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# MSc Global Environment, Politics and Society

Dr Darrick Evensen & Michael Albert, Programme Directors | November 2025

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# Agenda

- MSc GEPS : Introduction to the programme
- Teaching and learning methods
- Why study GEPS at Edinburgh?
- Career Prospects
- Questions



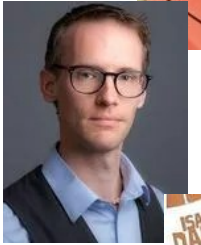
# MSc GEPS: Key Academic Staff



- Elizabeth Bomberg (politics; climate; social movements)



- Liz Cripps (ethics; justice; political theory)



- Darrick Evensen (energy; climate; risk; social-psychology)



- Isabelle Darmon (sociology; social theory)



- Michael Albert (capitalism, utopian future, pol. theory)



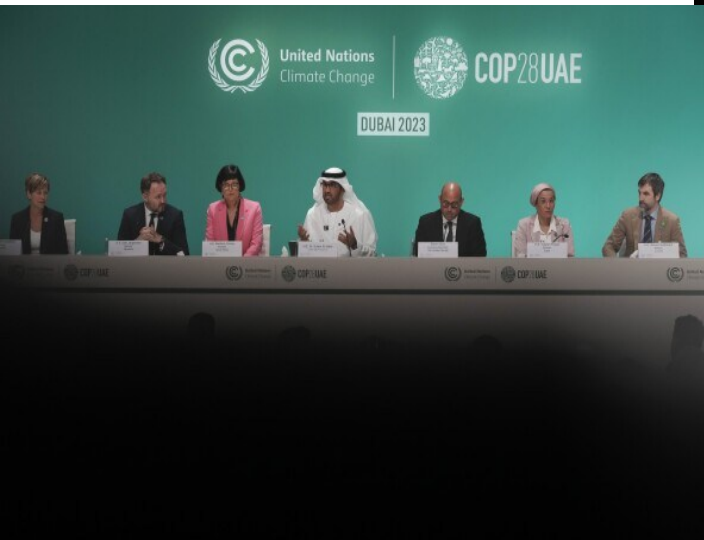
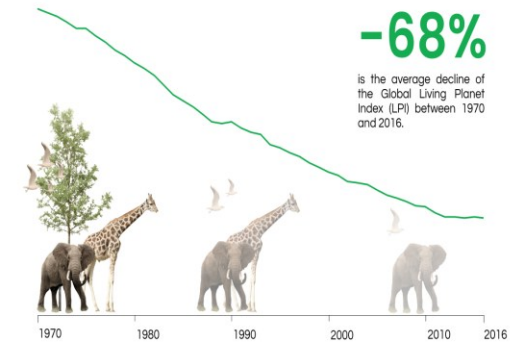


# What is the MSc GEPS about? (in pictures)



Figure 1. Living Planet Index, World

Source: World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Zoological Society of London.



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# What is the MSc GEPS about? (in words)

- Approach: It offers a social-science based, trans-disciplinary understanding of global environmental problems and the political conflicts and debates over how they should be addressed.
- Skills: It enables students to critically engage with different positions on how environmental problems should be understood, framed, and addressed through policy, and to develop their own perspective.
- Content: climate change, biodiversity, energy, plastics, ocean governance, debates on capitalism and “sustainable development”, environment and security nexus, climate justice & ethics.



# MSc GEPS Programme Requirements, 2025-26

(180 credits in all)

1. **Global Environment:** Key Issues (Sem 1)

2. **At least one of following:**

- Global Environmental Politics
- Global Environment & Society
- Climate Change Justice and Responsibility
- Environmental Risk: Politics, Communication, Ethics

3. **Four optional courses (80 credits) – *wide selection***

4. **Dissertation or Placement-Based Dissertation (Apr-Aug) (60 credits)**

Programme requirements and details for 2024 are here: <http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/24-25/dpt/ptmscgleps1f.htm>



# The year in overview



## Semester 1

**Global Environment:  
Key Issues**  
20 credits

**Option (i.e. your choice)**  
20 credits

**Option** 20 credits



## Semester 2

**At least one of these core courses:**  
GEP, GE&S, CCJR, ER

**Option**  
(or another of above courses)  
20 credits

**Option**  
(or another of above courses)  
20 credits



# Sample of Optional Courses – Semester 1

- Ecosystems and Global Change\*
- Energy in the Global South
- Energy and Society: Themes and Issues\*
- Gender Politics and Representation
- Global Environmental History\*
- Globalization
- Happiness: Cross Cultural Perspectives
- Health and Human Rights
- Heritage, Sustainability, and Environmental Justice\*
- Human Dimensions of Environmental Change\*
- Human Rights, Global Politics and Intl Law
- Humanitarianism and the Media
- Innovation in Sustainable Food Systems
- International Ocean Governance and Protection of the Marine Environment\*
- Introduction to International Environmental Law\*
- Marine Systems and Politics\*
- Principles of Environmental Sustainability\*
- Politics & Theories of International Development
- Science, Knowledge and Expertise
- Topics in Environmental Humanities\*
- Values and the Environment\*

