Multidisciplinary Rural Studies

Rural Studies is a multidisciplinary university network, which offers its students academic teaching in rural studies, does interdisciplinary master’s degree studies in the field and develops teaching and research.

The Rural Studies network considers it important that rural areas and towns can develop in sustainable and constructive interaction. Mutual activity between universities can broadly yield information, know-how and expertise related to rural areas for national and international demand.

The role of rural areas in the international distribution of work and in society is changing. The network is involved in the defining of the role and potential of rural areas as a part of the regeneration of Finnish society. The activity of the network itself is based on the equal academic partnership of the universities. The networked method creates versatile and extensive expertise that is the basis for high-grade rural teaching. It increases the effectiveness and visibility of rural research in Finland as well as in Europe.

The Rural Studies network has been established in 2002. It consists of ten universities: Helsinki, Joensuu, Jyväskylä, Kuopio, Lapland, Oulu, Tampere, Turku, Vaasa and Åbo Akademi. The network has created a whole new educational entity and evolved into a significant co-operative construction in the rural field. The network has a Board of Executives, which has a representation from each university and from among the Rural Studies students. Ruralia Institute of the University of Helsinki is responsible for the co-ordination of the network.

The multidisciplinary rural studies offer the students interested in the development and developing of rural areas an opportunity to
specialise in rural questions from an interdisciplinary perspective. The studies create readiness for national and international tasks as a rural researcher, an expert on rural policy and a developer of rural areas. The students have placed themselves in jobs corresponding to their education after graduating, for example in research institutions (researcher/planner), ministries (programme secretary), administration and local activity groups. This has been furthered by the contacts made during the studies with the experts and the networks of experts in the field.

Rural Studies provide the students with intellectual and skill-related readiness to perceive, analyse and solve problems related to both research and the development of rural areas in a sustainable way. The completion of Rural Studies creates readiness for understanding the background and connections of socio-economic changes affecting rural areas.

A graduate specialised in rural questions masters the system and operational mechanisms of rural policy and sees the connections of local development with the decision-making on different levels. S/he masters the methodology of rural research and is able to apply research information to practice. In addition, s/he has readiness to organise and supervise extensive rural development projects in which the mobilisation of local resources is linked up to strategic development.

The central principles of the teaching are: multidisciplinarity, interaction between theory and practice, the diversity and internationality of the teaching.

The multidisciplinary approach is the cornerstone of the teaching. Rural areas open from many different perspectives and the interaction between different disciplines enriches the teaching. The teaching engages with versatile questions concerning rural areas on a practical level. Interaction between theory and practice is realised in co-
operation with the people, enterprises and communities operating in rural areas.

The diversity of teaching means the application of different teaching- and work methods. Part of the teaching is carried out as distance learning. Contact teaching periods are arranged also in rural areas. Different e-learning environments are exploited in versatile ways in the distance learning periods. Internationality is realised by the inviting of foreign researchers and experts in the rural field as lecturers and by participating in international projects of rural research and in other forms of co-operation.
1. Studying in the university network

Right to study

The students accepted in the programme have a right to study for all the Rural Studies at the universities of the network. Rural Studies are available as a secondary subject to the students of all departments and subjects at the partner universities of the network. The student can freely choose the study modules suitable for her/himself from all the available study modules. The studies will be written into the student’s personal study plan. The directive turnaround time of the studies is two years. The students graduate from their own departments with a master’s degree. Postgraduate students can choose parts of Rural Studies applicable to their postgraduate studies.

Rural Studies – departments in charge

The teaching is done through the departments in charge involved in the network. The Rural Studies students have a right to take rural studies in any university of the network.

Study practices

The homepage of the university network (www.ruralstudies.fi) operates as an electric Study Affairs Office, where the students can find real time information on the activity of the network, a study guide, a bulletin board and contact information. Ruralia Institute at the University of Helsinki, Mikkeli Unit, is responsible for the practical co-ordination of the university network.
The completing of the study modules

The Rural Studies study guide gives specific information on the content, methods, completing of the studies and study material for each study module. While formulating their study plan, the students should take into account that all study modules are not carried out every academic year.

The entry and registering of study attainments

The teacher in charge of each study module makes the entry for the study attainment. The co-ordination unit will send the student a completion certificate, after which the student her/himself is responsible for having the attainment registered in the study register of her/his home university. The co-ordination unit keeps a list of the students and their study attainments and sends the student a separate certificate for the completed multidisciplinary rural studies.

