

# NATURECULTURES

## Finnish Society for Environmental Social Sciences YHYS Colloquium

November 22–23, 2018

VENUE: University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Lapland, Sápmi, Finland

THEME: Naturecultures

The 23th annual colloquium of the Finnish Society for Environmental Social Sciences (YHYS) will be held at the University of Lapland, Rovaniemi. The theme of the colloquium is *Naturecultures*.

The programme includes keynote speeches, panel discussions, workshops and a pre-conference early career researcher meeting.

Ecological compensation, biodiversity offsetting, no net loss of biodiversity, ecosystem services, low-carbon economy, ecoinnovation, circular economy, zero waste, active energy citizenship, resilience and bioeconomy. These are examples of concepts that have in the past few years steered the conversations of the management of natural resources, environmental protection and environmental politics and greatly influenced political agendas. A growing awareness of the climate change, of the sixth wave of extinction and of other irreversible changes in our environment has influenced the emergence of re-conceptualizations of the eco-sociality of societies. It has sensitized subjects to identify the most critical question for the future policies and research: How to comprehend the co-existence of nature and society.

Environmental social sciences have indicated long ago how the problems of the society's relation with nature originate from the profoundly—and problematically—established divide between culture and nature, located in the western thought. The persistent modernist bifurcations form an obstacle to perceiving that human communities do not only live from the land, but live and breathe with the land— and with non-human others.

In the past few years, the emerging multidisciplinary discussion on naturecultures has unsettled the established fields of politics of nature and natural resources, political ecology, and environmental ethics by providing alternative, supplementary, reciprocal and ethically sustainable forms of knowing. The naturecultural theorizing has offered new conceptualizations for thinking about being-in-the-world and for re-establishing the relationship with the land by drawing open-mindedly from the traditions of natural sciences, social sciences, philosophy, and arts.

The colloquium seeks to foster multidisciplinary discussion on the issues of naturecultures, both as a research concept and as a mode of being-in-the-world.

## Call for papers

YHYS Colloquium invites contributions to the fields of natural resources and environmental politics as well as explorations on naturecultural issues covering a variety of issues such as energy and climate, or sharing our lives with non-human others.

To submit your paper proposal, please send your abstract (approx. 200 words by e-mail) to the [session convener](#) by September 3, 2018.

In addition to the colloquium sessions, an early career researcher meeting will be arranged on 21 November, 2018. For further information, please follow the webpages of the colloquium.

## SESSIONS

### Biodiversity offsetting: ideologies, modalities and production of naturecultures

The European goal of no net loss of biodiversity and ecosystems increasingly requires humans to offset their impacts on ecosystems. Biodiversity offsetting designates an ensemble of actions to maintain or restore the good conservation status of species and ecosystems impacted by a project. From no net loss perspective, the biodiversity lost in one place is compensated by creating equivalent gains elsewhere.

Biodiversity offsetting interrelates nature and culture in two ways. On the one hand, biodiversity offsetting promises to reconcile development and conservation. Humans move species and intervene on the trajectories of ecosystems to preserve them, restore them, or replace them with novel ecosystems. But species and ecosystems may also react in unexpected ways in response to offsetting actions. The resulting natureculture has been severely criticised by opponents to biodiversity offsetting who underlined its market-based rationality and the impossibility to recreate nature.

In this session, we invite researchers to reflect on biodiversity offsetting practices and theory. What are the ideas and ideologies behind biodiversity offsetting? What kind of biodiversity offsetting policy and legislation could best achieve the ambitious goals? How biodiversity offsetting works in practice? Which actors get involved in offsetting projects and how? What kind of naturecultures does offsetting produce?

Session conveners: Lucas Brunet ([lucas.brunet@irstea.fr](mailto:lucas.brunet@irstea.fr)) , Nina V. Nygren, University of Tampere.

### CLIMATE INTERVENTION – a phenomenon of the Anthropocene

Climate engineering, climate intervention and geoengineering are names referring to a set of emerging technologies currently developed to complement the toolbox for the fight against climate change. Climate engineering can take place by various methods from solar radiation management to carbon dioxide removal. Besides the technological aspects, also the governance of geoengineering is currently developed.

Climate engineering is essentially a phenomenon of the Anthropocene. Whereas climate change has shown that humans are capable of unintentionally altering the climate of our planet, geoengineering has been suggested as an intended strategy to buy time for efficient mitigation measures to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. However, the impacts of different deployment options are distributed unevenly, and it is also feared that the introduction of geoengineering technologies may reduce the political will to climate change mitigation.

