

STEPS Centre Summer School on pathways to sustainability

University of Sussex, 14-25 May 2018
www.steps-centre.org/summerschool

The ESRC Social, Technological and Environmental Pathways to Sustainability Centre (STEPS Centre) at the University of Sussex is pleased to announce a major two-week international summer school on Pathways to Sustainability. Involving innovative forms of teaching and interaction, including an international team of leading researchers in this field, the Summer School will be held from 14-25 May 2018 in Brighton, UK.

Applications are invited from highly-motivated doctoral and postdoctoral researchers, working in fields around development studies, science and technology studies, innovation and policy studies, and across agricultural, health, water or energy issues. There is a premium on interdisciplinary approaches and on interests and orientations that converge with work of the STEPS Centre. Numbers are limited, so recruitment will be by refereed selection. Participants will be required to pay a fee, but a number of scholarships are available.

Participants at the 2014 summer school



The STEPS Centre is a flagship initiative of the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Located in well-appointed buildings on the University of Sussex campus in the South Downs National Park near the vibrant cosmopolitan city of Brighton, the STEPS Centre is a joint initiative of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and the Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU) at the University of Sussex. The Summer School will take place during the 2018 Brighton Festival - a famously energetic and eclectic celebration of culture and arts running from 5 - 27 May - with plenty of opportunities for students to engage.

Founded in 2006, the STEPS Centre is part of a global network of institutes and organisations concerned with the key roles played in development and social change by science and technology. Working with partner institutes in twenty countries across five continents the STEPS Centre has pioneered a number of highly policy-engaged initiatives aiming at radical rethinking of the contributions made by knowledge and innovation towards social equity, democratic empowerment and environmental integrity. To this end, the STEPS Centre is building an innovative portfolio of interdisciplinary theory, analytical frameworks and practical tools to strengthen academic research and policy appraisal alike – prioritising the interests of the most marginal groups.

Focusing on the self-reinforcing and path-dependent interactions of social, technological and environmental systems – and informed by an analysis of the way different kinds of power help shape the social framing of knowledges, the STEPS Centre has developed a unique ‘pathways approach’ to research and policy engagement. Drawing on innovation and development theory, science and technology and policy studies, ecological economics, decision analysis and political ecology, the Summer School will explore and apply the associated array of crossdisciplinary concepts, analytical frameworks, empirical methods and policy strategies.

Participants will join the wider team of STEPS researchers in lectures, seminars, interactive exercises and innovative ‘walkshop’ events in the beautiful nearby Sussex countryside. The emphasis will be on grounded theory, collaborative learning and participatory experience. Students are encouraged to bring current research projects offering particular opportunities for applying the STEPS Centre ‘pathways approach’.

Curriculum

Starting and ending with one-day workshops in the Sussex countryside, the Summer School will be built around fourteen further half-day sessions interspersed with periods for collaborative study, group deliberation and private reflection, as well as a day-long ‘conference’ developed by participants themselves. There will be a number of organised evening events, both academic and social, while the Brighton Festival offers a unique choice of further evening activities.



Discussion at the 2014 summer school

Themes covered in web-posted readings and teaching and discussion sessions will include:

- the politics of sustainability
- complexity in dynamic interacting systems
- interdisciplinarity in social and natural science
- knowledge and power
- understanding risk, uncertainty and ignorance
- livelihoods, institutions and development
- equity, social justice and pro-poor action research
- global governance of science and technology
- the political dynamics of regulation
- innovation and social change
- socio-technical transitions
- civil society and social innovation
- responsibility, accountability and enterprise
- sustainability, security, resilience and transformation
- ‘opening up’ expertise and consensus
- participatory tools and practices
- science, policy and the media
- technology access and delivery
- strategies for communication and engagement
- the politics of diversity and pluralism
- active citizenship and innovation democracies
- prosperity, wellbeing and green growth

Sessions will offer opportunities to relate these themes to specific issues and policy debates across the STEPS Centre’s core domains of food and agriculture, health and disease, water and sanitation, and energy and climate change. Participants will be encouraged to engage and develop their personal research topics and ideas in interaction with other students and with STEPS Centre members.

People



Ian Scoones (STEPS Director). A Professorial Fellow at IDS, Ian trained as a natural resource ecologist and currently works on the intersections of science, policy and environmental and agricultural change, particularly in Africa.



Andy Stirling (STEPS Co-director; SPRU Research Director). Trained in archaeology and anthropology, then at Greenpeace, before research on science and technology policy. He focuses on uncertainty, power, diversity and transformation.



Adrian Ely (Head of Impact and Engagement). Adrian's areas of research interest include the environmental impacts of GM crops, biotechnology regulation, risk and uncertainty in policy-making around new technologies and innovation for sustainable development. Adrian convenes the Innovation, Sustainability, Development: A New Manifesto project.



David Ockwell (STEPS member; Department of Geography, University of Sussex). Based at SPRU, David specialises in climate change policy with a particular focus on low carbon technology transfer and development, and on public engagement with climate change.



