

# PhD-courses: What do our candidates need and how do we guide them?

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*Håvard Haarstad*  
*Dept of Geography and CET*



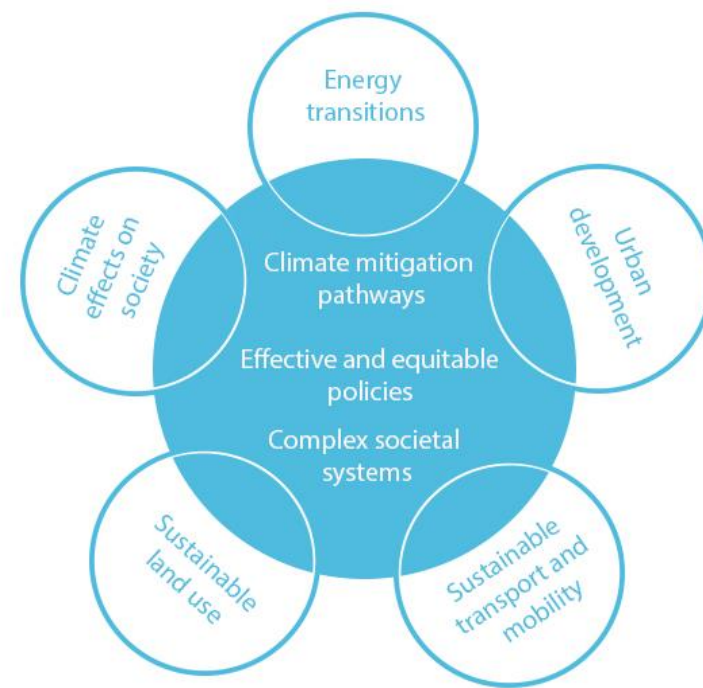


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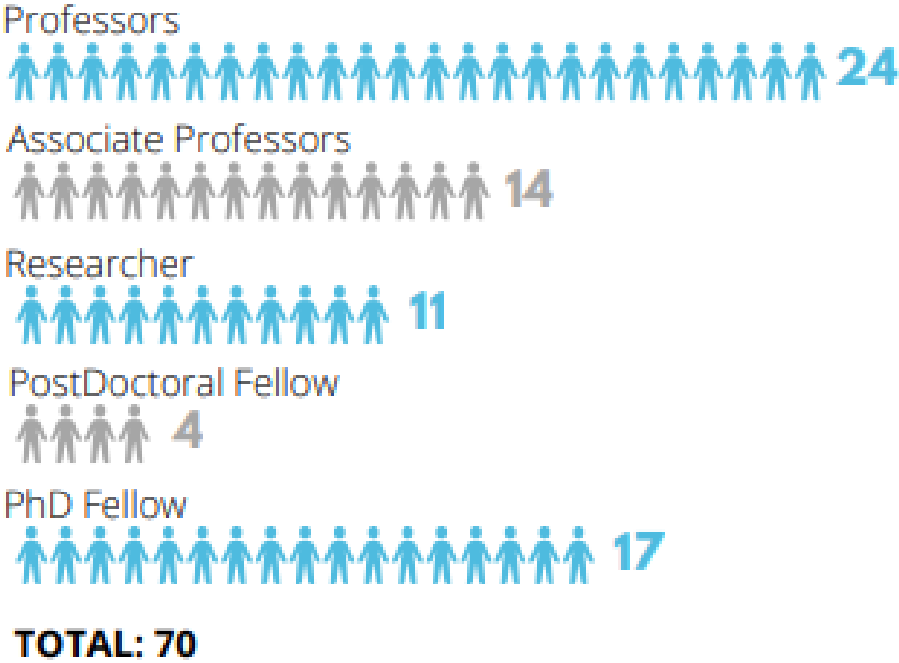
*Actionable knowledge*

*for deep, rapid and  
sustainable transformation  
of society*

*to mitigate climate change*









# Bergen Summer Research School

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BERGEN SUMMER RESEARCH SCHOOL 2020

## BSRS 2020: Actionable knowledge to meet global challenges

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, BSRS 2020 was organised as a virtual research school.