Expenses

The teaching is free of charge, a payment is collected from the students for study material according to the practices of the department providing the teaching. The travels expenses of the students are not compensated for, and the possible accommodation and other expenses caused by intensive study periods are kept moderate. Separate instructions will be given about excursions abroad.

Internationality

The Rural Studies student exchange is arranged through the exchange programmes of the universities of the network. The university network gathers information about foreign university programmes, invites foreign teachers to give lectures on a regular basis and arranges international summer schools and seminars related to rural areas. The network participates in international projects of both teaching and research.
Rural Studies -graduate school

The network advances the mutual interaction among research groups related to further training in different universities and operating in different disciplines. The network arranges courses, seminars and meetings with researchers for postgraduate students. This way the network supports the teachers of the network in the instruction of postgraduate studies.

E-learning

E-learning is an important form of studying in the university network. Ca. half of the Rural Studies study modules are carried out as e-learning, either as multiform e-learning and contact teaching or completely as e-learning. Sufficient time should be reserved in one’s timetable for the completing of the e-learning courses.

Rural Studies Board of Executives

The Board of Executives of the network is in charge of the entity and development of Rural Studies. Each university in the network, the Rural Studies students and the co-ordination unit of the network set one member and one deputy member for the Board for two years at a time.

Rural Studies in Swedish

The Vaasa unit of Abo Akademi University offers a thematic secondary subject entity (25 cr.) in Rural Studies. More information about the studies can be attained at https://www.abo.fi/student/landsbygdsstudier

Rural Studies PR-contact persons

Each member university has one or more PR-contact person(s). The PR-contact persons are in charge of the communications of the studies and the network in their own universities.
2. The structure and content of the studies

The study modules offered by the Rural Studies network are introduced in this chapter. The multidisciplinary rural studies consist of an introductory study module and six modules, which are further divided into study modules.

**Introductory module:**
RS 100 An excursion into the development questions of rural areas (5 cr.)

**Department in charge**
University of Helsinki, Department of Social Psychology.

**Objective**
The study module serves as an introduction to multidisciplinary rural studies. It deals with the central processes of change in rural areas and the attempts to control them in practical contexts and from the perspectives of different disciplines. The student is trained to observe and formulate problems of research and development related to rural areas. S/he learns to understand the difference and similarities between research and development on a deeper level and is trained for the multidisciplinary discussion of research problems in a group and the application of one’s own know-how and the perspective of one’s own subject. The examination becomes concrete through the context of the chosen rural municipality.

**Content**
The key themes of the different modules of Rural Studies: the change of rural areas, rural policies, rural cultures, environmental questions and entrepreneurship in rural areas.
Mode of study

During the intensive period the students get acquainted with the content of both rural research and the Rural Studies programme. During the period the students familiarise themselves diversely with the activity of a Finnish municipality and sub-regional unit through practical contexts and examples. During the period the students consider and assess the change of rural areas and the challenges related to it together. In the discussions they contemplate the causes and effects of social, economic and ecological development. Along with these discussions certain development is highlighted and formulated into problems and question related to research and development.
Module 1:  
The change of rural areas

The change of rural areas as a part of societal development is highlighted in the study modules of this module. The theme is approached from the perspectives of different disciplines and research traditions.

Learning goals

The student understands the societal and economic-political connections of the continuous change of different rural areas from the perspectives of different disciplines. S/he recognises and is able to compare the effects and implications of cultural, economic and regional differences in the rural area-town –continuum. S/he understands the variety of rural readings and their changing nature. S/he gets a general idea of the changes in the values, attitudes, world views and identity of the rural population in Finland.
RS101 The development of remote rural areas (5 cr.)

*Department in charge*
University of Oulu, Department of Geography.

*Objective*
After completing the study module the student knows the basics of regional differentiation of rural areas and the measurement and analysis of peripheral location in Finland and in Europe. S/he understands the special features, development problems and possibilities of remote and sparsely-populated rural areas and is able to estimate the effects of political actions from the perspective of remote rural areas.

*Content*
Part 1: The regional differentiation processes of rural areas
Part 2: Remote location as a regional development challenge
Part 3: The means of development of remote areas in rural policy
Part 4: Special problems of remote rural areas
Part 5: The choices of living in remote rural areas

*Teaching and working methods*
Web lectures 10 h + study handout + examination on the lectures.
Exercises in the web and discussions in small groups and an individual essay or practical work related to the lectures. The subject of the practical work can emphasise the analysis of remoteness or the ways of developing remote rural areas.

