

Critical realism in environment, development and planning studies

Ph.D. course organized by the Norwegian University of Life Science (NMBU), the Faculty of Landscape and Society, Spring 2019

Venue: Faculty of Landscape and Society, NMBU, Aas, Norway

Time: May 20 - 24, 2019

Responsible person: Professor Petter Næss

Lecturers:

Professor emeritus Berth Danermark, Örebro University, Sweden

Professor Petter Næss, NMBU/Urban and Regional Planning

Research fellow Rasmus Steffansen, Aalborg University, Denmark

Research Professor Joar Skrede, Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research

Associate Professor Jin Xue, NMBU/Urban and Regional Planning

ECTS: 5

Main learning objective:

After having completed the course, the Ph.D. students will possess good knowledge of the philosophy of science position of critical realism and its relevance to environment, development and planning studies. The course will enable the Ph.D. students to reflect on the application of critical realism in research, including its methodological implications and its potentials as a base for ideology critique.

Requirements:

All participants write and present a paper – approx. 2500 to 4000 words – which must be submitted electronically no later than May 8, 2019. Each participant will be given the role of opponent for one other participant's paper. Papers will be distributed to the opponents shortly after May 8. It is therefore crucial that the deadline for paper submission is kept.

Deadline for application: March 26, 2019

Application: By email to Sheena Gilchrist Lisland, e-mail sheena.gilchrist.lisland@nmbu.no

Economy and traveling:

Participation is free of any economical charge. Participants cover their own travel and subsistence costs. Information about how to reach the course venue by public transport can be found at www.ruter.no. Further information about Oslo and its surroundings, including cultural events in the days before, during and after the course, can be found at <http://www.visitoslo.com/en/>

Description: The aim of this PhD course is to provide opportunity for doctoral students to develop their knowledge of critical realism as a contribution to their overall meta-theoretical reflections. Apart from giving a general introduction to critical realism, the course will place particular emphasis on the following topics: interdisciplinary research, the application of critical realism in research, its methodological implications and its potentials as a base for ideology critique.

A considerable part of the course will be devoted to discussion of papers written by the participants and submitted to the organizers prior to the course. In order to be able to write the papers, it is important to start reading the required reading of the course early. Reading the required literature before the course starts is also important in order to have good discussions during the course. Each of the participants' papers should address at least one of the following aspects of critical realism, reflecting on their understanding of the concept(s) in question and how this understanding is reflected in their PhD project:

- Causality
- The relationship between disciplinary knowledge and the need for interdisciplinary integration
- Abduction and retroduction
- Agency and structure
- Prediction and generalization
- Critiques
- Ideology and discourses

The paper presentation sessions make up an important part of the course. Each paper will be commented on by an appointed opponent as well as by the other course participants. The presentation of each paper should last for about 5 minutes, followed by comments by the appointed opponent of 5-10 minutes duration. This leaves time for about 25 minutes of general discussion about each paper within a total time slot of 35-40 minutes per paper.

Program:

Day 1, Monday, May 20

- 0915 – 0930 Opening of the course and short presentation of participants
- 0930 – 1030 **Berth Danermark:** Critical realism as a platform for explaining society
- 1045 – 1145 Discussion
- 1145 – 1245 Lunch
- 1245 – 1345 **Berth Danermark:** Critical realism and interdisciplinary research
- 1400 – 1500 Discussion
- 1515 – 1615 Presentation and discussion of Ph.D. students' papers

Day 2, Tuesday, May 21

- 0915 – 1015 **Petter Næss:** Critical realism, causality and spatial planning
- 1030 – 1130 Discussion

- 1130 – 1230 Lunch
- 1230 – 1330 **Rasmus Steffansen:** Critical realist methodology: applying Bhaskar's RRREIC scheme in empirical research
- 1345 – 1445 Discussion
- 1500 – 1630 Presentation and discussion of Ph.D. students' papers

Day 3, Wednesday, May 22

- 0915 – 1015 **Joar Skrede:** Critical realism and discourse analysis
- 1030 – 1130 Discussion
- 1130 – 1230 Lunch
- 1230 – 1330 **Petter Næss:** Mixed methods – a critical realist research example
- 1345 – 1445 Discussion
- 1500 – 1630 Presentation and discussion of Ph.D. students' papers

Day 4, Thursday, May 23

- 0915 – 1015 **Jin Xue:** Scenario research, backcasting and retroductive thinking
- 1030 – 1130 Discussion
- 1130 – 1230 Lunch
- 1230 – 1630 Presentation and discussion of Ph.D. students' papers

Day 5, Friday, May 24

- 0915 – 1015 **Petter Næss:** Cost-benefit analyses of projects and plans – a critical realist critique
- 1030 – 1130 Discussion
- 1130 – 1230 Lunch
- 1230 – 1330 **Jin Xue:** The possibility of urban sustainability transformation from the perspective of critical realist ideology critique
- 1345 – 1445 Discussion
- 1500 – 1545 Short reflection and feedback on the content of the course, and closing session

Required reading

Bhaskar, R. (2008). *A Realist Theory of Science*, pp. 21-62. London and New York: Routledge.

Bhaskar, R. (2009). *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*, pp. 103-136. London and New York: Routledge.

Bhaskar, R. & Danermark, B. (2006). Metatheory, Interdisciplinarity and Disability Research: A Critical Realist Perspective. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 8(4), pp. 278-297.

Danermark, B.; Ekström, M. & Karlsson, J. C. (2019): *Explaining Society*, second edition. London/New York: Routledge.

Fairclough, N., Jessop, R. & Sayer, A. (2002). Critical realism and semiosis. *Journal of Critical Realism*, 1, pp. 2–10.

Næss, P. (2015). Critical Realism, Urban Planning and Urban Research. *European Planning Studies*, 23 (6), pp. 1228-1244.

Næss, P. (2015). Built Environment, Causality and Travel. *Transport Reviews*, 35 (3), pp. 275-291.

Næss, P. (2016). Built Environment, Causality and Urban Planning. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 17(1), pp. 52-71.

Skrede, J. & Hølleland, H. (2018). Uses of Heritage and beyond: Heritage Studies viewed through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis and Critical Realism. *Journal of Social Archaeology*, 18(1), pp. 77-96

Steffansen, R. (2016). Critical Realist Methodology Guiding Theory Development: The Case of the Norwegian Second Home Ownership Paradox. *Journal of Critical Realism*, 15(2), pp. 122-141.

Xue, J. (2019). The possibility of urban sustainability transformation from the perspective of critical realist ideology critique. Forthcoming paper.

Additional, recommended reading

Bhaskar, R. (2009). Contexts of interdisciplinarity: nterdisciplinarity. In Bhaskar, R.; Frank, C.; Høyer, K. G.; Næss, P. & Parker, J. (eds): *Interdisciplinarity and Climate Change*, pp. 54-84. London/New York: Routledge, pp. 1-24. London and New York: Routledge.

Danermark, B.; Ekström, M.; Jakobsen, L. & Karlsson, J. (2002): *Explaining Society*, pp. 1-12, 115-149 and 177-209. London/New York: Routledge.