*\*outside course; limited spaces*





# Sample of Optional Courses – Semester 2

- Analysing Qualitative Data
- Anthropology and Environment
- Case Studies in Sustainable Development\*
- **Climate Change, Justice and Responsibility**
- Contemporary Political Theory
- Creativity and the Environment\*
- Energy Policy and Politics
- Energy & Society: Methods and Applications\*
- Environmental Governance
- **Environmental Risk: Politics and Ethics**
- Gender and Development
- **Global Environmental Politics**
- **Global Environment & Society**
- International Organisations
- International Political Economy
- Participation in Policy and Planning\*
- Political Ecology\*
- Public Engagement and Policymaking
- Research Design
- Social Movements and the Environment\*
- Waste Reduction and Recycling

*\*outside course; limited spaces*



# Studying & Learning



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# How will you study?

## Exploratory and analytical

- The programme will introduce you to a range of analytical perspectives (political, legal, ethical and societal) from which to examine global environmental issues

## Emphasis on independent work

- You will be expected to engage in independent reading, thought and writing, though you will be guided by lectures, seminar discussion, group work and supervised projects.



# Teaching Formats

- Lectures / Seminars – typically capped at around 30 students at the MSc level
- Self-led / Group Study
- Independent Research (including dissertation)





# GEPS Research Dissertation

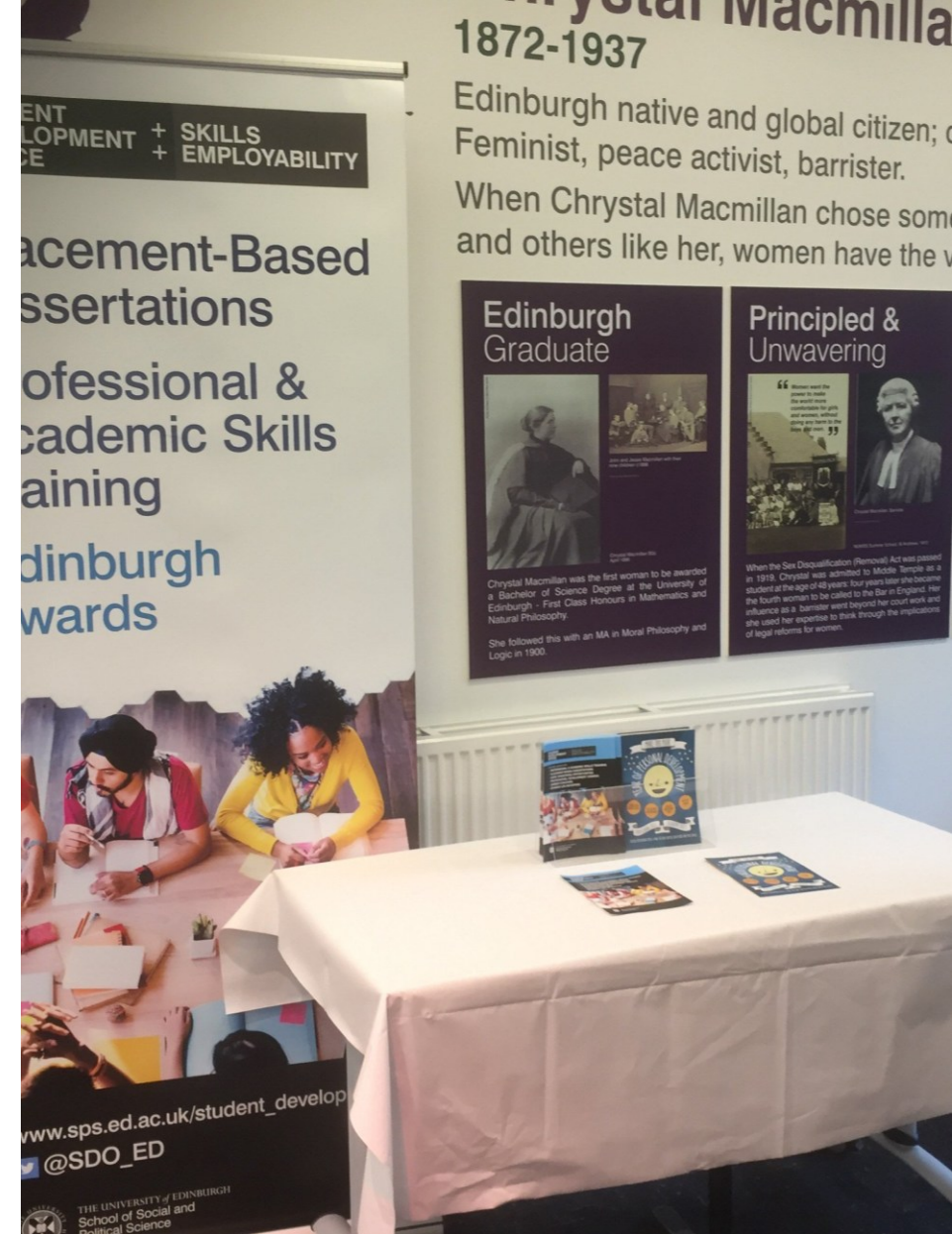
- Extended piece of independent, in-depth scholarship on an environmental politics, ethics or sociology topic;
- Student's own endeavour, but with individual supervisor;
- up to 10,000 words
- Opportunity to choose area/topic of interest;
- Excellent preparation for further academic, teaching, or policy work; can be 'desk-based' or involve field work.
- Workshops held in winter; retreat towards end of Semester 2



