



Ph.D. course

Women, Energy and Health

Questioning Current Paradigms for Development and Social Change



The Centre for Development and the Environment's (SUM) research area on Energy and Consumption, SUM Research School and the Interfaculty research area Livelihoods in Developing Countries (LEVE), University of Oslo are pleased to invite applications to the doctoral course *'Women, Energy and Health: Questioning Current Paradigms for Development and Social Change'*.

The course will be held in Oslo, Norway, at the Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM), **6 – 8 January, 2014**.

Applications are invited from 15 August. The final application deadline is 1 October, 2013.

*Picture: Woman Barefoot Solar Engineer assembling solar panels, Dai Kundi, Afghanistan.
Photo by courtesy of Norwegian Church Aid.*

Course description

Background

A new set of global development goals is currently being shaped. The post-2015 development agenda identifies gender equality, energy and health as central to development and poverty reduction. This Ph.D. course will interrogate the assumptions about social change that underpin international attention to these goals.

Gender equality is, on the one hand, presented as a condition for economic growth (e.g. World Development Report 2012), as captured in the notion of smart economics and in campaigns like ‘The Girl Effect’, but discrimination against women is also considered as a violation of human rights and therefore as a problem in itself. Women are thus variably perceived as agents of development and as (passive) victims of discrimination; each image reflecting a specific view on agency and change.



Gendered processes of social change are important to key development concerns such as energy and health. The current discourse on energy for development is strongly influenced by the pressing problems of climate change, deforestation, governments’ dependency on fossil fuels and energy poverty. Initiatives like ‘Energy for All’ highlight the need to provide poor people with access to electricity based on renewable sources. Gender is increasingly mainstreamed within this energy agenda, for instance through efforts to empower women by providing access to new technology. Renewed focus on modern stoves to address the problem of indoor pollution and poor health highlights the growing links between concerns about energy and health. Like energy programmes, global health programmes often emphasise technological solutions, whether medicines and vaccines, mobile phone technology or other ‘innovations’ that seek to empower ‘users’ to take charge of their own health. Current energy and health initiatives seem to share a deep faith in technology as a driver of social change, combined with an individualistic understanding of human behaviour. The broader social, political and historical context and the impact of structural constraints are rarely considered.

To balance these mainstream approaches, this course will present social scientific perspectives on social change and development, informed by grounded empirical research for better understanding women’s (and men’s) daily lives and concerns.

*Picture: Baking bread on a traditional stove, Uttar Pradesh, India.
Photo: Karina Standal.*

Lecturers

- **Jane L. Parpart**, Research Professor, Department of Conflict Resolution, Human Security, and Global Governance, McCormack Graduate School University of Massachusetts Boston, USA.
- **Emma Crewe**, Research Associate, Dept. of Anthropology and Sociology, The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London, UK.
- **Rachel Tolhurst**, Senior Lecturer in Social Science in International Health, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, UK.
- **Margaret N. Matinga**, Independent Consultant, Energy and Rural Development, South Africa.
- **Sidsel Roalkvam**, Associate Professor, Centre for Development and the Environment, University of Oslo, Norway.
- **Tanja Winther**, Senior researcher, Centre for Development and the Environment, University of Oslo, Norway.

Objectives and Focus

The objective of this Ph.D. course is to review and question the underlying assumptions on social change that inform the current paradigms within development discourses on women, energy and health. Alternative perspectives will be presented. The course also seeks to illuminate some of the links between energy and health. For example, in what ways are women's positions and health influenced by specific energy solutions? How may the health-energy-equality nexus be approached and understood? What measures in terms of cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary approaches are needed for understanding and approaching the issues of women, energy and health in a holistic way?

We wish to enable doctoral students to better understand key concepts, debates and perspectives in energy, health and gender equality for the purposes of research, policy making and/or concrete programmes and projects. Although the main emphasis will be put on anthropological perspectives, the lectures cut across scales, forms of knowledge and social, political, and economic dimensions.