*Mode of study*
A web examination based on the web lectures, study handout and supplementary literature, active participation in the web discussion and an accepted essay/practical work.
RS102 The dynamics of change in rural areas (5 cr.)

Department in charge
University of Joensuu, the Subject Group of Geography.

Objective
To familiarise the students with the development features of rural areas, the results and different trends of rural research, especially from the geographical and regional points of view.

Content
The most salient themes:
– the research tradition of regional science in rural areas
– the development history of rural areas
– the forming of the settlement structure, population centres
– sociological rural- and foodstuff research
– rural development
– the communal features of villages
– population development, rural women
– welfare society in different fields
– the interaction between rural areas and towns
– the progress of information society

Teaching and working methods
The course includes web lectures and a book examination. There are 16 hours of lectures in the web. The web lectures are completed by attending the lecture series and doing the written assignments on rural issues connected to it. The assignments contain questions dealing with different themes, and essays will be written on them.

Mode of study
Assignments and book examination. The essays will be sent by e-mail to the teacher for assessment. The book examination will be arranged as a web examination.
RS103 A web course on social-psychological rural research (6 cr.)

Department in charge
University of Helsinki, Department of Social Psychology.

Objective
To familiarise the students with the central concepts, theories, methods and results of the social-scientific, specifically social-psychological research of rural people and to give them a general idea of the changes in the values, attitudes, world views and identity of the rural population in Finland.

Content
Finnish rural areas and the change of rural areas are studied on the course from social-psychologically interesting perspectives. For example the images attached to rural areas, rural entrepreneurship and the changes in the social relationships, identity, values, attitudes and ways of life in rural areas are being examined. They are largely dealt with through empirical research. The course is divided into four main themes, which are rural images, the Pyhtää-research project of the Department of Social Psychology, farmers and the change in farming and rural entrepreneurship.

Teaching and working methods
The study module is taken in the Blackboard –study environment, in which, in addition to familiarising themselves with the study material, the students work on their personal assignments and discuss on the basis of the study material. The course also includes literature, and the students will write an essay on it.

Mode of study
The completing of the study module consists of the assignments of the web course, active participation in the web discussion and an essay. Earlier experience of the Blackboard -environment is not required for the participation on the course.
RS104 Transformation of Rural Areas in European Post-Socialist Countries (6 op)

Department in charge
University of Helsinki, Aleksanteri Institute.

Objective/content
This course will provide students with the main features of rural changes in transition countries in Europe and analysis of development policies and practises in some case regions. The main issues will include historical background (pre-transition rural structure), overview of policy and institutional reform, social aspects of rural development, stakeholders in rural development and other topics. The planned programme is a response to the growing demand for knowledge on rural development.

Mode of study
Web-course (12 lectures, one lecture per week), discussion after each lecture, essay.
Module 2: The skill of research and development

An expert on rural issues must be able to independently solve problems related to rural areas. A thesis is important testimony to skill and expertise. The aim is that as many students in the Rural Studies network as possible write their master’s thesis for their main subject on a subject dealing with rural areas. Writing the thesis is also learning for project work, essential in working life.

Learning goals

The student is familiar with the central theories of rural research, especially the methodology and methods of development and is able to apply them to her/his thesis. S/he recognises her/his own expertise and understands and masters the entity related to it. S/he can formulate a research question and -problem and can write her/his thesis in interaction with her/his instructor and the other students. In addition, the students get a versatile idea of the occupational image of a rural developer and get acquainted with the different stages and know-how requirements of local development on a concrete level.
RS201 Research skills (10 cr.)

The study module consists of two courses:

The methodological contemporary trends of rural research (3 cr.)

Department in charge
University of Vaasa, Regional Science.

Objective
The student gets a current idea of rural research, its phrasing of questions and methods. The study module supports the theoretical and methodological know-how the students have acquired in their main subjects by familiarising them with the special questions concerning rural areas and research approaches. The student gets ideas and additional motivation for her/his own thesis work.

Content
The research process is gone through from the ideating stage to the revising of the research report. The themes to be discussed include the effects of methodological choices to the formation of the research, the formulating of the research problems, the selecting of the research methods, the questions related to data collection and the writing of the research report.

Teaching and working methods
Lectures and group work.