Harriet Dudley (STEPS Centre Manager) became interested in international development, and particularly corporate governance issues, during her MBA studies. She worked at the Overseas Development Institute as a research assistant and with the Aga Khan Development Network before joining the STEPS Centre team.



Amber Huff (STEPS Centre member; IDS Research Fellow). Amber Huff is a social anthropologist and political ecologist. She is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies. Her primary areas of focus include politics of conservation, resource struggles and conflict, environmental policy, rural livelihoods and human adaptability and the politics of indigeneity and autochthony within resource struggles in southern Africa.



Melissa Leach (Director, Institute of Development Studies). Melissa originally trained as a geographer and social anthropologist. Her interdisciplinary research explores the politics of local knowledge and practices and science-policy processes across a wide range of environmental and health issues. Melissa was Director of the STEPS Centre until early 2014.



Hayley MacGregor (STEPS member; IDS Research Fellow). Hayley is a medical doctor and social anthropologist whose areas of research include mental health and disability, human rights discourses and health citizenship, and the regulation of and responses to medical technologies.



Fiona Marshall (STEPS member; Senior Lecturer at SPRU). Fiona is a tropical agricultural ecologist/environmental scientist specialising in interdisciplinary initiatives to understand and address the impacts of environmental change on the livelihoods of the poor.



Lyla Mehta (STEPS Water and Sanitation Domain Convenor; IDS Fellow; Adjunct professor, Noragric, Norway). Lyla is a sociologist and uses the lens of water and sanitation to address issues concerning scarcity, access, rights, knowledge, power and the cultural politics of environment and development.



Erik Millstone (STEPS Agriculture and Food Domain Co-convenor; Professor of Science Policy at SPRU). Erik trained as a physicist and philosopher, but now works on science and public health policy; his interests include public and environmental health protection policies, the interactions between scientific and policy considerations in both risk assessment and risk management, BSE, GM crops and obesity policy.



Nathan Oxley (STEPS Communications & Impact Manager) contributes to the impact, communications and engagement work of the STEPS Centre. He has worked for a specialist communications agency on sustainable development, and as a web editor for a national charity in the UK.



Adrian Smith (STEPS member; Senior Research Fellow at SPRU). Adrian specialises in critical analysis of environmental policy processes and research into relationships between technology, society and sustainable development.



John Thompson (STEPS Agriculture and Food Domain Co-convenor; IDS Research Fellow). John has worked on power, policy and sustainability issues in complex and dynamic agri-food, water and natural resource systems for 30 years, in both developing and industrialised countries. A resource geographer by training, he currently serves as Co-Convenor of the STEPS Food and Agriculture Domain and Joint Director of the Future Agricultures Consortium.



Linda Waldman (STEPS member; Director of Teaching and Learning, IDS). Linda is a social anthropologist whose research areas include indigenous identity and nationalism, environmental pollution, asbestos disease and its socio-cultural ramifications.

Applications

Please use our online form to apply*:

steps-centre.org/summerschool

You will need to enter personal information, including:

1. A brief statement outlining why you are interested in attending the STEPS Summer School (maximum 500 words) and details of your qualifications, professional experience and any publications.
2. A reference, as an attached document, from your academic supervisor/tutor or your current employer. This document should be 2 x A4 side only.

The deadline for sending applications is 5pm GMT on Sunday 28 January 2018. Please note that applications received after that deadline will not be considered. We hope to be able to let you know if your application has been successful by 28 February 2018.

*If you are unable to access the form, please contact Harriet Dudley h.dudley@ids.ac.uk.

Fee

The fee for the STEPS Summer School is £1,000 GBP. This will be payable one month before the start of the Summer School.

Scholarships

We have a limited number of scholarships available to candidates whose country of birth is not an OECD member country (see <http://bit.ly/OECDlist> for details).

Scholarship funding may cover part or all of the following:

- STEPS Summer School fee
- Return flights or rail travel to the STEPS Summer School
- A contribution towards visa costs
- Accommodation
- Subsistence allowance (£400 to cover food and local travel)

Please ensure that you indicate on your application form that you wish to apply for scholarship funding.

Staying in Brighton and Hove

The City of Brighton and Hove gets very busy in May, and short-term accommodation can be hard to find and expensive. Successful applicants to the STEPS Summer School will be provided with a list of reliable accommodation sources, including rooms to rent in houses let by trustworthy landlords, and budget guesthouses. It will be important for you to make your accommodation booking as soon as possible after you have been informed of the success of your application. Living costs in Brighton range from £30-£100 per day for accommodation, food and local travel.



Brighton Festival_Steven Miller

Tea and coffee will be provided for Summer School participants during each day, and a picnic lunch will be provided at both workshops, but other meals are not provided.

Getting to IDS

The STEPS Summer School will take place at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) on the Sussex University campus at Falmer, near Brighton, East Sussex, UK. For information on how to get to IDS, please visit the IDS website: <http://www.ids.ac.uk/visiting-ids>.

Thanks to our funders

The summer school has run for the past six years with the generous support of the ESRC, IDRC and UKIERI