In addition to lectures, the course will allow researchers conducting Ph.D. research to present their own work and comment on that of others, guided by senior experienced academics who are themselves working in this field.

The syllabus/readings include 1000 pages of literature. There will be a maximum participation of 18 students, and the language of instruction will be English.

Application

Who may apply?

The interdisciplinary nature of the course will appeal to doctoral students from a variety of backgrounds, such as anthropology, sociology, geography, political science, medical science, public health, gender studies, development studies, engineering, economics and area studies.

While doctoral students will be prioritised, a few places may be available for well-qualified researchers, practitioners and final year masters students.

Funding

No course fees apply and lunch will be provided.

The organisers have some funds available to cover the cost of accommodation (meals not included) for selected students from outside Oslo; if you are in need of such support please state this in your application.

Similarly, there is funding available for a limited number of travel scholarships for selected students (please consult point 4 under 'Application procedures').

Application procedures

Interested students should submit the following by e-mail to weh-2014@sum.uio.no.

1. **A cover letter** signed by your Ph.D. supervisor or another person at your institution/workplace, stating your academic background and academic degree(s) held, your research interests and current research projects (if any), including estimated date of completion of doctoral project.
2. **A statement of purpose**, in the form of a 1 page note where you a) briefly describe your current research b) explain in what respect this course will relate to your work and c) inform us whether you intend to submit a revised paper upon completion of the course. (NB: For those who are admitted to the course, this statement may be distributed to lecturers and fellow students via a password-protected intranet site).
3. **An updated CV.**
4. **[OPTIONAL]:** Students from outside Oslo may apply for a modest travel scholarship and/or accommodation support, in a separate document following their course application. If you wish to apply for a travel scholarship, please also attach a budget which includes economy class travel.

Applications are invited from 15 August. The final application deadline is **1 October, 2013**.

Due to space constraints, an early application is highly recommended.

Successful applicants will be contacted by 15 October, 2013.

Preparations

A major purpose of the course is to provide participants with comments on their on-going work. It is therefore obligatory for all participants to present a draft paper during the course. The paper should be approximately 10 pages long (4000 – 5000 words, excluding the bibliography).

Students who are admitted to the course should submit their draft paper electronically to the course secretariat [weh-2014@sum.uio.no] by 30 November, 2013.

This paper may be revised and resubmitted for evaluation and approval after the course (please consult the section on 'Credits' below).

All draft paper submissions will be posted on the course's password protected intranet site in preparation for the course. This will give participants ample time to read each other's draft papers in advance. All participants are expected to give and receive comments on their papers.

Syllabus and programme

A complete reading syllabus list (with links to online publications, when possible) of approximately 1000 pages will be available on the course's intranet site by 15 October.

Participants are expected to read the syllabus in advance of the course.

The final course programme will also be posted on the course intranet website.

Credits

Your own institution must approve credits for the course. Course participants will receive a Course Certificate, which **recommends** either 10 or 3 ECTS credits.

For a recommendation of 10 credits, a revised paper of about 15 – 20 pages (6000 - 8000 words) must be submitted to the course organisers no later than 8 weeks after completion of the course, and the paper must be graded with 'pass'. (The paper will be evaluated by a course lecturer and assessed within eight weeks after submission).

3 ECTS credits are recommended for those who participate in full but choose not to submit a revised paper for evaluation.

Contact information

Should you have any practical inquiries, please do not hesitate to email the course secretariat at weh-2014@sum.uio.no or phone: +47 22 85 89 93.

Check for updates

Please check for updated information at the [Ph.D. course's web pages](#) at the Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM).

This Ph.D. course is organised by the [Centre for Development and the Environment](#) (SUM) Research area on [Energy and Consumption](#), [SUM Research School](#) and the Interfaculty research area [Livelihoods in Developing Countries](#) (LEVE) at the University of Oslo, Norway.



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