This session welcomes presentations that discuss all forms of climate intervention from any of the following viewpoints: governance, design or implementation options, ethics, technological development, public perceptions, geoengineering as a strategy to deal with climate change, and many more.

Session convener: Ilona Mettiäinen, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland,  
Ilona.mettiainen@ulapland.fi

### Climate services – a new way to translate climate science to decision-making

Climate services are a recently introduced option in the science-policy interface. According to the 2015 roadmap by the European Commission, climate services involve “the transformation of climate-related data — together with other relevant information — into customised products such as projections, forecasts, information, trends, economic analysis, assessments (including technology assessment), counselling on best practices, development and evaluation of solutions and any other service in relation to climate that may be of use for the society at large.” (European Commission 2015). The roadmap notes the importance of climate services not only for climate adaptation actions, but also for mitigation and disaster risk management.

As the core purpose of climate services is to provide climate information to assist decision-making (Buontempo & Hewitt 2017), the importance of end-user involvement in the development process is highlighted.

This session welcomes presentations on case studies on climate services and their co-design processes, data related questions, and the usability of climate services from end-user viewpoints, to name a few.

Session convener: Ilona Mettiäinen, Ilona.mettiainen(at)ulapland.fi, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland

### Collective reflection on experiments, experimentation and interventions in environmental social science

Experiments and interventions are being increasingly called upon to test and invent solutions to sustainability problems. They are encouraged as dynamic means to develop new technologies, practices, institutional designs or governance arrangements, but also to invite new actors to their invention. Experimental designs have a long tradition in laboratory sciences. In social sciences action research has applied interventions as a means to address wicked social problems. Lately, in transition studies experiments have been highlighted as an engine for sustainability transitions. Science and Technology Studies remind that experimentation should keep as attentive for new imaginaries. All these various methodological approaches evoke rather different imaginaries for experiments, interventions and their outcomes.

In this working group we want to encourage discussion on the varying uses, motives and outcomes of experiments and interventions in environmental social science. We invite reflections on 1) varying experimental settings, tools, methods and concepts; 2) their different societal outcomes; 3) experiments and interventions as means to mobilize and create new imaginaries and collectives; 4) the changing role of research/ers in experimental settings and in interventions; 5) ethics of experimentation and intervention research.

The working group is organized around reflective talks followed by a collective discussion. Each participant is welcomed to give a reflection on their uses and outcomes of experiments, experimental research or interventions. The reflections can be based upon practical experience or theoretical elaborations. Creative ways to give the talk are welcome. We devote most of the time in the working group to joint discussions. Please send short synopsis of your argument (max 250

words) to the conveners by 3.9.2018. We aim to compile a commentary on the joint discussion to the [versuslehti.fi](http://versuslehti.fi).

Session Conveners:

Maija Faehnle (@ymparisto.fi), University of Tampere, Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE)  
Juha Hiedanpää (@luke.fi), Natural Resource Institute, Luke  
Minna Kaljonen (@ymparisto.fi), Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE)  
Helena Leino (@uta.fi), University of Tampere  
Taru Peltola (@ymparisto.fi), Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE)

### Environmental and ecological justice

Human-caused environmental changes have turned environmental matters a central concern for justice. Various social movements and academic disciplines have employed the notion of environmental justice and its further developments like food, climate and energy justice and justice in human-animal relations. New notions of justice have been coined.

This session explores and examines environmental justice in ways that improve our understanding about its different meanings and applications. We welcome both theoretical and empirical presentations that concern environmental justice or ecological justice (justice in human-nonhuman relations), broadly understood.

Session conveners:

Teea Kortetmäki, University of Tampere, [teea.kortetmaki@uta.fi](mailto:teea.kortetmaki@uta.fi)  
Markku Oksanen, University of Eastern Finland, [markku.oksanen@uef.fi](mailto:markku.oksanen@uef.fi)  
Abstract submissions (150-300 words, by September 3): [teea.kortetmaki@uta.fi](mailto:teea.kortetmaki@uta.fi)

### Investigating togetherness in a more-than-human society: More-than-human methodologies

The relational approach of actor network theory (ANT) and feminist research, especially Haraway's contributions (2003; 2008), have had an immense influence on the methodological development of human-animal studies. Following this, an increasing amount of scholars has started to discover ways to recognize and make visible the agency of non-humans in research and beyond (see Buller, 2015). In the past few years, there have been valuable openings in more-than-human methodologies in the fields of anthropology (e.g. Candea, 2010), geography (e.g. Brown & Banks, 2015) and sociology (e.g. Malone, Selby & Longo, 2014). In addition to this, recent multidisciplinary book contributions have taken the task to explore more-than-human methodologies (Hamilton & Taylor, 2017; Bastian, Jones, Moore & Roe, 2017).

