

# FUTURE GEOGRAPHIES

PhD course within the Swedish National Program for Research Education in Human Geography

Autumn semester 2021

**Course convenor:** Erik Jönsson, Department of Social and Economic Geography, Uppsala University  
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**Course period:** Oct-Nov 2021.

**Credits:** 7,5 ECTS

**Application deadline and maximum course size:** Interested PhD Students must apply via e-mail to Erik Jönsson by April 30, 2021. Maximum number of participants is set at 20, and students from Swedish Human Geography departments are given priority.

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to a set of vibrant, if occasionally discordant, discussions on future worlds and future visions increasingly prevalent both in geography and in a number of overlapping fields (human ecology, innovation studies, science and technology studies, sustainability studies etc.). Through engaging with how future visions are articulated today and how various actors strive to create their respective desired futures students will gain a nuanced understanding of space and time as inescapably intertwined. Thus, the course illuminates the deeply political role of future visions.

## Lecturers

- Wim Carton, Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies.
- Markus Grillitsch, Department of Human Geography, Lund University.
- Alf Hornborg, Human Ecology, Lund University
- Erik Jönsson, Department of Social and Economic Geography, Uppsala University.
- Anneleen Kenis, Division of Geography and Tourism, Division of Geography and Tourism, KU Leuven

## Course sessions

The course will be divided into two two-day and a final three day session themed as follows. The names in brackets identify convenors for each session (though other lecturers can be involved as well).

### What future to expect in the so-called Anthropocene (Erik Jönsson, Alf Hornborg)

- 6-7 October 2021, Campus Gotland

During the first module, students will be introduced to theorisations of future geographies. They will also gain familiarity with texts today either proclaiming the advent of the Anthropocene as a novel geological epoch, or problematizing the idea that we are now entering 'the geology of mankind' (Crutzen, 2002). Focus will be on the processes put at the heart of descriptions of the transition to this suggested epoch, the various alternative names given to the Anthropocene, and on various kinds of utopian or dystopian visions for the world to come. The main literature for this week will be Bonneuil and Fressoz (2017) and Scranton (2015), complemented by articles on what the Anthropocene according to various researchers could mean, as a notion or as a geological epoch.

### Changing Geography of Production and Innovation (Markus Grillitsch)

- 20-21 October 2021, Lund

The aim of this module is to familiarise students with future visions and attempts to create particular futures within the context of the changing geography of production and innovation, including the disparities it creates within and between regions, and potential policy implications. An emphasis lies on interdependencies at multiple scales from local to global and the factors shaping why some places prosper and grow while others are lagging behind. In the module, we discuss the reasons for path-dependent development trajectories informed by evolutionary theory as well as how crises and radical innovations ripple exiting systems of production and consumptions. Yet, another focus is to what extent, how, and

under which circumstances human agency shapes development and potentially leads to a break with existing trajectories. The model also informs students about policy approaches and potential policy implications shaping the geography of production and innovation. This module is based on articles, which discuss the conceptual and theoretical foundations of the geography of production and innovation, and its consequences (e.g. Rodríguez-Pose, 2018, MacKinnon et al., 2019, Boschma et al., 2017, Storper, 2011, Grillitsch and Sotarauta, 2019, Hassink et al., 2019, Yeung and Coe, 2015).

### **The politics and geographies of climate futures (Wim Carton, Anneleen Kenis)**

- 1-3 November 2021, Uppsala

In this module, students are introduced to scholarship on sociotechnical imaginaries (Kim and Jasanoff, 2009), anticipatory climate governance (Vervoort and Gupta, 2018; Guston, 2014) and the knowledge politics of climate change scenarios (Beck and Mahony, 2018). Lectures and seminars will draw on examples from among others, geoengineering and carbon removal research (Buck, 2019) to lay out a comprehensive picture of ongoing debates and research on the representation and envisioning of contested futures under climate change. Main questions to be raised include the relation between discursive constructions of the future and the (geo)politics of the present; issues of representation in the creation of influential scenarios (i.e. who gets to imagine the future); and the kind of functions that such visions perform.

### **Examination**

The course will be examined through a 5,000 word course paper, to be submitted two weeks after the course's final session. Drawing on the various themes and sets of literature introduced during the course the students will here have the possibility to connect the course content to their PhD research.

### **Evaluation**

A written course evaluation will be conducted after the final course session.

### **Literature (preliminary)**

- BECK, S., & MAHONY, M. (2018). The politics of anticipation: The IPCC and the negative emissions technologies experience. *Global Sustainability*, 1, e8.
- BELLAMY, R., & PALMER, J. (2018). Geoengineering and geographers: Rewriting the Earth in what image? *Area* 51(3), 524–531.
- BUCK, H. J. (2019). *After Geoengineering: Climate Tragedy, Repair and Restoration*. London - New York: Verso.
- BONNEUIL, C. & FRESSOZ, J.B. (2017) *The Shock of the Anthropocene*. London: Verso.
- BOSCHMA, R., COENEN, L., FRENKEN, K. & TRUFFER, B. (2017) Towards a theory of regional diversification: combining insights from Evolutionary Economic Geography and Transition Studies. *Regional Studies*, 51, 31-45.
- CRUTZEN, P.J. (2002) Geology of Mankind. *Nature* 415, 23.
- GRILLITSCH, M. & SOTARAUTA, M. (2019) Trinity of change agency, regional development paths and opportunity spaces. *Progress in Human Geography*, 1-20.
- GUSTON, D. H. (2014). Understanding "anticipatory governance." *Social Studies of Science*, 44(2), 218–242.
- HASSINK, R., ISAKSEN, A. & TRIPPL, M. (2019) Towards a comprehensive understanding of new regional industrial path development. *Regional Studies*, 53, 1636-1645.
- JASANOFF, S., & KIM, S. H. (2009). Containing the atom: Sociotechnical imaginaries and nuclear power in the United States and South Korea. *Minerva*, 47(2), 119–146.
- MACKINNON, D., DAWLEY, S., PIKE, A. & CUMBERS, A. (2019) Rethinking Path Creation: A Geographical Political Economy Approach. *Economic Geography*, 95, 113-135.
- RODRÍGUEZ-POSE, A. (2018) The revenge of the places that don't matter (and what to do about it). *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 11, 189-209.
- SCRANTON, R. (2015) *Learning to die in the Anthropocene: reflections on the end of a civilization*. San Francisco: City Lights.

- STORPER, M. (2011) Why do regions develop and change? The challenge for geography and economics. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 11, 333-346.
- TARR, A.R. (2020) Does Wall•E Dream of Electric Kale? The California Dream as Post-Scarcity Nightmare. *Literary Geographies*, 6(1): 24-38.
- VERVOORT, J., & GUPTA, A. (2018). Anticipating climate futures in a 1.5 °C era: the link between foresight and governance. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 31,104–111.
- YEUNG, H. W.-C. & COE, N. M. (2015) Toward a Dynamic Theory of Global Production Networks. *Economic Geography*, 91, 29-58.