



Decoloniality, Political Ecology & The New Humanities: Reconstructing Indigenous Ecology

10TH TO 14TH DECEMBER, 2025



**DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY KHARAGPUR**

OVERVIEW

This course introduces political ecology as a necessary alternative to political economy in the face of ecological crisis. Political economy, which has historically shaped modern global systems, operates on unsustainable assumptions, which result in ecological catastrophes. Political ecology, by contrast, challenges the entrenched relationship between politics and economy, placing politics on an ecological foundation and redefining productivity beyond economic imperatives.

The course critiques the Eurocentric leanings of some political ecology models and engages with the New Humanities, emphasizing alternative approaches to unsustainable economic systems. It also critically examines the lingering colonial influences that obscure indigenous ecological traditions. Following anthropologist Zoe Todd, the course explores ways to decolonize political ecology by integrating indigenous ecological perspectives and challenging Western theoretical binaries.

A key focus is ecological reason, rooted in the German critical tradition, which reassesses political economy through the lens of its ecological consequences. While classical models once saw economic development as liberating, their unintended environmental impacts demand a reexamination of suppressed or overlooked alternatives. This is not a nostalgic return to the past but a reinterpretation of historical knowledge in response to an unprecedented global emergency.

The course examines three bodies of texts: (1) decolonial works with ecological concerns, (2) theories of political ecology and ecological reason, and (3) indigenous ecological texts that engage with the first two. It also explores contemporary and ancient practices, such as Buddhism, that offer ecological insights. By bringing these perspectives into dialogue, the course aims to formulate a vision for recovering the Commons, fostering an eco-sensible world, and rethinking human habitation in response to the ecological crisis.



OBJECTIVES



The primary objectives of the course are as follows:

- i) Reconstructing decolonial and Indigenous contexts from the purview of political ecology and ecological reason;
- ii) Introducing new perspectives in the Humanities, In which the latter provides an array of standpoints that help us both reconsider the past and exercise our moral imagination for a new, just, and sustainable future;
- iii) Demonstrating the global reach of such modes of analysis, a reach that rethinks the relationship between the global and the local;
- iv) Considering new modes of global living, with all of its cultural and biological diversity, such that this diversity, currently on the brink of cultural homogenization as an ecological disaster, becomes an opening to its flourishing

Modules	A: Nature and society B: Political economy, climate change & ecological catastrophes C: From Political Economy to Political Ecology D: The Commons and Communitarian Anarchy E: Deep time & Ecology F: Geo-criticism, Ecosophy & the Planetary G: Decolonizing Planetary ecology H: Indigenous Ecology, Cosmo-Politics & Green Capitalism I: Learning from Buddhist Ecology J: New Humanities and developing world ecologies K: Conclusion: Political Ecology & New Activisms Number of participants for the course will be limited to fifty.	
You Should Attend If...	· You are a student at all levels or a faculty member from reputed academic institutions and social, political, and religious institutions. · You are a Masters student, research student, or faculty of Humanities and Social Science disciplines interested in areas of Planetary Ecology, Decolonial Thinking, New Humanities, and Ecological Crises. · You are a cognoscenti, writer, intellectual, member of the intelligentsia or some industrial house interested in or likely to benefit from Critical Theory, Philosophy, Art and Literature, Politics, and Sociocultural concerns or interdisciplinary mode of research.	
Fees	The participation fees for taking the course are as follows: · Students & Research Scholars: Rs. 1000. · Participants from abroad: US \$500. · Faculty & Academic Institutions: Rs. 3,000. · Industry/ Research Organizations: Rs. 10,000. The above fee include all instructional materials, computer use for tutorials and assignments, laboratory equipment usage charges, and 24 hr free internet facility. The participants will be provided with accommodation on the payment basis. Note: There is no central registration on the GIAN portal (gian.iith.ac.in); registration will be managed directly by the hosting institute.	
Timings	Session A: 2 hours 30 minutes Lectures; Session B: 2 hours Discussion/Tutorial	Time: 10:00 a.m to 12:30 p.m. Time: 02:30 p.m to 04:30 p.m.

