

Framing the journey



Module 1 Synopsis: Capitalism, Planetary Limits, and the Struggle to Restore and Share our Common Wealth

In this first module, we introduce the core features of neoliberalism, the dominant form of capitalism over the last four decades. We are particularly interested in exploring how the neoliberal ideology has widened social inequality and deepened ecological risks for all forms of life.

Second, we introduce two proposals that seek to transform the dominant eco-political system: doughnut economics and the double movement. Kate Raworth uses a doughnut-shaped graphic to depict the urgency of recalibrating the economy away from economic growth and towards a logic of living within ecological limits and meeting basic human needs equitably. Karl Polanyi's double movement addresses the historical and ongoing struggle by different social classes to re-embed social goals in the heart of the economy and place social limitations on commercial exchange.

Third, Silvia Federici teaches us about women's roles and responsibilities in past and present commons. In particular, she uncovers the invisible history of women's resistance to the original enclosure of commons during the transition to capitalism. Federici then explores current struggles led by feminists in response to contemporary neoliberalism. She urges us to go beyond seeing the commons as collective resource management, to re-establish commons thinking and the socio-political practices of "commons making."

In the second half of the module we introduce the multi-level perspective (MLP) and the concept of systems change. Contemporary transition thinkers use MLP to examine current efforts to change the dominant economic system, engage environmental concerns, and change incumbent systems. This module closes with a discussion on the transition efforts of social and solidarity economy actors and explores grassroots examples of co-operatives meeting basic needs for healthy food, social care, and living within ecosystems limits.

Our goal is to help you better understand the actors, obstacles, and enabling processes involved in transition and systems change. We introduce you to people and institutions organized at different systems levels, from local to global. Each seeks to put in place alternatives, large and small, that elevate the common good to central priority—ecologically, socially, culturally, and economically. Each approach creates different implications for how we might generate whole systems change. Pay close attention to how the people involved are struggling to blend economic democracy, ecological sustainability, and social justice.

Objectives for this module

1. To describe and apply some key concepts used in the course, including: neoliberalism, planetary limits, basic needs, double movement, commons thinking, social reproduction, resistance, social economy, solidarity economy, and drawdown.

2. To become familiar with the multi-level perspective (niche, regime, landscape) as applied to systems change and transition.
3. Identify and start to analyze the different responses by governments, community groups, and private sector actors to the crises in post hurricane Puerto Rico.

Suggested time allocation: 5 hours total

Review of commentary, required video and reading materials, note-taking	150 minutes
Weekly exercises	80 minutes
Weekly whole group discussions (https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/discussion_topics/43832)	70 minutes
Total	300 minutes

Module 1 discussion forum

As you work your way through this module, be sure to post your ideas and reflections in the [**Module 1 discussion forum** \(\[https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/discussion_topics/43832\]\(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/discussion_topics/43832\)\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/discussion_topics/43832) and read and reply to the posts of others.