To be able to study togetherness in a more-than-human society, there is yet a further need for developing new methodological approaches. Recognizing this, the session invites innovative, provocative and experimental openings to the discussion of more-than-human methodologies. We hope these openings to bring together different disciplinary backgrounds, all the way from social sciences to natural sciences, and beyond. Topics of the session are not restricted to particular animate or inanimate more-than-human entities.

Conveners: Mikko Äijälä [mikko.aijala@ulapland.fi](mailto:mikko.aijala@ulapland.fi) and Tarja Salmela [tarja.salmela@ulapland.fi](mailto:tarja.salmela@ulapland.fi), University of Lapland.

### Living with waste: exploring how waste shapes/ is shaped by contemporary societies

Contemporary societies are characterized by constant circulation of waste from one place to another. Significant amount of resources is directed to manage this flow, to make it safe, invisible and to transform it back to valuable inputs and goods again. Societies are thus in many ways shaped by waste flows. However, the very concept of waste is a slippery one. On one hand, waste management practices of today do not consider any matter as pure waste, only by-products waiting to be economically utilized. The boundaries between waste and resource are drawn and contested by public regulation, market actions and techno-social development. On the other hand, in everyday life, waste is something which disrupts the smooth running of things. Thus, waste is not a singular, well-defined, or stable entity but it is heterogeneous and multiple. In addition, waste is not a passive object waiting to be endowed with meanings or transformed by human activities. It amounts to materials which are active in themselves: they do something.

In this working group we welcome discussion about the relationship of society with waste. The topics may include but are not limited to the transformation of matter into waste, waste regulation, waste management infrastructures, the role of waste in economic development, different manifestations and contestations of throwaway society, waste management conflicts and struggles to turn waste into economic resources. We welcome both theoretical and empirical contributions.

Conveners: Heikki Huilaja ([heikki.huilaja@ulapland.fi](mailto:heikki.huilaja@ulapland.fi)) and Johanna Saariniemi ([johanna.saariniemi@ulapland.fi](mailto:johanna.saariniemi@ulapland.fi)), University of Lapland

### Naturecultures in literature and arts

Until recent times, humanistic scholarship on environmental issues has been stuck in what Bruno Latour calls the “the pitfall of ‘social representations’ of nature” (Politics of Nature, 2004). As long as research material consists of human-made texts (writing, sound, image, moving image), research on human-nonhuman relations and environmental change is understood to concern culture, not nature. This intellectual and ideological divide between culture and nature disregards the role of literature and arts in imagining, negotiating and forming human-nonhuman relations, and it also disregards the physical consequences that these imaginations, negotiations and formations have. Moreover, it neglects human-nonhuman entanglements and nonhuman agency in art works and artistic practices. The emerging discipline of Environmental Humanities highlights the importance of cultural knowledge and understanding in addressing environmental questions, and it seeks novel conceptualizations and methodologies reaching beyond the nature-culture divide that still stiffens the academia.

With Environmental Humanities as our common ground, in the “Naturecultures in literature and arts” -workshop we discuss textual naturecultures and naturalcultural texts in diverse theoretical and methodological frameworks, including ecocriticism, new-materialism, posthumanism, human-animal studies and environmental philosophy. We welcome analyses of specific texts and theoretical and methodological reflections on naturecultures in literature and arts.

Session conveners:

Juha Raipola, University of Tampere, [juha.raipola@uta.fi](mailto:juha.raipola@uta.fi) Karoliina Lummaa, University of Turku, [sakalu@utu.fi](mailto:sakalu@utu.fi)

### Politics of materiality in the Arctic

The plastic waste found recently in the Arctic Ocean is yet another example of numerous connectivities between Arctic and global environmental concerns and politics. Environmental issues, especially natural resources, their exploitation and preservation in the context of global resource demands and warming climate is a highly political question for the region and its governance. Global imaginaries of resources and economic significance of the region attract new actors and advance industrial activities, and extend politics and governance beyond the region. Current political and scientific discourses and practices, which often celebrate Arctic exceptionalism, do not well capture the changing nature of materiality and its political dimensions in the Arctic. This session welcomes presentations that discuss different material politics in the Arctic, including contributions that critically reflect on scientific and political discourses and practices about the Arctic in the global context as well as to find alternative ways, beyond binary divides, to investigate interactive complexities of human-culture-nature relationships.