# Placement-based dissertation

- Project-based report with organisation (NGO, charity, govt body, social enterprise);
- Project selected in consultation with the host organisation and Programme Director
- 12-15,000 words (including project diary)
- 2025-26
  - Information sessions in October
  - Both on-line and some in person
  - List of pre-arranged placement places released in December
  - Places are competitive (no guarantee)
  - Student – led placements also possible

More info: <https://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/students/development-hub/masters/placement-based-learning/msc-placement-based-dissertations>



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# Some Past Placement Projects of GEPS Students

Placement office (SWAY)	Student-led
African Centre for Technology Studies	Friends of the Earth Scotland
Classrooms for Malawi	Friends of Clear Water (Idaho, US)
Dept of Social Responsibility & Sustainability (UoE)	Gibraltar Dept of Environment
Action Aid (Kenya)	Green Party, Scotland
Red Rocks Rwanda	IUCN (Intl Union for Conservation of Nature)
SCIAF (Catholic development charity)	Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)
Stockholm Environmental Institute (Oxford)	Oxfam Belgium
Traidcraft, Edinburgh or Bangladesh	SCENE energy consulting
Water Witness	World Resources Institute (WRI)
Tree Story	Local councils



# Study Support

## GEPS Specific

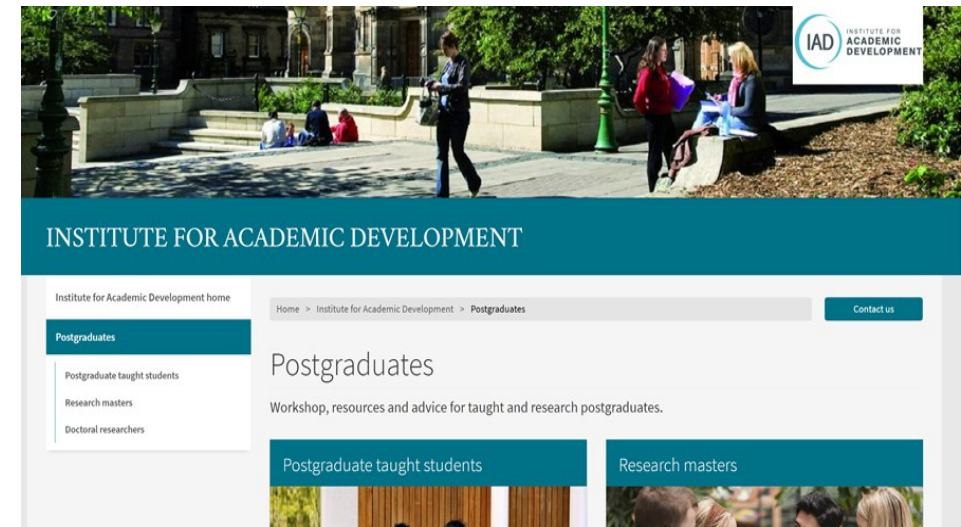
- Programme Directors as core contact; oversight of whole degree; contact for personal academic support
- Programme Administrator Casey Behringer [pgtaught.sps@ed.ac.uk](mailto:pgtaught.sps@ed.ac.uk)
- Student Advisor for help with pastoral issues ([student.sps@ed.ac.uk](mailto:student.sps@ed.ac.uk))

## School Level

- Student Development Hub (placements, academic skills)

## University Level

- Institute of Academic Development (writing workshops, etc)
- Award winning Student Association ‘Advice Place’





