

Postgraduate course 7,5 credits, fall semester 2023

Existential Sustainability: Expanding the Discourse on Sustainability

What is existential sustainability and how can existential perspectives become part of contemporary sustainability work? In the process of implementing the green transition, new perspectives have emerged, relating to the existential and religious dimensions of human life. This course is a collaboration between the Centre for Theology and Religious Studies at the Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology and the Department of Architecture and the Built Environment at LTH. In this course, existential and religious studies perspectives on sustainability will be studied in relation to perspectives on the built environment, as a way of expanding the conceptual framework of Agenda 2030. Special attention is paid to the human being as a narrative being, which will be examined through three theoretical complexes, namely place, deep time, and identity. Departing from an excursion to Råängen at Brunnshög, the students will study how existential meaning and identity are created through storytelling in relation to place and time.

Råängen is an urban development project conducted by Lund Cathedral on land belonging to the church. It is part of the large redevelopment project in northeastern Lund, Brunnshög. Råängen is unique in its ambition to take on board the perspective of eternity when developing a new city district. This exemplifies how places, through their specific environment and history, become part of human identities and acquire meaning-making significance. At large, this is a question of the relationship between human and nature in history, the present time, and the future. In the course, the human being as a small story is put in relation to both short and long historical perspectives by examining storytelling and rituals which are connected to specific places and sites, what is called memory cultures. Here, the human narrative capacity to create understanding and meaning in processes that function as a transgression between generations and epochs is at the center. By studying the concrete landscape, keys are given for an improved understanding and explanation of processes of identity formation, which contribute to transformed human patterns of behavior, thus answering questions like: What effects does the exploration of existential sustainability have on the future and our ability to find ways of living that do not endanger the lives of future generations?

Schedule:

- 18/9-2023 Introduction and excursion to Råängen
- 23/10-2023 Workshop 1
- 20/11-2023 Workshop 2
- 18/12-2023 Workshop 3
- 18/1-2024 Student conference