Mode of study
Participation in lectures and exercises. A learning diary and a small research work.
The Master’s thesis path of rural research (7 cr.)

Department in charge
University of Vaasa, Regional Science.

Objective
The study module supports the completion of the Master’s thesis. The student gains control over the writing of the thesis, from the analysis of the problem to the solution of the research problem and the writing of the thesis.

Content
The Master’s thesis path consists of a series of workshops (Master’s thesis workshops) that support the progress of the theses. In the Master’s thesis workshops the students get instruction and guidance on the methods and the writing of the thesis. Along with the process the students get practice in the methodology expected by their subject and approach. The series of Master’s thesis workshops include also a “congress item” in which the students present their work and are trained in scientific discussion.

Teaching and working methods
Four workshops.

Mode of study
Participation in at least three workshops.
RS202 The style of development in a rural context (4 cr.)

Department in charge
University of Helsinki, Department of Social Psychology.

Objective
After having completed the study module the student is able to outline the kind of issues the development of rural areas comes down to intellectually and in relation to skills. S/he understands the programmatic entity of rural development from the EU level to the level of local activity and recognises the different active parties in rural development and discerns their different roles. The student is able to acquire information on the critical questions of rural development projects, is familiar with the different occupational images and know-how requirements of a rural developer and is able to assess her/his personal aptitudes, know-how and working style in relation to these.

Content
The content of the study module consists of the following parts: 1) discussion on what development (of rural areas) is; 2) analysing the meaning of development style and situational awareness in addition to know-how and skills; familiarising oneself with rural development activity and the actors in practice, 4) acquiring additional information on development either independently or in small groups with the help of a case study and 5) discussion of the occupational images of development, one’s own observations and conception on development together with the small group and the teachers of the study module and with visiting experts. A practical context for the discussion on development is the LEADER+ - programme partly financed by the EU, and the different organisations, associations and individual persons participating in it in different ways.
Teaching and working methods
The study module consists of the following working methods: 1) three workshops (each lasting two days), 2) web discussions (introducing oneself/an advance assignment and a discussion period after each workshop) and 3) a case analysis of a development project done individually (or as pair work). With the help of the aforementioned working methods the intellectual and skill-related dimensions of rural development are examined from perspectives supplementing each other.

Mode of study
Participation in the workshops, the individual working on a case and web work.
RS204 Rural development project (3 cr.)

Department in charge
University of Tampere, Department of Regional Studies.

Objective
In this study module the students participate in rural development. They carry out a small-scale development project under the supervision of the teacher in charge and in interaction with the local people. After the process the student’s conception of the prerequisites and capabilities for development has deepened. S/he understands the importance of the context and the situation-specific nature of development in practical development. The student is better equipped to control the stages of project arrangements and is able to apply her/his know-how and skills to project work independently.

Content
The content of the study module is shaped according to the case in question. The content is comprised of the stages of rural development programme work, starting with an orientation to the task and proceeding to a finished programme proposal.

Teaching and working methods
The study module consists of an orientation given by the teacher in charge and method training, co-operative occasions with the local people and the practical preparations of the programme with a field experiment. The final result is a programme proposal for the development of the villages in the area. The teaching method is intensive work in a development group. The work requires the ability to co-operate from the students. The teacher is in charge of the realisation of the project and the instruction of the work, but also local experts in rural development are used in the study module. The study module is aimed at the students who are in the final stage of their studies.
Modes of study
The study module is carried out as 4-5 days of intensive work in a development group and in co-operation with the interest groups and the villagers. The study attainment is the final programme proposal, prepared by the team, which is also assessed from the perspective of the local actors.

Study material
The orientation material will be distributed to the students beforehand and other written material at the outset of the study module.
Module 3:  
Rural policies

In this module a general view of rural areas as a social question and a field of politics is constructed. Rural areas are studied from the perspectives of politics and political systems. Under examination are the structures, methods and requisite of the multi-level system of rural policy in Finland and in the EU. The development questions of rural areas are considered from the perspective of extensive rural policy.

Learning goals

The student is familiar with the basic structures and methods of the system of rural policy. S/he is able to consider questions of development from a wider political perspective. The student is familiar with the possibilities created by the political-administrative structures affecting rural development.
RS301 The planning- and decision-making structures of the development of rural areas (4 cr.)

Department in charge
University of Helsinki, Department of Economics.

