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

Berlin, 18 – 22 September 2017

IRI THESys offices, 4th 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mo, 18 Sept</td>
<td>Prof. Jonas Nielsen, IRI THESys, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin:</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.15-14.00</td>
<td><em>Why Human Environmental research and something about the course, the practicalities and IRI THESys</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>14.00-14.30</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.30-16.00</td>
<td>PhD Poster Presentations I</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.00-16.15</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.15-17.00</td>
<td>Discussion, program and miscellaneous</td>
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<tr>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>Course diner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tue, 19 Sept</td>
<td>Prof. Dieter Gerten, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research:</td>
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<tr>
<td>09.15-11.00</td>
<td><em>Earth system analysis, planetary boundaries and social transformation</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>11.00-11.30</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.30-13.00</td>
<td>Prof. Jonas Nielsen, Prof. Jörg Niewöhner, Dr. Bettina König, IRI THESys, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin:</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.00-14.00</td>
<td><em>Multi-disciplinarity, inter-disciplinarity and trans-disciplinarity: All you ever wanted to ask and know about these concepts</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>14.00-15.30</td>
<td>Speaker to be confirmed:</td>
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<td>15.30-16.00</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.00-17.00</td>
<td>PhD Poster Presentations II</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.00-18.00</td>
<td>General discussion/synthesis of the day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed, 20 Sept</td>
<td>The skill of networking I (Matteo Garavoglia, Impuls Plus, Köln):</td>
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<tr>
<td>09.15-11.00</td>
<td><em>How to network forms an essential aspect of developing and maintaining a career in academia.</em></td>
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<td>11.00-11.30</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.30-13.00</td>
<td>The skill of networking II (Matteo Garavoglia, Impuls Plus, Köln)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.00-14.00</td>
<td>Lunch break</td>
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| 14.00-15.30 | Prof. Heiko Faust (Universität Göttingen) 
Experiences and concrete cases of conceptualization, operationalization and methodological approach to human-environment projects |
| 16.00     | Social activity: Tempelhofer Feld/ Berlin Wall                                  |

**Thu, 21 Sept**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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| 09.15-11.00 | Prof. Hermann Lotze-Campen, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research: 
From the farm to the global garden: computer simulation of human land-use change at different spatial scales |
| 11.00-11.30 | Coffee break                                                                      |
| 11.30-13.00 | Jonas Nielsen, Herman Lotze-Campen and Anthony Patt: 
How do I ask an interdisciplinary research question? 
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: 
An undisciplined approach to studying human-environment systems |
| 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                          |

**Fri, 22 Sept**

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