Description of proposed 2 ECTS PhD course on Agroecology

Course organizers
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Learning objectives:
Upon completion of the course, the students are expected to be able to:
-describe and characterize different types of agro-food systems, using concepts derived from systems thinking and agroecology
-characterize different scientific perspectives and discuss their implications in the context of inquiry into agro-food systems
-analyze and discuss the ecology of different types of agro-food systems in a critical perspective (ie environmental and social dynamics between agro-food systems and their environments)

Overall, the course is supposed to facilitate the development of a coherent notion of the term ‘agroecology’ among PhD students and postdocs at Department of Agroecology. The students will be credited 2 ECTS, based on participation in the course and submission of a course report of max. 3 pages.

Motivation:
Department of Agroecology has seen an influx of PhD students with a highly differentiated professional background. Many students are not recruited from within the agricultural sciences, but from various disciplines across the spectrum of natural and social science. Consultations with current PhD students have indicated that, in spite of the department name, there is a lack of a coherent notion of what the term ‘agroecology’ might mean. With regards to establishing coherence within the department, as well as improving communication with the social environment of the department, a short PhD course (2 ECTS) aiming at addressing the gap in understanding is relevant.

Course teaching methods:
Lectures, group work, plenary sessions

Course teachers:
Module 1: Chris Kjeldsen, Tommy Dalgaard, Morten Graversgaard, Martin Thorsøe
Module 2 panel members: Mogens Greve, Jørgen Olesen, Troels Kristensen, Jørgen Eriksen, Mogens Nicolaisen, Per Kudsk. Panel session facilitation: Chris Kjeldsen

Course content:
The course is based on two main modules. The first module is a theoretical module, which aims at exploring the core notions of agroecology, systems thinking and scientific perspectivism. Agroecology is framed as both an area of scientific inquiry into agricultural systems, as well as a social movement. Scientific perspectivism offers conceptual tools to discuss the nature of scientific inquiry into agricultural systems and the modes of inquiry by which the latter can be explored. Systems thinking has been deployed by various staff members at the department and offers a theoretical framework to guide inquiry into agricultural systems, and is thus relevant to consider in the context of the course. The second module of the course is a plenary panel session, where senior members of the department staff will be asked to present their field of scientific inquiry, and their understanding of the
notion ‘agroecology’. The course participants will, based on the conceptual tools introduced in the first module, discuss with the panel members. The outcome of the plenary panel session is an exploration of both coherence as well as differentiations of the scientific inquiries taking place at the department.

After the concluding plenary planning session, the course participants will submit a brief course report (max. 3 pages). Course structure is summarized below.

**Time and venue of the course:**
Over two days in Spring 2019, in conjunction with the PhD grand meeting in Aarhus.

**Course literature:**


Course literature will be supplied in electronic format (pdf) to the course participants.