Session convener: Monica Tennberg, University of Lapland, [monica.tennberg@ulapland.fi](mailto:monica.tennberg@ulapland.fi)

### Probiotic living in compromised times

The last century has been marked by compulsions for hygiene, purity, and control. This obsession has saved human lives but, consequently, has resulted in eradication of species and introduction of new chronic diseases. It has also led to the emergence of new pathologies - the increase of antimicrobial resistance (AMR). These unexpected developments have sparked an interest in the "probiotic" introduction of formerly taboo entities, such as bacteria and other microbial life forms back to our bodies, homes, cities and the wider countryside (Lorimer 2017, 28). Lorimer suggests that the current "probiotic turn" is intellectually and politically significant for understanding late modern human-environment relations.

This session seeks to explore the probiotic turn as a theoretical as well as methodological and empirical challenge, and an opening for social sciences. We welcome papers that conceptualize new social forms of microbial living to include post-human assemblages and their more-than-human agency. We encourage participants to imagine and experiment novel ways to study the post-human assemblages of living with microbes. What would a more granular view of the practices and relation-making between humans, insects, microbes and other more-than-human life forms look like? How does the changing understanding of microbes affect the conceptualization of life, health, cleanliness, purity, society, bodies etc?

Topics could include, but are not limited to:

- Everyday practices of co-living and relating with microbes, such as fermentation or composting;
- Studies of novel biotechnologies to seek alternatives to antibiotics (fecal transplantation, vaccines, phage therapies etc);
- New moralities and ethics introduced by the probiotic turn
- Analysis of socio-political circumstances and infrastructures of microbial transmission
- How boundaries between bodies are made and maintained.

Session conveners: Veera Kinnunen [veera.kinnunen@ulapland.fi](mailto:veera.kinnunen@ulapland.fi), University of Lapland and Salla Sariola, [salla.sariola@helsinki.fi](mailto:salla.sariola@helsinki.fi), University of Helsinki

## Suomen ympäristöhistoria 1700–2000 (suljettu sessio)

Suomen ympäristöhistoria on moneen muuhun eurooppalaiseen maahan verrattuna lyhyt ja intensiivinen. Ihmiset ovat muokanneet maata ja vaikuttaneet ympärillään olevaan elämistöön ja kasvillisuuteen aina, mutta Suomessa karkeasti 1700-luvulta alkaen muutokset ovat olleet nopeampia, laaja-alaisempia ja kauaskantoisempia kuin aiemmin. Järvien laskeminen, koskien valjastaminen, metsien kaataminen, soiden kuivatus ja eläinkantoihin puuttuminen on vaikuttanut luonnonympäristöömme, jonka muutokset puolestaan ovat vaikuttaneet ihmisiin moniin tavoin. Vaikutuksille ja niiden arvioimiselle oli yhteistä lisääntyvä kompleksisuus: vaurautta ja kasvua tavoitteleva, luontoa resurssina käyttävä toiminta heijastui lopulta myös ihmisten terveyteen ja yleiseen viihtyvyyteen. Globaalistikin vaikuttaneet trendit kuten kaupungistuminen, arjen teknistyminen ja kaupallistuminen, siirtyminen fossiilisiin energiajärjestelmiin ja laaja poliittinen sitoutuminen talouskasvun tavoittelemiseen muovasivat suomalaisten elämää ja samalla ympäristöämme 1700-luvun lopulta lähtien. Tässä narratiivissa kietoutuivat yhteen unelma tieteen ja teknologian kautta saavutettavasta edistyksestä sekä kasvun materiaaliset jäljet ja rajat. Suomen ympäristöhistoria 1700–2000 -sessiossa eritellään ihmisten tavoittelemia ja aiheuttamia biofysisiä ja materiaalisia muutoksia suomalaisessa ympäristössä, sekä niihin liittyneitä arvoja, käsityksiä, käytäntöjä ja monipolvisia seurauksia. Sessiossa tarkastellaan myös keskeisiä ihmisten käsissä olevia muutosvoimia, joilla on voitu vaikuttaa niin elinympäristöömme heikkenemiseen kuin hyvinvointiinkin. Silloin keskeisiksi kysymyksiksi nousevat, miten ympäristö on tullut politiikkaan ja politiikka taasen ympäristöön? Minkälaisen kehityksen seurauksena huoli ympäristöstä on muuttunut paikallisesta laajemmaksi ja miten se alkoi käsitellä kokonaista elämän- ja ajattelutapaa?