# Why study GEPS at Edinburgh?

- Dedicated, engaged faculty with interdisciplinary expertise
- Exemplary students from across the globe and with diverse backgrounds
- Amazing array of activities, seminars and events linked to climate and environment



# Extra Curricular Activities (Examples)

- Our outstanding Department of Social Responsibility & Sustainability:  
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/sustainability/events>
- Students' Association: societies galore  
<https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/events>
- Lots of other University and community seminars, networks and clubs, provided in our GEPS handbook, and GEPS social media channels and list-serves
- GEPS-specific social and academic events



# Career Prospects (where our alumni work)

## NGOs, THINK TANKS, BUSINESS CONSULTANCY

- Baille Gifford consultant
- Biofuelwatch UK
- Cartier Jewellery, Sustainability Consultant
- Climate Analytics, Berlin
- European Environmental Bureau (Brussels)
- Global Oil and Gas Exit List
- Ricardo Energy and Environment (consulting)
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (land use officer)
- Royal Town Planning Institute (Develop. Officer)
- Soil Capital (Environmental Consultancy, Brussels)
- WorldBoston, World Affairs Council (operations manager)

## GOVT AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

- Dept of Environment (Defra, UK)
- European Commission (EU Political and Human Rights officer)
- House of Lords, UK (policy researcher)
- Hungarian Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Programme Coordinator)
- Natural Resources, Wales
- Scottish Parliament information Centre, Environment Analyst
- Environmentt and climate change Canada (policy advisor)
- Scottish Wildlife Trust
- UN Environmental Programme (consultant)
- UN Conservation on Migratory Species (Bonn)
- UN Resident Coordinator, Malawi
- World Bank (professional officer)

## ACADEMIC (PhD, Law School, Research posts)

Cambridge, Univ. East Anglia, Edinburgh, King's College London, Lancaster, Oxford, Sheffield, Australia National Univ., Arizona, North Carolina, Utah, Washington



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# Next steps...

<https://edin.ac/student-chat-pg>



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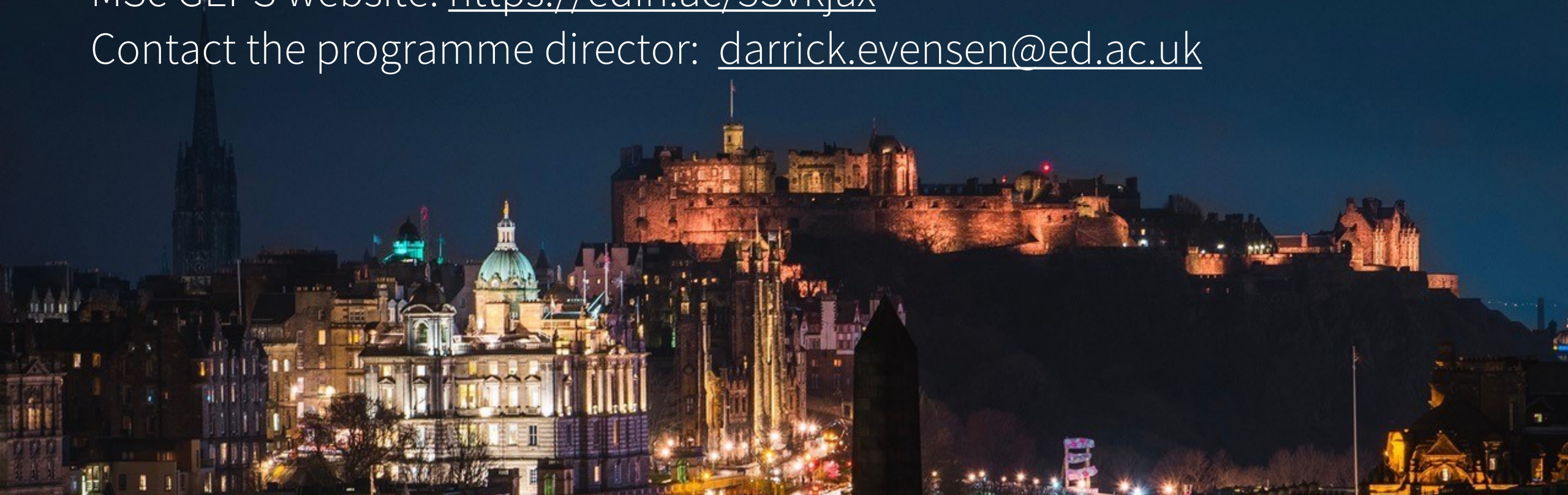
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# Contact details for follow-up questions

MSc GEPS website: <https://edin.ac/3Svkjax>

Contact the programme director: [darrick.evensen@ed.ac.uk](mailto:darrick.evensen@ed.ac.uk)



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