

Call for participation

Entanglement of mountain farming and tourism

ESRS Summer School 2024 / September 18-22 / Obergurgl, Austria

Theme and programme

Several tourism destinations in the Alpine Areas developed from poor mountain communities in the 18th and 19th century. This societal transition from farming communities focusing on the production of food, towards communities that gains their livelihood from service provision took place in a short period of time. Today, mountain farming in Europe is under severe pressure, for instance from out-migration of young people, loss of agricultural land to construction and infrastructure, continued afforestation of agricultural land, integration into the globalized market and other factors, which put its continued existence at high risk. These mountain farms are mostly family-owned and family-operated, and these, in particular, have to cope with growing uncertainty caused by these pressures. Even if the economic importance of farming has decreased, rural life is still substantially shaped by farming activities. Furthermore, farms contribute to the social-ecological resilience of rural areas, for example through the provision of ecosystem services. Additionally, mountain farming has a high value for tourism in these areas that goes beyond the provision of agritourism. One example is the newly establishing mountaineering villages in Austria, Italy, Germany and Switzerland (see: <https://www.bergsteigerdoerfer.org/>). These classified villages do not only provide professional tourism services for mountaineers, but also respects the traditional landscape and environmental quality and is committed to preserving local cultural and natural values.

The upcoming summer school ‘Entanglements of mountain farming and tourism’ aims to illuminate these entanglements in different ways. Therefore, we welcome contributions that highlights perspectives on:

- Theoretical and conceptual approaches to grasp these entanglements (e.g. social-ecological resilience, farming resilience, foodscapes, ...)
- Empirical examples of these entanglements from different mountain areas
- Empirical examples that highlight certain aspects of this entanglement (e.g. the meaning of farming for winter tourism, provision of ecosystem services, safeguarding of local traditions, local provision of food, ...)

We want to discuss these perspectives to broadly understand what mountain farming contributes to viability of mountain areas.

Scientific committee

- **Ass. Prof. Dr. Rike Stotten** (Univ. of Innsbruck, Austria)
- **Dr. Thea Wiesli** (Univ. of Innsbruck)
- **Prof. Dr. Markus Schermer** (Univ. of Innsbruck)
- **Assoc. Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Ph.D. Dr. Ika Darnhofer** (Univ. of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna, Austria)
- **Prof. Dr. Hilde Bjørkhaug** (Norwegian Univ. of Science and Technology, Norway)
- **Dr. Rebecka Milestad** (Royal Institute of Technology–KTH, Stockholm, Sweden)
- **Prof. Dr. Mike Peters & Univ. Dr. Michael Traugott** (Univ. of Innsbruck, Austria)

Participation

PhD students and early PostDocs in the field of Rural Sociology and rural studies from all universities are invited to an interdisciplinary social scientific dialogue of their ongoing work as well as to a scientific discussion of current concepts and issues of Rural Sociology.

Benefits for PhD students

- Input lectures from hosting professors
- Interdisciplinary exchange
- Presentation and discussion of PhD work
- Face to face feedback from a professor
- Reflection sessions to integrate new aspects into your work
- Networking with other PhD students and professors in the field
- Short field trips and natural activities (e.g. cold-water swimming)
- 3 ECTS (by full-filling course requirements)

Application

The Summer School is available to a maximum of 12 persons. Students/PostDocs interested in applying should submit a short biographical note and an extended abstract (max. 500 words) related to a selected output from their research project, such as PhD thesis chapter, academic paper intended for publication or any other academic text. Abstracts should be sent to: rike.stotten@uibk.ac.at. The scientific committee will select the candidates, who will be asked to send their full papers.

Deadlines

31/03/2024	submission of applications (extended abstracts)
22/04/2024	results of evaluation (information for the applicants)
18/08/2024	submission of full papers (approx. 4.000 words)

Costs for participants

The participation in the Summer School is for ESRS members free of charge. Travel is self-organized at own expense. We will organize a shuttle from Ötztal Bahnhof train station to the venue ([University Center Obergurgl](#)).

Outline of the planned schedule

	morning	afternoon	evening
Wednesday 18.9.2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction round • Presentation of the program • Presentation of the venue • Short hike in the neighborhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inputs and panel discussion
Thursday 19.09.2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation and discussion of the students • Individual feedback round 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excursion in the village • Presentation and discussion of students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input • Discussion • Sauna evening (optional)
Friday 20.09.2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation and discussion of the students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excursion • Mountain pick-nick • Hike 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inputs • Discussion
Saturday 21.09.2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early bird: Boosting your personal resilience by cold water treatment (optional) • Presentation and discussion of the students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual feedback round 2 • Reflection round on the ESRS Summer School theme • Reflection sessions to integrate new aspects into your work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback round
Sunday 22.09.2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departure 		

The venue

The [University Center Obergurgl](#) is located at an altitude of 1940 meters above sea-level, just five minutes from the heart of the village. The listed historical buildings, carefully refurbished and equipped with the latest technical systems, house conference rooms, the Alpine Research Center, laboratory, sports medicine, lounges, restaurant and 40 bedrooms. On the doorstep: one of Europe's finest Biosphere Parks and the Ötz Valley glaciers.

The origin of today's University Center dates back to 1951, when three former customs buildings were converted for the use by the Obergurgl Federal Sports Center and the University of Innsbruck's Alpine Research Center. That marked the beginning of a focus on sports and science with guests from all around the world.