Course overview

The course covers the issues of environmental effects of natural resources management and the political, social, and economical dimensions involved. The main objective is to put land and water management and their environmental effects in the Middle East into a holistic and sustainable perspective in view of development. Four important areas for Middle East development are touched upon in the course. The first involves management of water and land in view of population increase and climate change. For this, different societal actors that influence the direction of development through water and land management are analyzed. The second involves techniques for spatial planning and management also involving transboundary water management options. In the third part, conflict or cooperation are looked at from a management perspective and their influence on the environment. In this part different traditional and improved water management systems are introduced. The last part involves political aspects of natural resources use. Further, the natural resources and environmental sustainability in the refugee camps are discussed.

Through individualized course work students should be able to critically examine current uses of land and water resources and connected problems related to the environment and sustainable development. Students will acquire knowledge to evaluate water and land resource management alternatives in view of environmental effects. The course work will also prepare students for applying this knowledge in a variety of different professional contexts; as policymakers, trainers or practitioners, in government agencies, private firms or NGOs.

After the completion of the course, students should have a basic understanding of environmental sustainability related issues concerning water and land resource management. Students will also be able to effectively use concepts within the sustainability research field. Specifically, students should be able to:

- Identify, analyze, and reflect upon basic water and land resource problems that affect the environment.
- Identify and understand general and specific use of water and land resources at present and in the long-term in view of sustainability theory including economic, social, and environmental dimensions.
- Analyze relevant development phenomena in connection to water and land resource management using key concepts and theories acquired during the course.
- Formulate research questions regarding sustainability as affected by water and land resource utilization and relationships to poverty and conflicts in the Middle East.

The course is organized around a series of lectures covering key issues in environmental effects of water and land use and related management issues. Lectures are followed by seminars or group work where the different environmental sustainability problems are treated in depth. Students will be encouraged to individually or collectively search for, analyze and present syntheses of literature. The course will conclude with seminars in which the students’ individual and group work is discussed.