

## **Exploring current trends, discussions and methodologies in research on human-environment relations**

**Berlin, 18 – 22 September 2017**

**IRI THESys offices, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor,  
Friedrichstraße 191, 10117 Berlin**

Research on human-environment relations is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary. Various and often quite different disciplines spanning natural, social and human sciences engage in research focusing on how humans live in, affect, govern, reflect upon and perceive their natural environment, and how, in turn, that environment supports or constrains human life and culture. A multiplicity of methods, epistemologies and even ontologies thus intermingle in human-environment research. How well do these integrate to enable (truly) interdisciplinary research?

At the Integrated Research Institute on Transformations of Human-Environment Systems (IRI-THESys, <https://www.iri-thesys.org/>), researchers from the humanities, social and natural sciences challenge each other in order to collaborate, develop and potentially solve research questions revolving around current transformations of human-environment systems. The PhD Summer School *Exploring current trends, discussions and methodologies in research on human-environment relations* is part of this agenda.

The Summer School will bring together scholars and PhD students from different disciplines. The scholars will be asked to present their personal as well as general disciplinary understanding of what a ‘human-environmental relation’ is. This understanding has implications for how research on human-environment relations is done in different disciplines. The scholars are therefore encouraged to link their personal and disciplinary understanding of human-environment relations with *how* they go about exploring these.

By providing the students (and invited scholars) with epistemological and methodological insights into how different disciplines engage with human-environment relations the Summer School hopes to provide 1) a better understanding of how different disciplines understand a ‘human-environment relation’, 2) how they go about researching it, 3) ways to identify and understand differences between disciplines, and 4) ways to identify common and complementary research topics and methodologies cutting across disparate disciplines.

The latter objective is a particularly important component of the Summer School. A major challenge for interdisciplinary research is the difficulty of developing research questions around which different disciplines can collaborate. It is our hope that the Summer School will equip the students with knowledge on how to think about and develop such questions.

## Programme

<b>Mo, 18 Sept</b>	
13.15-14.00	Prof. Jonas Nielsen, IRI THESys, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin: <i>Why Human Environmental research and something about the course, the practicalities and IRI THESys</i>
14.00-14.30	Coffee break
14.30-16.00	PhD Poster Presentations I
16.00-16.15	Coffee break
16.15-17.00	Discussion, program and miscellaneous
19.00	Course diner

<b>Tue, 19 Sept</b>	
09.15-11.00	Prof. Dieter Gerten, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research: <i>Earth system analysis, planetary boundaries and social transformation</i>
11.00-11.30	Coffee break
11.30-13.00	Prof. Jonas Nielsen, Prof. Jörg Niewöhner, Dr. Bettina König, IRI THESys, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin: <i>Multi-disciplinarity, inter-disciplinarity and trans-disciplinarity: All you ever wanted to ask and know about these concepts</i>
13.00-14.00	Lunch break
14.00-15.30	Speaker to be confirmed: <i>Linking the social and the ecological through governance</i>
15.30-16.00	Coffee break
16.00-17.00	PhD Poster Presentations II
17.00-18.00	General discussion/synthesis of the day

<b>Wed, 20 Sept</b>	
09.15-11.00	The skill of networking I (Matteo Garavoglia, Impuls Plus, Köln): <i>How to network forms an essential aspect of developing and maintaining a career in academia.</i> In this session we will let ourselves be inspired by a networking expert.
11.00-11.30	Coffee break
11.30-13.00	The skill of networking II (Matteo Garavoglia, Impuls Plus, Köln)

13.00-14.00	Lunch break
14.00-15.30	Prof. Heiko Faust (Universität Göttingen) <i>Experiences and concrete cases of conceptualization, operationalization and methodological approach to human-environment projects</i>
16.00	Social activity: Tempelhofer Feld/ Berlin Wall

<b>Thu, 21 Sept</b>	
09.15-11.00	Prof. Hermann Lotze-Campen, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research: <i>From the farm to the global garden: computer simulation of human land-use change at different spatial scales</i>
11.00-11.30	Coffee break
11.30-13.00	Jonas Nielsen, Herman Lotze-Campen and Anthony Patt: <i>How do I ask an interdisciplinary research question?</i> In this session groups across the disciplines will get together in order to develop a research question related to human environment relations to which everybody within the group can contribute. The process of getting to this question forms a key element of the exercise and the presentation the following day. A short introduction by Jonas Nielsen, Herman Lotze-Campen and Anthony Patt will set the scene.
13.00-14.00	Lunch
14.00-15.30	Prof. Anthony Patt, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology: <i>An undisciplined approach to studying human-environment systems</i>
15.30-16.00	Coffee break
16.00-17.00	Groups prepare Friday's presentation of their research question and challenges
17.00-17.30	Round up, questions, discussion
18.30	Optional event: Modern Art in Bunker – Boros collection

<b>Fri, 22 Sept</b>	
10.00-11.00	This is an interdisciplinary research question on HE relations! Student groups present
11.00-11.30	Coffee break
11.30-12.00	This is an interdisciplinary research question on HE relations! Student groups present
12.00-13.00	Round-up, general discussion, ways forward
14.00-15.30	Lunch and good byes

## **Student Work**

You are to prepare a poster and read in advance of the course.

The readings are uploaded in Dropbox folder THESys Summer School 2017, subfolder Readings.

You will be invited to join this Dropbox group once you have been confirmed as participant.

In Drop Box you will also find a poster template in the Poster subfolder. Please use one of the templates. Upload the finished poster in the Poster subfolder no later than **12 August 2017**.

This is in order to have the posters printed in time.

There will be two poster sessions: Monday 14.30-16.00 and Tuesday 16:00 – 17:00. You will be allocated a time to present. The idea is that people mingle and walk from poster to poster. This should give you more time to talk about your own project than an oral presentation. It should also familiarize us with each other and our research. The posters will hang on the walls throughout the course.

Please make sure the following information is on your poster:

- ▶ PhD working title
- ▶ Place of research
- ▶ Topic of research
- ▶ Main research question
- ▶ Methodology
- ▶ Disciplinary affiliation: your PhD will be a PhD in what?

Please aim to make your poster understandable for researchers from other disciplines

Last but not least, bring a critical, engaged mind and a willingness to ask questions, discuss and learn to the course!

## **Contact**

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