Organisoiijat: Esa Ruuskanen, esa.ruuskanen@oulu.fi(Oulun yliopisto), Paula Schönach (Helsingin yliopisto) ja Kari Väyrynen (Oulun yliopisto)

## Struggle over Renewable Energy

Energy is the lifeblood of economic activity and social welfare, while simultaneously being at the core of many of the most significant environmental problems. Stronger policy actions have been demanded in order to move the world onto a more sustainable energy path. Without doubt, this will not happen without rigorous resistance of those in the most powerful positions of current energy-related structures. Concerning renewable energy, solar and wind power have gained the biggest investments globally, Denmark and Germany, for instance, being massive investors. In Finland, while in recent years the operational environment has altered and the energy sector have gone through some significant changes, such as implementation of feed-in tariff in 2011 and wind power production being at the verge of becoming market competitive without subsidies, the power wielding in the sector seems to have changed little. For instance, the supported industrial scale production has kept citizen and community energy in the margins. This workshop examines whether the ongoing changes have meant a redistribution of power in the energy sector or do the old power structures still persist. The session is structured as a workshop with no conventional presentations, but 5 minute pitch talk/presenter and a facilitated joint discussion. We invite researchers from multiple fields (academics from projects and incentives from Finland and around the world) to submit discussion papers as a preliminary material for attendees. We welcome papers dealing with various energy-related issues e.g. regulation, support policies, energy democracy and citizen energy, as well as papers operating with a more extensive perspective on the complex totality of energy politics.

Session Conveners: Tapio Litmanen, [tapio.litmanen@jyu.fi](mailto:tapio.litmanen@jyu.fi); Miikka Salo, [miikka.o.salo@jyu.fi](mailto:miikka.o.salo@jyu.fi) & Riikka Aro [riikka.aro@jyu.fi](mailto:riikka.aro@jyu.fi), University of Jyväskylä

### Theoretical approaches and conceptual openings for research on extractive industries

Within extractive industries (mining, forestry and energy sector) nature is understood as a resource for the human societies. In the heart of the extractive industries is still a modern way of rationalizing: the use of natural resources is the indispensable engine for societies' development.

As the research of the use and management of natural resources is often funded by e.g. European Union projects, the research approaches are guided by politically pre-set practical goals. Hence, there is often a limited space for theoretical discussions or conceptual criticism in the applied studies funded for limited time. For example, the concept of *social license to operate* (SLO), referring to local acceptance of certain industrial project is moderated by mining business and European Union for exploiting the ore deposits while the academics are trying to answer to the call for the theoretical base of the concept.

We welcome presentations discussing the theoretical approaches and conceptual openings for studying for example mining, forestry and energy sector. Also the themes that are not often the core of explicit project research, such as feelings, sense of place, identity and (in)justice, are welcomed as well case-studies reflecting theoretical discussions.

Conveners: University lecturer Leena Suopajarvi, University of Lapland, [leena.suopajarvi@ulapland.fi](mailto:leena.suopajarvi@ulapland.fi), University researcher Tuija Mononen, University of Eastern Finland [tuija.mononen@uef.fi](mailto:tuija.mononen@uef.fi)

### Open working group for Environmental Social Sciences

This working group welcomes theoretical, methodological, historical, empirical and policy oriented openings and discussion relating with the conference theme.

Please submit proposals to [yhys\(at\)ulapland.fi](mailto:yhys(at)ulapland.fi)

### Important dates

Call for sessions:	June 26, 2018.
Confirmed sessions:	August 13, 2018.
Call for papers open:	August 20 – September 3, 2018
Acceptance of papers:	September 14, 2018
Registration open	September 14 – October 14, 2018
Early career researcher meeting:	November 21, 2018
Colloquium:	November 22–23, 2018

### Contacts and information

Organizing team: [yhys\(at\)ulapland.fi](mailto:yhys(at)ulapland.fi), Colloquium homepage: <https://www.ulapland.fi/yhys2018>

YHYS homepage: <http://www.yhys.net/>