

**INVITATION**  
**PhD COURSE – GEOGRAPHY**  
**4-6 March 2009**

***Poverty, vulnerability and adaptation:***  
**Rural livelihood and land use responses to global change**

**Organized by:** Research Group on Environment and Society in Developing Countries, Department of Geography and Geology (DGG), University of Copenhagen, in collaboration with Global Land Project (GLP). Associate Prof. *Ole Mertz* (course leader); GLP Chair, Prof. *Anette Reenberg*; Prof. *Niels Fold*; Associate Prof. *Kjeld Rasmussen*; Associate Prof. *Torben-Birch-Thomsen*; Associate Prof. *Jytte Agergaard* and Associate Prof. *Kate Gough*.

**Keynote speakers:** Prof. *Eric Lambin*, University of Leuven, Belgium; Dr. *Michael Mortimore*, Drylands Research, UK; Associate Prof. *Chasca Twyman*, University of Sheffield, UK; and Dr. *Kirsten Halsnæs*, UNEP Risø Centre, Technical University of Denmark. One additional speaker to be confirmed.

**Course activities:** the course will revolve around three key activities:

- 1) Presentations from keynote speakers
- 2) Workshops to discuss and interpret the key literature on various aspects of the concepts poverty, vulnerability and adaptation.
- 3) Thematic sessions where PhD students present their research outlines, methodological considerations, draft papers etc.

**ECTS:** 5

**Venue and time:** Department of Geography and Geology, University of Copenhagen, Øster Voldgade 10, 1350 Copenhagen K, Denmark ([www.geo.ku.dk](http://www.geo.ku.dk)). The course will start on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2009 at 9.00 am and end Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2009 at 17.00 pm.

**Participation:** An application for participation in the course should be sent to Ole Mertz (see contact details below) no later than **26<sup>th</sup> January 2009**. Participants who are not enrolled in the 'PhD School of the Faculty of Natural Science', University of Copenhagen, must pay a **participation fee of DKK 500**, no later than 26<sup>th</sup> January 2009 to our account in 'Danske Bank' – account no. 3001-431033668, Swift: DABADKKK – please, indicate name of participant and the sentence: 'PhD course on adaptation March 2009'.

**Abstract:** An abstract of the proposed presentation at the course must be attached to the application. The presentation may cover the entire or parts of the PhD project or a specific paper under preparation.

**Contact information:** For further information contact Ole Mertz, Department of Geography & Geology, University of Copenhagen, Øster Voldgade 10, DK-1350 Copenhagen K, Denmark. Email [om@geo.ku.dk](mailto:om@geo.ku.dk); Phone: +45 3532 2529.



**Thematic background:**

The impact of environmental change and other globalization processes on rural livelihoods and land use in developing countries is attracting increasing information, not least with the certainty that climate change will have primarily negative effects on the poorest and most vulnerable populations. However, understanding the exact nature and consequences of these impacts and the adaptive strategies that local people choose is not straightforward as responses are always set in wider contexts of multiple drivers of change. Many local people have generations of experience with adaptation to long term trends and coping with shocks, but the persistent poverty and associated vulnerability does limit the adaptive capacity and may constrain the ability to face even harsher conditions in the future.

The aim of this PhD course is to investigate how adaptive strategies to environmental change and globalization processes have evolved and to discuss conceptual approaches to studying vulnerability and adaptation in poor rural communities in developing countries. While climate change will be an important example used in the course, wider processes of environmental, economic, social and political change will also be addressed as none of these can be seen in isolation. Lectures by keynote speakers will focus on this overall theme. In order to investigate the wide ranging theoretical, methodological and empirical questions related to the topic, the course will address, among others, the following issues:

- **Poverty and vulnerability:** What constitutes the vulnerability of an individual, a household, a community? Are the links between poverty and vulnerability clearly understood? How can the vulnerability of households and communities be assessed?
- **Adaptive capacity:** A widely used, but recently criticized term. To what extent does the poverty-vulnerability context influence the adaptive capacity?
- **Impacts of environmental change:** How do rural communities respond to environmental change? Perceptions vs. facts in the understanding of environmental change?
- **Multiple drivers of livelihood and land use change:** How to analyze the multiple influences and feed-back mechanisms of environmental change and globalization processes on local livelihoods? Complex, multi-scale models or 'all other things equal' simplifications?
- **Impacts on the productive sectors:** The specific sensitivity of natural resource management, agriculture and fisheries, pastoralism, and water resources management to environmental change and globalization processes