Objective
The student gets an idea of the change in the execution of rural policy from a historical perspective. S/he understands the connections of the development of Finnish rural areas especially to the elements coming across through the EU. The student is familiar with the multi-level nature of decision-making in rural development and is able to assess documents related to rural development.

Content
Getting acquainted with the historical formation of rural policy. Going deeply into the planning-, administrative- and decision-making systems and developmental organisations related to rural development. Analysing documents related to rural development.

Teaching and working methods
Lectures 16 h.

Mode of study
A lecture diary and a small research work.
RS302 Development policies in the rural context (5 cr.)

Department in charge
University of Helsinki, Department of Economics.

Objective
The student is able to outline different areas of development policy such as regional-, livelihood- and innovation policy in the rural context. S/he understands the connections of the policies to rural development from the perspective of scientific know-how. S/he gets practice in recognising the phrasing of questions related to the mastery of rural development. S/he has an idea of the current themes and subject matters of rural research and rural development.

Content
The content of the course consists of the discerning of the different political areas of operation concerning rural areas from the perspective of research, and the phrasing of questions of the theory and realisation of the management of local development. The entity is comprised of orientation lectures (8 h) and instructed e-learning.

The orientation lectures consist of the following themes:
– rural areas from the perspective of political research
– theoretical perspectives on the development and management of rural areas.

The e-learning is comprised of familiarising oneself with the given material, web discussion based on it and an essay written based on both of these. After the thematised web discussions the student chooses one of the subject matters of the policies related to the covered rural research and rural development as the topic for the essay, for example:
– the interfaces and innovation networks of urban and rural policies
– business- and innovation policies in the rural context
– welfare policy and rural areas
– the development of creative fields in cultural and rural policies

Teaching and working methods
Lectures, e-learning.

Mode of study
A lecture diary, e-learning, an essay.
Module 4: 
Rural cultures

In this module rural areas are approached from the comprehensive perspective of cultural research. The changes taking place in rural areas are familiarised with through the discerning of the research on rural communities, societal processes and the new sources of vitality in rural areas. The central methods and concepts of cultural research are emphasised in the teaching.

Learning goals

The students are familiar with the diverse forms of rural culture and have familiarised themselves with the human and economic resources of rural culture. They master the basic questions of the cultural policy of rural areas and the changing innovation fields of the vitality of rural areas. They master the central concepts of the cultural research of rural areas and get the requisites for rural development catering for the cultural starting points.
RS401 The capital of rural culture (6 cr.)

Department in charge
University of Jyväskylä, Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius and the Department of Social Science and Philosophy (the Programme of Cultural Policy).

Objective
The student familiarises her/himself with the human and economic resources of rural cultures and their complex impressiveness. S/he recognises the concept of capital and knows how to use it in both research and development.

Content
Many kinds of phenomena can be included in the concept of rural culture, depending on whether it is the question of for example an ethnologic, sociologic, culture-geographic or economic perspective. The central themes of the study module include for example cultural events in rural areas, the success stories of rural areas and the processes and structures of rural areas related to cultural policy. The phenomena of the themes can be understood as cultural, social and economic capital. The basic concepts used in the study module (for example social capital) are assessed especially from the definitions of Robert D. Putnam and Pierre Bourdieu.

Teaching and working methods
The study module is divided in three items: an advance assignment, a contact teaching period and written work. The study module starts with a two-day-long introductory lecture (12 h) in Jyväskylä. During the study module the students will write three essays in the Optima web environment.
Mode of study
Participation in the introductory lecture, the completing of the advance assignment and home essays, which will be written in the web environment.
RS402 Rural culture – an entanglement of time, space and communality (5 cr.)

Department in charge
University of Jyväskylä, Department of History and Ethnology, Ethnology.

Objective
The objective is to study and understand rural life and the construction of rural images from a cultural perspective and to provide tools through it for rural development catering for cultural starting points and the supporting of continuity.

Content
During the study module the students will familiarise themselves with theoretical considerations and practical examples on how the basic concepts of ethnological sciences (for example culture, tradition, locality) and the perspectives on the research of history are placed in the rural context and explain the essence of rural areas.

Mode of study
The course will be entirely carried out in the Optima web environment and it consists of three assignment entities supporting each other: the careful familiarising oneself with the course material, participation in the web discussion and the writing of a compiling essay.

