

SGO2302
Exam Questions
Spring 2018

Please answer **one** of the following four questions. Your answer should be **maximum 5000 words**, not including references. You are expected to draw from the course readings and lectures in your responses, and to use a consistent style of referencing. Note that the questions do not require you to do new research or find external literature – you should be able to use the course curriculum to answer them. Exams may be written in English, Norwegian or other Scandinavian languages.



1) Justice for whom?

Norway is seen as an environmentally progressive country and the City of Oslo was recently selected to be the 2019 European Green Capital. However, critical voices argue that all of Norway's environmental efforts are contradicted by the fact that Norway is also a major oil exporting country, ranking #10 in the world in terms of the dollar value of crude oil exports. In 2016, after signing the Paris Agreement and supporting the goal of limiting global warming to below 2°C, the Norwegian government allowed exploration of new oil and gas fields in the Barents Sea. In 2017, Greenpeace Norway and the Norwegian environmental organization Nature and Youth (*Natur og Ungdom*) filed a lawsuit against the government, arguing that the new explorations violate paragraph §112 of the Norwegian Constitution, which guarantees citizen's rights to a healthy environment. Early in 2018, the Court found the Norwegian government not responsible for breaching the Constitution. However, the environmental organizations are appealing the decision later this year.

Leading up to the trial, a Norwegian newspaper plans to run a series of articles focusing on debates about oil and gas production and consumption and climate change. You have been asked by the editor of the series to write a background paper highlighting different discourses on "Climate Change Equity and Justice." In your report, please discuss:

- a) What are the key equity and justice issues associated with climate change, relative to drivers, impacts and responses?
- b) Which justice aspects are likely to be favored by the different climate change discourses?
- c) What types of solutions to future energy needs are likely to be proposed by different actors (e.g., oil companies, government, and environmental groups)?



Photo: [Simon Matzinger](#)

2) Meat consumption and climate change: What's at "steak"?

Multiple scientific studies point to the threat that animal agriculture poses to the environment by the around nine billion land animals raised for food each year in the EU (predominantly in industrial systems). The UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation identified the farm animal sector as "one of the top two or three most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems, at every scale from local to global" and suggests it should be a major policy focus when dealing with environmental issues. FAO estimates that animal agriculture accounts for 14.5 percent of human-induced GHG emissions.

Although it is often considered taboo to discuss reducing meat consumption, in a recent press release by Greenpeace, scientist Pete Smith is quoted as saying "The need to reduce demand for livestock products is now a scientifically mainstream view. Only a significant decrease in meat and milk consumption will allow us to deliver a food system fit for the future – for the benefit of humans and the planet as a whole."¹ Some leaders in the EU are dismissive of these facts, such as the EU agriculture commissioner Phil Hogan who said, "Well, there's no evidence whatsoever that the intake of these products actually contribute enormously to the emissions."² Recognizing that this is a controversial issue, the Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture is exploring some ways to dramatically reducing meat and dairy production and consumption in Norway. Based on your expertise from SGO2302, they have hired you as a consultant to help them to develop a transformation strategy. Applying the concepts from course literature and discussions, provide an analysis that includes discussion of:

- a) The biggest problems with meat and dairy production and consumption, from an environmental perspective.
- b) A discussion of how consumer behavior is linked to social and cultural practices.
- c) How the Three Spheres of Transformation might inform a strategy for change.

¹ <http://www.greenpeace.org/eu-unit/en/News/2018/halve-meat-protect-climate-nature-health/>

² <https://euobserver.com/opinion/141344>



<http://museohistoricodearcatao.blogspot.no/p/agina-principal.html>

3) Let's talk about adaptation

In the rural community of Arcatao of northern El Salvador, the impacts of climate change are already affecting people's daily lives. Impacts in this region include changes in rainfall patterns that disrupt local agricultural cycles and threaten food security, and unpredictable weather-related natural disasters, such as the flooding of the River Lempa, landslides, and uncontrollable forest fires. You have been sent by the World Bank to do research on climate change adaptation. They would like you to identify the most important behavioral and technical measures for reducing exposure and vulnerability to climate change impacts. Little does the World Bank know that you have taken SGO2302 and have a broader and deeper understanding of the solution space for climate change. You have decided to give them more than they asked for in your field report! Please write a report that includes the following:

- a) Discuss how rural communities can reduce exposure and vulnerability to climate change impacts, and successfully adapt to climate change. Be sure to include local perspectives from the people of Arcatao!
- b) Describe differential responsibility for climate change from a North/South perspective.
- c) Make two recommendations to the World Bank regarding what can be done at the global level to reduce climate change risks and to promote successful adaptation to climate change.



4) Can we cure climate despondency?

A headline in the paper on April 15, 2018 read “LGBT lawyer dies after setting himself on fire in climate change protest.” This prominent lawyer sent the New York Times a note where he stated:

“Pollution ravages our planet, oozing uninhabitability via air, soil, water and weather. Most humans on the planet now breathe air made unhealthy by fossil fuels, and many die early deaths as a result, my early death by fossil fuel reflects what we are doing to ourselves.”

According to Sky News, he talked about the difficulty of improving the world even for those who make an effort to do so and noted that privilege was derived from the suffering of others: "Many who drive their own lives to help others often realize that they do not change what causes the need for their help," he added.

If we consider the research on climate change and grief, we know there are likely to be more such tragedies ahead. You and some fellow SGO2302 students have decided to start a new NGO that will work to eradicate climate despondency by empowering people to address the deeper social roots of the climate change issue. A foundation is willing to fund your start-up, if you can provide them with a credible analysis of the contributions of the social sciences and humanities to addressing the issue of climate change. In your proposal, the foundation would like you to discuss the root causes of climate change from the perspective of the social sciences and humanities, including how beliefs, values and worldviews influence dominant discourses and shape how problems and solutions are framed, identified, and prioritized. Be sure to bring in the role of imagination, creativity, and the potential transformation.