COORDINATOR

PROF. JASON MARTIN WIRTH



Prof. Jason Martin Wirth is a Professor and Chair of the Philosophy Department at Seattle University, USA. He also serves as the Chair of the Interreligious Dialogue Initiative at Seattle University and is a Board Member of the Cascadia Poetics Lab. Additionally, he is on the Editorial Board of Watershed Press. His academic interests include German philosophy from Kant to the present, comparative philosophy with a focus on Mahāyāna Buddhist thought, philosophy of art, literature, and film, and environmental philosophy. Prof. Wirth has received numerous accolades for his contributions to scholarship and teaching, including The Torch Bearer Award, The Office of Integrity Formation's Blessed Peter Faber Integrity Award, and The Outstanding Teaching Award. He is the author of several books, including *Nietzsche and Other Buddhas: Philosophy After Comparative Philosophy* (Indiana University Press, 2019), *Mountains, Rivers, and the Great Earth: Reading Gary Snyder and Dōgen in an Age of Ecological Crisis* (SUNY Press, 2017), *Commiserating with Devastated Things: Milan Kundera and the Entitlements of Thinking* (Fordham University Press, 2016), *Schelling's Practice of the Wild: Time, Art, Imagination* (SUNY Press, 2015), *The Conspiracy of Life: Meditations on Schelling and His Time* (SUNY Press, 2003), *The Ages of the World*, a translation with introduction of Schelling's *Die Weltalter* (1815) (SUNY Press, 2000), *Zen No Sho: The Calligraphy of Fukushima Keidō Rōshi* (Clear Light Press, 2003), and *Schelling Now: Contemporary Readings of Schelling* (Editor, Indiana University Press, 2004). Prof. Wirth's work engages deeply with philosophy, ecology, and interreligious dialogue, making significant contributions to contemporary thought on these subjects.



COORDINATOR



DR. SASWAT SAMAY DAS

Prof. Saswat Samay Das is an Associate Professor at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, India. His research aims at critically engaging with assemblages of New Humanities such as Continental philosophy, Deleuze & Guattari Studies, Decolonial Studies, Environmental and Planetary studies. He was a visiting Professor at the Institute of English and American Studies, University of Oldenburg, Germany in May 2024. His books yield reconstructive insight into diverse contemporary issues and remain committed to yielding new line of flights against deadlocking mobility of global capitalism. Some of his recent books include: *Technology, Urban Space and the Networked Community* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), *Deleuze and the Global Terror*, (Edinburgh University Press, 2022), *Deleuze, Guattari and the Schizoanalysis of the Global Pandemic: Revolutionary Praxis and Neoliberal Crisis* (Bloomsbury, 2023) and *Deleuze, Guattari and the Schizoanalysis of Post-Neoliberalism* (Bloomsbury, 2024). Some of his forthcoming books are *Religion Politics & New Materialism: Philosophical Perspectives* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2025) & *“Outside” Political Economy: New Networks of Media & Digitality* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2025). He has published in well-known international journals such as *Philosophy in Review*, *Deleuze Studies*, *Cultural politics*, *Theory & Event*, *Contemporary South Asia*, and *Economic and Political Weekly*.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

GIAN Organizing Team, email: gian2025iitkgp@gmail.com

Registration link: <https://forms.gle/P82c5ixGvEJjDLjW7>

INVITED SPEAKERS



PHOTO SARA PENRHYN JONES

PROF. KATE RIGBY

Professor Dr. Kate Rigby (Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities) is Alexander von Humboldt Professor of Environmental Humanities at the University of Cologne, where she leads a research hub for Multidisciplinary Environmental Studies in the Humanities, and visiting scholar in the Research Centre for Environmental Humanities at Bath Spa University. Her research lies at the intersection of environmental literary, philosophical, historical and religious studies, with a specialist interest in European Romanticism, ecopoetics, multispecies studies, disaster studies, and Australian studies. She was the inaugural President of the Association for the Study of Literature, Environment and Culture (Australia-New Zealand), and the founding Director of the Australia-Pacific Forum on Religion and Ecology. A founding co-editor of the journal *Philosophy Activism Nature*, she also co-edited the University Press of Virginia series, *Under the Sign of Nature*, and her books include *Topographies of the Sacred: The Poetics of Place in European Romanticism* (2004), *Dancing with Disaster: Environmental Histories, Narratives, and Ethics for Perilous Times* (2015), *Reclaiming Romanticism: Towards an Ecopoetics of Decolonization* (2020) and *Meditations on Creation in an Era of Extinction* (2023).