Study material
The literary study material of the course consists of the course material in the web and self-sought literature to support the compiling essay. The course material includes essays written by experts in ethnological sciences (anthropology, folklore, ethnology) and researchers of history, the meaning of which is to tell about the typical solutions that guide the work of the researchers in these fields, when rural areas as cultural environment are the research subject. The material entity offers contentual, conceptual and methodological examples and choices for the students’ disposal.
RS403 The regenerating culture and vitality of rural areas (5 cr.)

*Department in charge*
University of Lapland, Tourism Research

*Objective*
The most important sectors of the prevailing rural culture – housing, work and leisure – and the new sources of vitality contained in them, such as tourism, are outlined in the study module.

*Content*
In the study module the students familiarise themselves with the regenerating culture and vitality of rural areas from the following perspectives:
- rural areas as a part of the changing way of life (increasing leisure, the frequency of tourism etc.)
- the new housing cultures of rural areas (the new residents of rural areas, leisure housing, second homes etc.)
- the new forms of work and production, rural innovations in entrepreneurship
- the support networks of rural areas.

From these perspectives the students try to outline the new sources of vitality in rural areas.

*Teaching and working methods*
Lectures. The Optima-learning environment: independent work according to one’s own timetable. An exercise on which the student works up a written report. The exercises contain also empirical collection of information. The content of the exercise (two alternative exercises) is introduced in the Optima-learning environment.
**Modes of study**
Independent work using the Optima-learning environment, lectures, literature and self-collected data. Completing the exercise and a written report. The report should show the student’s familiarisation with the central content of the study module and the study material.

**Study material**
Web material in the Optima-learning environment and literature (to be specified in Optima) and self-collected material for the exercise.
RS404 Rural Heritage (5–10 cr.)

Department in charge
University of Turku, Department of Cultural Production and Landscape Studies

Objective
The student gets acquainted with the different manifestations of rural cultural heritage and learns to critically examine rural areas from the perspective of the construction of cultural heritage and the generation of identities happening through it. The student gets a personal feeling for working in the cultural heritage projects of different fields and the assessment of them.

Content
In this advanced special studies study module the material and immaterial cultural heritage, the ways to define it and the changes of it in the transition phase of rural areas are examined. Rural cultural heritage is approached from the perspectives of landscape protection, history culture and cultural tourism. On the study module the students get acquainted with places in Satakunta in which rural cultural heritage has been studied and/or productised.

Teaching and working methods
Lecture, small group teaching, independent work.
Module 5: Environmental questions related to rural areas

The module concentrates on the dynamics of the relationship between society and environment. The content is related to the questions related to the use, planning and protection of natural and cultural environment and the locally sustainable development of rural areas.

The study module RS501 consists of two study modules, RS5011 Environment and fairness – e-learning (3 cr.) and RS5012 The facing of the control over and protection of the natural resources of rural areas (2 cr.).

Learning goals

The student is familiar with the dynamics between society and environment. S/he is able to outline the questions related to the use, planning and protection of natural and cultural environment from different perspectives.
RS501 Rural areas and environmental policy (5 cr.)

The nuclear study module consists of two separate parts: e-learning and an intensive period.

RS5011 Environment and fairness –e-learning (3 cr.)

Department in charge
University of Joensuu, the Subject Group of Sociology and Social Policy.

Objective
The student learns to understand the importance of the interaction between social factors and the different levels of society in the definition of environmental problems in rural areas. The student learns to outline the challenges of fairness related to the use and protection of environment and is able to analyse them theoretically and empirically.

Content
The course familiarises the students with the current questions of fairness of environmental policy. In addition to the general perspectives, the student can choose a special question to get acquainted with: forest-, animal- or climate policy. Through these examples the questions of fairness of environmental policy are connected especially to the rural context.

Working method
The work takes place in the web. The student familiarises her/himself first with the book “Fairness and the environment” and answers the questions related to it. After this the student works up assignments on a theme of her/his own choosing: forest-, animal- or climate policy. The assignments proceed stage by stage from the international level to the
national and regional levels. The student reflects on her/his own thinking as the assignments proceed and finally analyses her/his answers theoretically. The assignments are instructed with additional course material.

Mode of study
Assignments done in the web, grading 0–5. The student gets feedback on the assignments.
RS5012 The facing of the control over and protection of the natural resources of rural areas (2 cr.)

Department in charge
University of Tampere, Department of Regional Studies.

