let’s talk together about study skills: what skills have you developed from the module? What skills do you still need to develop and work on, and how will you do this in future? * What might be the key questions and issues for future gender theory and research, and how they might be tackled? * Start by thinking about what ‘big questions’ remain for you about theorising gender and environmental violence, and work outwards from there. * Produce a poster by hand based on our discussions * Think about one thing you can pledge to do, going forward, to work towards gender and environmental justice or equality (however you define it). |