PROF. NIELS WEIDTMANN

Niels Weidtmann is Director of the College of Fellows - Center for Interdisciplinary and Intercultural Studies at the University of Tübingen. He received his doctorate from the University of Würzburg with a thesis on intercultural philosophy under Heinrich Rombach. Habilitation in cultural theory at the University of Tübingen. He was a visiting researcher at the University of Vienna and at Doshisha University, Kyoto. Since 2019 he is elected President of the Society for Intercultural Philosophy (GIP e.V.). His research interests are in phenomenology and hermeneutics, structural philosophy, philosophical anthropology and intercultural philosophy.

Recent Publications: *One World Anthropology and Beyond. A Multidisciplinary Engagement with the Work of Tim Ingold* (co-edited with Martin Porr; Routledge 2023); *Analogie. Zur Aktualität eines philosophischen Schlüsselbegriffs* (co-edited with Dietmar Koch and Alina Noveanu; Alber 2023); *Interkulturelle Philosophie. Aufgaben, Wege, Dimensionen* (Francke/UTB 2016).

INVITED SPEAKERS



DR. AJAY GUDAVARTHY

Dr. Ajay Gudavarthy is an Associate Professor at the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He currently teaches courses on Contemporary Critical Theory and Indian Politics. His key interests lie at the interface of political theory, and social and political developments in contemporary India. He has been a visiting professor at the Centre for Modern Indian Studies, University of Aberdeen, and the University of London. He was also a recipient of the prestigious Charles Wallace Visiting Fellowship at SOAS, London. Currently, he serves as an Associate Member of the Institute for Humanities at Simon Fraser University, Canada. He has authored several influential books, including *Politics of Post-Civil Society: Contemporary History of Political Movements in India* (Sage, 2013), *Maoism, Democracy and Globalisation: Cross-Currents in Indian Politics* (Sage, 2014), *Cultural Politics of Modern India* (Aakar, 2015), and *India after Modi: Populism and the Right* (Bloomsbury, 2018).



DR. ANANYA ROY PRATIHAR

Prof. Ananya Roy Pratihara is an Assistant Professor in Communication Studies at the Institute of Management and Information Science, Bhubaneswar. She specializes in Cultural Studies, Communication, and Philosophy, with a research focus on Decolonial Studies, Deleuze Studies, Film Studies, and Eco-humanism. Ananya has an extensive academic portfolio, publishing books and journal articles with leading publishers such as Bloomsbury and Palgrave Macmillan. Her scholarly contributions include *Technology, Urban Space and Networked Community* (Palgrave, 2022) and *Deleuze, Guattari and Schizoanalysis of the Global Pandemic* (Bloomsbury, 2023), *Deleuze, Guattari and the Schizoanalysis of Post-Neoliberalism* (Bloomsbury, 2024). Some of her forthcoming books are *Religion Politics & New Materialism: Philosophical Perspectives* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2025) & *"Outside" Political Economy: New Networks of Media & Digitality* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2025). Her teaching experience spans institutions in India and Germany, where she has delivered guest lectures and mentored students in communication, and literature and cultural studies. A committed educator and researcher, Dr. Pratihara continues to explore the intersections of philosophy, literature, and environmental discourse, contributing to global scholarly conversations on planetary justice and postcolonial thought.

INVITED SPEAKERS



DR. NORIHITO NAKAMURA

Dr Norihito Nakamura is an Assistant Professor at Mie University in Japan and JSPS post-doctoral fellow. His research focuses on German Philosophy, Political Theology, Intercultural Philosophy and Philosophy of Technology. He received his PhD at Kyoto University in 2023 and wrote his doctoral dissertation about Schelling's political philosophy. Afterwards, he worked as a post-doctoral researcher at Tübingen University in Germany. He is also currently working as a visiting fellow at Erasmus University Rotterdam hosted by Prof. Yuk Hui. He published *Introduction to the Research on Schelling's Political Philosophy: The Author of the Anti-Political Apocalypse* (Jinbunshoin, 2025) and coedited the volume *Miki Kiyoshi and the Crisis of Thought* (Chisokudo: 2024). He also translated works of Markus Gabriel, Christoph Menke, Andreas Reckwitz, and Iain Hamiton Grant into Japanese.



DR. KAZUMA OMURA

Dr Kazuma OMURA is a JSPS (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science) Postdoctoral fellow. He is also a senior Researcher in the Research Organization of Open Innovation & Collaboration, Ritsumeikan University. His Research Interests include an exploration of the political-theoretical and social-philosophical significance of German and American Critical Theory, as well as an analysis of the intersections and bridges between "Western" Critical Theory and "non-Western" postcolonial and decolonial studies—particularly in relation to race, empire, and colonial domination.

