



Tübingen-International & European Studies (T-IES)

Summer School June

TRACK B

What's the Buzz?

Society, Social Media, and Artificial Intelligence in Europe Today

May 31 – June 28, 2024

Course title:	Bees, Sustainability and Society
Date / Room:	June 10 – June 14, 2024 / Room tba
Language of instruction:	English
Lecturer:	Dr. Simon Meisch
Contact hours:	16 + exam + field work

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In current political debates, bees have emerged as the key species to illustrate the many environmental predicaments of our time. As such, bees are also inspiring civic engagement at the local level against industrialised forms of land-use and in favour of different forms of human-nature-relationships. While this is a recent development, bees have always captured human reflection on what constitutes good societies. Latest research supported by AI provided fascinating insights in the organisation of the beehive and thus pushing the boundaries of human-animal-interactions.

This course uses the didactical concept of ›Alltagsphantasien‹ (›Everyday fantasies‹) to focus on bees and what they stand for in the participants' minds. From there, we will explore a wide variety of social challenges. Participants will reflect on issues of sustainable development and environmental ethics but also questions of research ethics – and they will learn about the wonderful world of bees and their significance for the ›Streuobstwiesen‹, i.e. a particular South German landscape.

COURSE SCHEDULE

	Date	Topic	Reading
1 (= 90 minutes)	Monday, June 10 10:30 – 12:00	Introduction Getting to know each other	[3]
2	Monday, June 10 13:30 – 15:00	Black Mirror (S03/E06) <i>Hated in the Nation</i>	
3	Tuesday, June 11 10:30 – 12:00	Bees & the environmental crises	[2], [4], [7]
4	Tuesday, June 11 13:30 – 15:00	Bees & Artificial Intelligence	[1]
5	Tuesday, June 11 15:30 – 17:00	Being a beekeeper	[3]
	Wednesday, June 12 All Day	Field Work Bees and the »Streuobstwiesen« (traditional South German meadow orchards) (separate schedule will be made available)	
6	Thursday, June 13 10:30 – 12:00	»Honeybee Democracy«	[6]
7	Thursday, June 13 13:30 – 15:00	Bees & Environmental Ethics	[5]
8	Thursday, June 13 15:30 – 17:00	Wrap-up	
	Friday, June 14 10:30 – 11:30	Final Written Exam	

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By using the example of honeybees, the course aims to make participants familiar with current debates on environmental and technological issues and to provide them with arguments helping them to form their own opinion on these challenges.

PREREQUISITES

The course is designed for undergraduate students (in their first or second year) from the social sciences and / or humanities with basic EU knowledge and a strong general interest in Europe and the EU. A very good command of English and the willingness to actively participate in the course are required.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

Active participation, knowledge of mandatory reading & timely submission of the preparatory tasks. The total amount of ECTS to be obtained upon successful completion of the program is 8 (eight).

READING

- [1] Bakker, K. (2022): How To Speak Honeybee. In: [Noëma](#) (2 November 2022).
- [2] Drivdal, L. & van der Sluijs, J. (2021): Pollinator conservation requires a stronger and broader application of the precautionary principle. In: *Current Opinion in Insect Science* 46, pp. 95–105.
- [3] Just Alex (2022): Becoming a Beekeeper. Movie on [Youtube](#).
- [4] Lorenz, S. (2016): The endangerment of bees and new developments in beekeeping: a social science perspective using the example of Germany. In: *International Journal of Environmental Studies* 73(6), pp. 988–1005.
- [5] Ott, K. (2010): The Case for Strong Sustainability. In Ott, K. & Thapa, P. (eds): *Greifswald's Environmental Ethics*. Greifswald: Steinbecker Verlag Ulrich Rose, pp. 59–64.
- [6] Seeley, T. (2010): *Honeybee Democracy*. Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, pp. 218–231.
- [7] van der Sluijs, J, et al. (2013): Neonicotinoids, bee disorders and the sustainability of pollinator services. In: *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 5, pp. 293–305.

INFORMATION ON THE LECTURER

Simon Meisch studied Political Science and Modern German Literature at the Universities of Tübingen and Edinburgh (Scotland) and received his doctorate in Political Science. Since, he has been working on ethical and epistemological issues of sustainable development and in the sustainability sciences. He was a researcher at the International Centre for Ethics in the Sciences and Humanities (IZEW) of the University of Tübingen (2003-17), the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (Potsdam, 2018-19) and the Centre for the Study of the Sciences and the Humanities (SVT) at the University of Bergen (Norway, 2021-22). Since January 2020, he is senior lecturer for interdisciplinary ethics at the IZEW. Amongst other projects, he led the research group »Ethics of Science in the Research for Sustainable Development« (2013-2017) or »Changing Water Cultures (CANALS)« (MSCA-IF, in collaboration with the SVT). His research focuses on ethical questions of water governance and research, the role of the humanities in sustainability research, ethics and concepts of sustainable development and the relationship between science and society.

Recent publications are Bruns, A., Meisch, S., Ahmed, A., Meissner, R. & Romero-Lankao, P. (2022): Nexus disrupted: Lived realities and the water-energy-food nexus from an infrastructure perspective. In: *Geoforum* 133, 79-88; Hanusch, F. & Meisch, S. (2022): The temporal cleavage: the case of populist retrotopia vs. climate emergency. In: *Environmental Politics Environmental Politics* 31:5, 883-903; Meisch, S., Bremer, S., Young, M. & Funtowicz, S. (2022): Extended Peer Communities: Appraising the contributions of tacit knowledges in climate change decision-making. In: *Futures* 135, 102868; Bremer, S., Glavovic, B., Meisch, S., Schneider, P. & Wardekker, A. (2021): Beyond rules: How institutional cultures and climate governance interact. In: *WIREs Climate Change* 12(6), e739.