

i Information about the exam

Home exam SGO2302 – Environment and Society Spring 2024

The exam opens Monday 6th of May at 10:00

Deadline for handing in your submission is Monday 13th of May at 12:00

About the exam

Please answer one of the following two questions. Regardless of the question, your answer should present a structured piece of argumentative writing, containing an introduction, analysis, discussion, and conclusion.

You are expected to draw from the course readings and lectures in your response. We are looking for you to “weave together” the themes and readings discussed in the course. However, make sure to address all concepts and explicit tasks listed in the exam question you choose to answer. 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. *If you choose to use external literature, it should only be supplementary.* The use of external literature is not required to achieve a high grade and not rewarded as extra effort.

Please use a consistent style of referencing. Include references within the text, e.g. (Leichenko and O’Brien 2019), rather than as footnotes. You also have to include a list of references in alphabetical order at the end of your text.

You can submit your exam in Norwegian, Swedish, Danish or English.

The front page of the exam shall contain the course code and your candidate number, which you'll find in Studentweb.

The minimum length of the home exam is 4500 words and maximum 5500 words (excluding references). Please use 12-point font, a regular font type (such as Times New Roman), and a 1.5 spacing of lines.

Questions during the exam

- If you have questions about the exam, you must send an email from your UiO-address to [SV-info](#). Write the course code in the subject field.
- If any information is given to all candidates during the exam, this information will be posted in Canvas. Make sure that you [receive Canvas notifications](#).

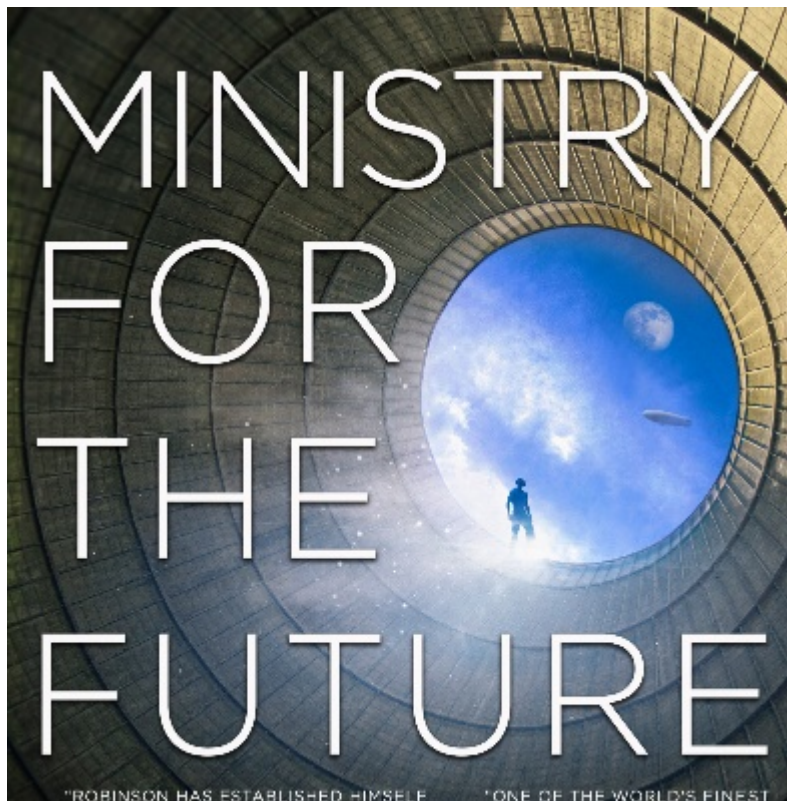
How to submit in Inspera

- [Read about submissions in Inspera](#).
- When you have started to answer the exam / uploaded your file, you will see that it is saved to your submission.
- You can change your exam answer until the test closes.
- When the test closes, your answer will automatically be delivered for grading.

After the exam

- After the submission deadline make sure that you find your submission under Archive in Inspira.
- Send an e-mail with your submission immediately to [SV-info](#) [Eller annet kontaktpunkt] if you do not see your submission.

Question 1: A Strategy for the Future



The United Nations has looked at the recent data on temperature anomalies in Antarctica and concluded that it is a global emergency. In response to this emergency, it has established a Ministry for the Future, taking inspiration from a novel of the same name by science fiction writer Kim Stanley Robinson. You have been named as the Deputy Director of this new ministry, based on your understanding of environment-society relationships. But there is something very strange about this new ministry. The Director that you are accountable has not yet been born! The Director of the Ministry for the Future will be an Indigenous person born in 2025, and they will not assume the position until 2050, when they are 25 years old. This means that you are working on behalf of future generations and have to justify all strategies and actions based on their interest. Your ministry is responsible for delivering results to the Director.

Your first task as Deputy Director of the Ministry for the Future is to write a 5-year strategy document for your staff, which includes one person from every country in the world. As a background for this document, please write an essay that clearly describes:

1. The values that the new Ministry will emphasize, and why they are important.
2. The issues will you prioritize over the next five years. Select two issues and explain why these are important from the perspective of the Ministry for the Future's Director. Discuss their implications for security.
3. The measurable results that your staff will work to achieve for ONE of your priority issues (in other words, what are the objectives), and three strategies that you will take to realize these objectives. Here you should be clear about what needs to shift in society, why, and how, with reference to two different discourses.
4. Recognizing that your plan will meet resistance, include a short communication to explain your priorities and strategies to skeptics.
5. At the end of the document, reflect on how the Ministry of the Future's Director is likely to evaluate this strategy in 2050 (i.e., what are the success criteria?).

Remember that the document will need to be approved by the UN General Assembly. To make it more credible, it is important that it contains reference to literature that you have read in your Environment and Society course.

Question 2: The Social Dimensions of Greenwashing

Over the past few years, a number of large corporations have been backtracking on their commitments to addressing environmental and social issues. Recently [The Guardian reported that Unilever](#), one of the world's largest corporations that produces washing products is pulling back on its environmental and social commitments. The CEO argued that people's focus on environmental and social issues was "cyclical": "When you have a huge drought for a number of months but everything else is going fine, the attention is on climate. These days it's about wars and rightly so, that's at the forefront."

Even though they have been backtracking their commitments, Unilever still advertizes that they are "leading in the next era of corporate sustainability." Climate activist groups recognize the role of corporate profits in this decision, and are planning a national campaign to call out major corporations for making false or misleading statements about the environmental benefits of a product or practice -- in other words, greenwashing.

Before the anti-greenwashing campaign starts, one of the international activist groups would like to understand more about the social science behind greenwashing, including the dominant discourses of employees within multinational companies that are backtracking on environmental commitments. In particular, they would like an academic analysis of how "greenwashing" companies are likely to understand climate change from a social science perspective. You are asked to present them with a briefing document that describes and explains the social science behind a lack of real commitments to addressing climate change by some multinational companies, supported by literature from your Environment and Society course readings.

1. Which discourse(s) are likely to resonate with or appeal to such companies the most, and why?
2. What values, worldviews, and beliefs, including views of nature, are likely to be prominent in companies that decide to water down ethical pledges to address environmental and social issues? As a result of these subjective dimensions, whose interests are prioritized and whose are ignored?
3. In what ways do leaders of "greenwashing" companies understand the social drivers and impacts of climate change? What perspectives on climate impacts and adaptation are missing from their view?
4. Based on your analysis, what is a potential option or strategy that could transform corporate greenwashing? Justify your choice.

1 Submission



Upload your file here. Maximum one file.

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Maximum marks: 10