



FAK3122 Artificiality, Nature and Naturalness 7.5 credits

Artificialitet, natur och naturlighet

This is a translation of the Swedish, legally binding, course syllabus.

If the course is discontinued, students may request to be examined during the following two academic years

Establishment

Course syllabus for FAK3122 valid from Spring 2017

Grading scale

Education cycle

Third cycle

Specific prerequisites

Enrolment in PhD or Master Program in any university or college.

Language of instruction

The language of instruction is specified in the course offering information in the course catalogue.

Intended learning outcomes

The course aims to offer advanced understanding of:

traditions and practices of conservation in different parts of the world, historical and current;
relations between conservation and environmentalism;
the role of artificial methods in conservation;
the science, ethics, and politics of conservation, national, colonial and post-colonial;
the concepts and ideas related to conservation such as: nature, environment, wilderness, biodiversity, human impact, conservation, preservation, protection, extinction, restoration, boundaries, parks/reserves, rights, power, agency, ownership, nature-culture, rewilding, naturalness/artificiality, management;
current trends and issues in conservation debates and controversies, including the implications of the emerging Anthropocene framing;
the historical patterns and contingencies of the rationale for conservation as a major phenomenon in modern societies.

Course contents

The idea of naturalness is deeply encoded into thinking about society and non-human nature. It permeates the long history of environmentalism and every dimension of environmental concern, from the idea of environmental impacts or boundaries to the idea of the loss or end of nature. And yet in an Anthropocene era, it seems clear that ‘nature’ is everywhere novel or hybrid to some extent. Moreover, the management of nature, even in conservation, is characterized by the application of technology. Even the protection of nature seems an exercise of artificiality. This course will consider these puzzles, and ask how those who care for nature respond to them. The particular focus of the course is the conservation and management of non-human life (‘biodiversity’), but applications to other contexts and dimensions of environmental management will also be considered.

Disposition

The course will combine lectures and short presentations by instructors with seminars and conversations. All students will be asked to make a prepared contribution to the discussion based on course readings and possibly related to ongoing research

Course literature

Benson, E, *Wired Wilderness: Technologies of Tracking and the Making of Modern Wildlife* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010)

---, “Generating Infrastructural Invisibility: Insulation, Interconnection, and Avian Excrement in the Southern California Power Grid,” *Environmental Humanities* 6 (2015): 103-130.

Cronon, W., “The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature”, in William Cronon, ed., *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1995), 69-90.

Lorimer J. *Wildlife in the Anthropocene: Conservation after Nature*. (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2015).

Monbiot, G. *Feral: Searching for Enchantment on the Frontiers of Rewilding*. (London: Allen Lane, 2013).

Robin, L., S. Sörlin & P. Warde, eds., *The Future of Nature: Documents of Global Change* (New Haven, 2013).

Shapiro, B., *How to Clone a Mammoth: The Science of De-extinction* (Princeton, 2015).

Additional readings will be assigned in direct relation to class.

Examination

Based on recommendation from KTH's coordinator for disabilities, the examiner will decide how to adapt an examination for students with documented disability.

The examiner may apply another examination format when re-examining individual students.

Other requirements for final grade

1) Active participation at a minimum of six meetings is required (individual exceptions can be accepted, ask instructor). 2) Minor oral and written tasks will be given during the course. 3) At the end of the course the student will submit a paper of 3-5 000 words on one or several of the themes discussed in the course. A 'pass' grade requires that all dimensions 1 to 3 are satisfactorily fulfilled.

Ethical approach

- All members of a group are responsible for the group's work.
- In any assessment, every student shall honestly disclose any help received and sources used.
- In an oral assessment, every student shall be able to present and answer questions about the entire assignment and solution.