



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet  
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

# SLUkurs

## Syllabus

**PNSo237 Relational geography for landscape and planning studies, 7.5 credits**

## Syllabus approved

2022-05-16

## Subjects

Landscape Architecture/Other Social Science/Landscape Planning

## Education cycle

Third cycle

## Grading scale

Pass / Failed

The requirements for attaining different grades are described in the course assessment criteria which are contained in a supplement to the course syllabus. Current information on assessment criteria shall be made available at the start of the course.

## Language

English

## Prior knowledge

Accepted as a PhD student.

## Objective, including learning outcomes

The course explores how Actor-network theory (ANT) has been, and can be, used in landscape and planning studies. Specific focus is set on the geography of ANT

and how it facilitates a richer (and radically relational) understanding of space, place, materiality and power. Furthermore it can enrich the repertoire of actors involved in shaping the landscape or in planning.

Upon completion of the course, the students shall be able to:

- describe and discuss the general differences between ANT and other relational theories of importance within contemporary landscape and planning studies;
- communicate an understanding of key concepts within ANT;
- apply the central concepts offered in the course to students own work.

## **Content**

Relational ontology has enriched landscape and planning studies over the past two decades. If taken seriously it suggests a radical shift in how to understand geography within landscape and planning studies. This shift departs usually from a critique of a Euclidean geography and a rooted understanding of place. In return, other ways of tracing the enactment of place/space are suggested. This includes examinations of the global in the local, of scale as a process, of travelling policies, of the heterogeneous set of actors involved in planning, of buildings and infrastructures as a matter of maintenance and repair, and of the role of materiality and non-human actors. While contemporary landscape and planning studies often use relational theories in a piecemeal manner, this course aims to challenge the students to explore a more radical relational approach, with Actor-network theory as a base. It will introduce seminal texts within the field, discuss differences between the loosely defined strands of relational approaches, and examine more recent trends of special interest for landscape and planning scholars.

The course is based on a combination of web-based and in-person seminars, spanning from a general introduction of ANT and relational ontology, the topological approach of "ANT and after", the importance of materiality, on maintenance and repair, to a discussion on recent trends within the field.

## **Requirements for examination**

For successful completion of the course the student must participate actively in the seminars, write an essay (ca 3 000 words) on a topic approved by the course leader, and comment on another student's essay. The essay may be written in English or Swedish.

**Additional information**

The course is offered by the research school Society and Landscape (SL) at the Department of Urban and Rural Development, SLU.

**Responsible department**

Department of Urban and Rural Development