Objective
The objective of the intensive period is to deepen the students’ understanding of the use of and control over the natural resources of rural areas and of environmental care. The period concentrates on the political and cultural dimensions of the care of rural and agricultural environments so that the locality of the environmental question is emphasised.

Content
The study method of the intensive course is multidisciplinary. The teachers of the course are specialised in the environmental questions of rural areas, and the teaching is based on environmental and rural sociology and policy and geography. The subject include the environmental question of agriculture on the different political sectors, the meeting of the practices of environmental policy and farmers, the diverseness of agricultural environments and the caring for it and the meeting of rural areas and environmental protection.

Teaching and working methods
Lectures and group work.

Mode of study
Presence in the lectures, participation in group discussions and a learning diary written up on the intensive period.
RS502 Rural law (5 cr.)

Department in charge
University of Joensuu, Subject Group of Law

Objective
The study module is an extensive introduction to the questions related to environmental law significant from the perspective of rural studies. After completing the study module the students are able to recognise the basic structures of the regulation systems of rural environment and the use of land.

Content
During the study module the students familiarise themselves with the central legislation related to rural law and gain basic readiness for the independent exploitation of the sources of law (regulations and cases).

Working methods
Independent familiarisation with the material delivered to the students. The study module will be completed by doing assignments and writing up a small-scale written work on a subject separately agreed upon with the teacher. The purpose of the assignments is to train the students for judicial acquisition of information and the use of judicial sources. In the written work the students will familiarise themselves with a self-selected question related to rural law on a deeper level.
Module 6: 
Entrepreneurship in rural areas

The activity of local economies and the mechanisms in the background affecting the emergence of entrepreneurship and business are under examination. Communality and the factors shaping it are emphasised as the natural counterforce of globalisation. Special attention is paid on the business relevant to rural areas.

Learning goals

The students understand the possibilities offered by rural areas as operational environments of enterprises, also the changes brought by the future on view. They are familiar with the general discussions related to the birth and development of economic activity and are able to creatively apply these in the operational environment offered by rural areas. The students are also familiar with the basic mechanisms of the activity of local economies and their potential to affect their own development.
RS601 Entrepreneurship in a social context. Theoretical perspectives on entrepreneurship in rural areas (6 cr.)

Department in charge
University of Helsinki, Department of Social Psychology

Objective
The objective of the course is to familiarise the students with the social psychological perspective in entrepreneurship research and to present the problematic related to small-scale entrepreneurship in rural areas. The course trains the students in the connecting of theoretical concepts and practical examples.

Teaching and working methods
The course consists of web lectures and assignments related to them, written material and the analysis of business cases, on the basis of which a practical work will be written.

Mode of study
The course will be completely carried out in the web in the Blackboard learning environment.
RS602 The promoting of business in rural areas (5 cr.)

Department in charge
University of Jyväskylä, Entrepreneurship.

Objective and content
The perspective of the study module is the perspective of the person or organisation developing the economy of the region or municipality and its sources of livelihood, i.e. the perspective of local development, interpreted broadly. The target phenomena of the study module are thus entrepreneurship in general terms as both a communal and an individual-/enterprise-level phenomenon and new, viable business, independent of whether it develops in already existent enterprises or locally in new enterprises. The aim of the study module is that the students understand the target phenomena conceptually on the different levels of examination, i.e. their structures, qualities and basic mechanisms, and, on this basis, are able to individually choose and develop the definitions of policy and methods of affecting the target phenomenon in practical development.

Content
The theoretical starting points of the birth of entrepreneurship and business and the development of local economies. Area-bound development policies and the construction of favourable environments for entrepreneurship.

Teaching and working methods
Lectures and course papers.

Mode of study
Active participation in the lectures and writing the course papers. The intensive period can be replaced by a book examination.
RS603 The sustainable development of local economy in rural areas (5 cr.)

Department in charge
University of Helsinki, Department of Economics.

Objective
In the study module the students familiarise themselves with the different alternatives of economic co-operation, for example as a promoter of technical innovations in entrepreneurship and as the solution of sustainable local economic development.

Content
In the study module the students examine the status of local communities in the globalising economy and the importance of changes to the future of local communities. On the course the students will also get acquainted with the challenges of local development.

Teaching and working methods
The course will be completely carried out in the web. It is comprised of intensive periods, independent work and small group work. An independent assignment (report) will be written on the course on a phenomenon related to local economy in rural areas.
Coordination unit:

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Ruralia Institute
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