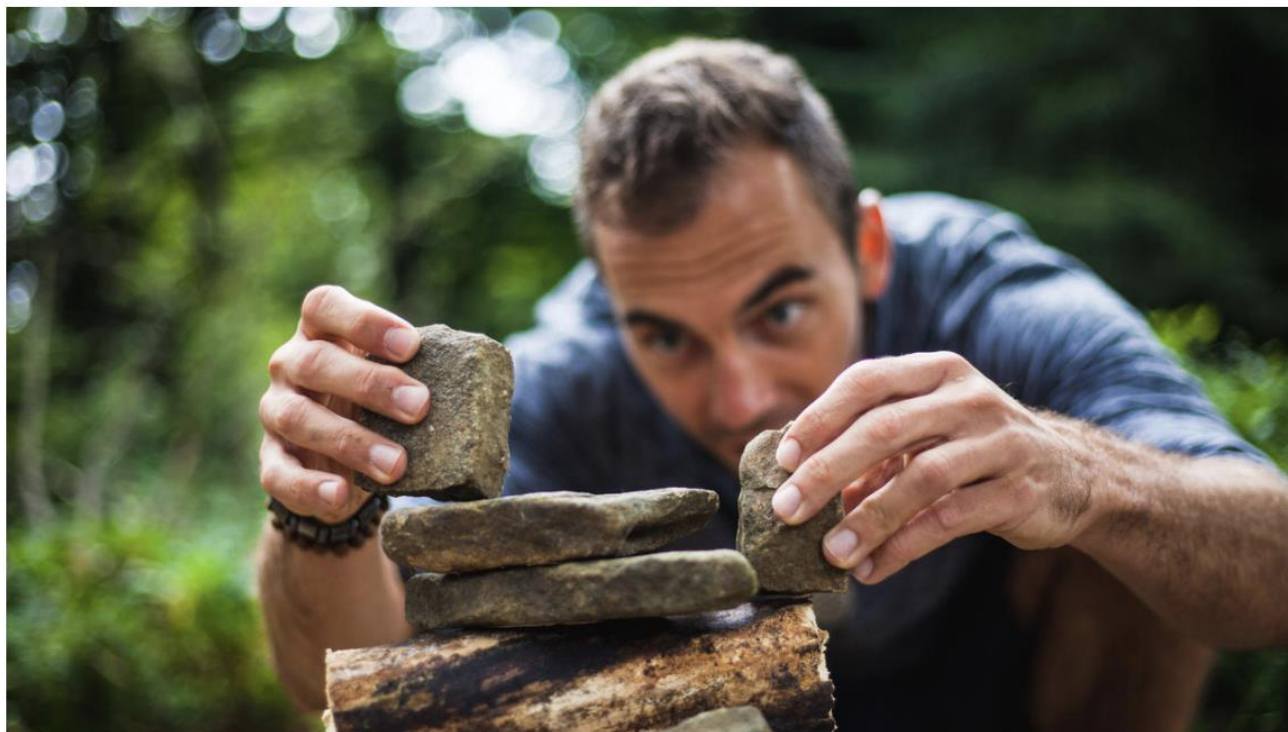


Photo: Pixabay

### BSRS COURSES 2020

**Bergen, 8-18 June, 2020**

#### [Cities in climate and energy transformations](#)

Siddharth Sareen, CET/UiB

Håvard Haarstad, CET/UiB

#### [Sustainable development of life below water](#)

*Postponed until 2021*

Katja Enberg, UiB

#### [Global climate governance regime](#)

Siri Gloppen, LawTransform/UiB

Danielle Hanna Rached, Fundacao

Getulio Vargas Law School

#### [Determinants of migrants' health](#)

Esperanza Diaz, UiB

#### [Global food systems](#)

Ragnhild Overå, UiB

Peter Andersen, UiB

#### [Media for democracy?](#)

Hallvard Moe, UiB

Jan Fredrik Hovden, UiB

# Survey: are courses available/useful? (n=5)

- Hard to find courses?
  - Not really, useful information on the Faculty pages + researcher schools.
  - Easy to find general courses. Hard to find very specific ones
- Have courses been useful?
  - Yes, good for developing the writing process.
  - VITSV900 is 'hard to relate to'. Lacks research ethics.
  - Courses have been too general. Particularly in methods.
  - Need a course on qualitative analysis.

# My own experience

- PhD candidates typically figure out their course needs on their own, without much involvement from me
- The candidates do important networking in the courses
- Little discussion of the course portfolio
- It can be hard to find thematically relevant courses (so sometimes we have to organise our own)
- Courses are often thought of as requirements, rather than helpful (especially by those who take them late)
- Important part of the courses is to develop skills (writing, discussing, relating to other disciplines)

# How do we guide students in selecting courses?

- Necessary competence versus broadening the horizons

# What do PhD candidates need to learn? (in addition to the actual research)

- The academic craft (writing, presenting, discussing) with more established researchers
- The publication game, including how to maneuver the publishing industry/predatory journals
- How to be part of an academic community, such as a discipline or an interdisciplinary field
- Relating their research to society






Perspectives

# Transformative social science? Modes of engagement in climate and energy solutions

Håvard Haarstad, Siddharth Sareen  , Tarje I. Wanvik, Jakob Grandin, Kristin Kjærås, Stina E. Oseland, Hanna Kvamsås, Karin Lillevold, Marikken Wathne

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## Abstract

The social sciences are increasingly called upon to engage with how decision-



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- Academic writing seminar
- Works-in-Progress
- Weekly CET Lunch seminars
- 'Actionable knowledge'



- Low bar for sharing work
- A community around achievement and failure
- Reflections on the societal relevance of our research



# One writing/publications skills seminar per semester at CET

## 2. Aims to make a contribution to that debate or help solve that problem

### **Abstract**

Literatures on sustainability transition and transformation increasingly emphasise the role of spatiality and local agency. This paper argues that relational thinking has much more to offer this debate than presently acknowledged, particularly in revealing the geographical interconnections between dispersed nodes of action and innovation. We use relationality to show the interconnections at work in exchanging and negotiating sustainability interventions between cities and across scales. Using the mass transit planning process in Addis Ababa as a point of entry, we trace how the city's transformation is negotiated at the intersection of local agency, the Ethiopian national political setting and international networks. A host of actors from different scales come together as transformation is assembled by aligning extensive local experience with elements mobilised from elsewhere. This *relational mobilisation* perspective arguably infuses hope into the debate, because it opens new ways of identifying seemingly insignificant actions and actors elsewhere and recognising them as potential drivers of change.

From the peer  
reviewers' (or  
editor's)  
mouth...

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"The author should consider finding a job outside of academia."



# Are our courses giving our PhD candidates what they need?

- I don't know.
- But I think:
  - Academic skills beyond the research itself (very few will become professors). Integrate skills in the courses?
  - We need to ensure that PhD students have a supporting community – can the courses better help in this?