



THE UNIVERSITY
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MSc Environment and Development

Dr Clare Barnes | 20 November 2025

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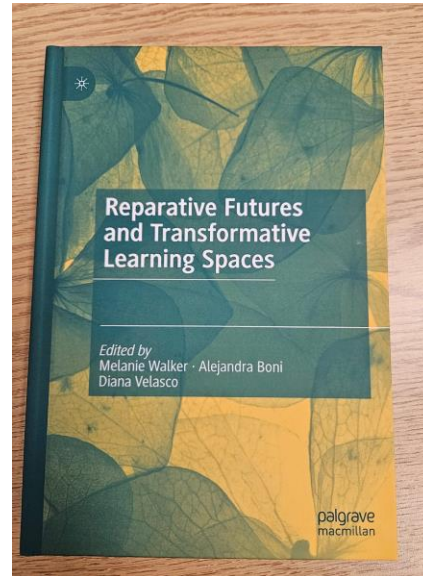
Who are we?

- Dr. Clare Barnes (she/her)
 - Programme Director
 - Senior Lecturer
- We work closely as a team so also meet:
 - Dr Regina Hansda (she/her)
 - Lecturer in Development and Justice
 - Dr Sam Staddon (she/her)
 - Senior Lecturer in Environment and Development



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Why study this MSc?

- Enables you to critically evaluate the multiple dimensions of the inter-relationship between development and the environment, with an abiding concern for social and environmental justice
- Explore how to tackle global environmental and social injustices through critical social sciences, political ecology and decolonial theories

Focus on (in)equalities, (in)justices, politics and power

'Loss and damage' deal struck to help countries worst hit by climate crisis

Governments draw up blueprint for fund to be administered at first by World Bank after tense Abu Dhabi talks



Global Witness

Campaigns ▾ Regions ▾ Publications ▾

Home > Press Releases > Fossil fuel lobbyists flood COP30 climate talks in Brazil, with largest ever attendance share

Fossil fuel lobbyists flood COP30 climate talks in Brazil, with largest ever attendance share

Published: 14 November 2025 Bélem, Brazil



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Why study this MSc?

- Understand the linkages between the environment, development agendas, and global inequalities for today and the future
- Gain the confidence to go on and make a difference in the world through knowledge, skills, care and solidarity
- Develop the capacity to critically reflect upon your own positioning, privilege and power in transformations towards social and environmental justice



Whose perspectives
are represented in
policies such as
National Park
designations?...and
whose are ignored?

Why does 'nature'
mean something
different to me than
my classmates?

What are the multiple
views on development
and why do some
views dominate
international
discourse?

How do historical
injustices influence
communities'
abilities to adapt to
climate change?

Why does access to
food or water differ
within households?



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Why study at Edinburgh?

- Learn from **world-leading researchers and experienced practitioners** working in environment and development fields
- Unique focus on **justice and inequality** when discussing environment and development issues
- Strong **collaborative connections with practitioners** provide insight into real-world applications



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Programme structure

Find a full list of compulsory and option courses on the [Degree Programme Tables](#)

Compulsory Courses	Semester	Credits
Environmental Justice and Development	Semester 1	20
Development and Justice	Semester 1	20
Professional Skills in Environment and Development	Semester 2	20
Environment and Development in the Field	Semester 2	20
Dissertation	May - August	60
2 option courses	1 per semester	40



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Teaching and assessment

- Courses can be delivered through a mix of lectures, interactive group activities, tutorials, class discussions and guest talks with Q&A
- Assessments include essays, project report writing, group assignments, presentations, reflective writing, and writing for different audiences (e.g. blog posts)



Our approach

- Our teaching approach encourages you to reflect upon your own role:
 - as researchers and as professionals, in transformations towards social and environmental justice, considering the ethics of engagement in an unequal world.
- Provides a strong basis for engaged citizenship in the world:
 - enabling you to contribute to world debates and actions for reducing inequalities
 - we discuss the connections between what we are learning and what this means for you – in your future careers and as a citizen
 - working towards social and environmental justice and more sustainable practices



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Dissertation

- An opportunity to explore, in-depth, a topic of your choice in relation to the programme, with the support of an academic supervisor
- Can be desk-based research or fieldwork; mix of qualitative or quantitative
- Typically 10,000 – 15,000 words
- You may also have the option to complete a dissertation project in partnership with an external organisation or local community
- You can use the dissertation to demonstrate your work to potential employers



Previous dissertation topics

- Equity issues of air pollution in London
- Rights of Nature in Ecuador
- Gendered nature of rural land ownership
- Food sovereignty
- Impacts of mining operations on different groups in society
- Community responses to climate change
- Carbon credit off-setting: justice implications
- Participatory approaches to a Just Energy Transition
- Ocean conservation through storytelling



What a typical week looks like...

Semester 1, Week 4	
Classes	Timetable
Environmental Justice and Development - Lecture	Thu, 09:00-12:00
Development and Justice	Tue, 14:10-17:00
Option course: Political Ecology – Lecture	Mon, 10:00-13:00
Total class hours	Roughly 9hrs

- Please note that the option course listed is just an example – hours will vary depending on the option courses you choose.



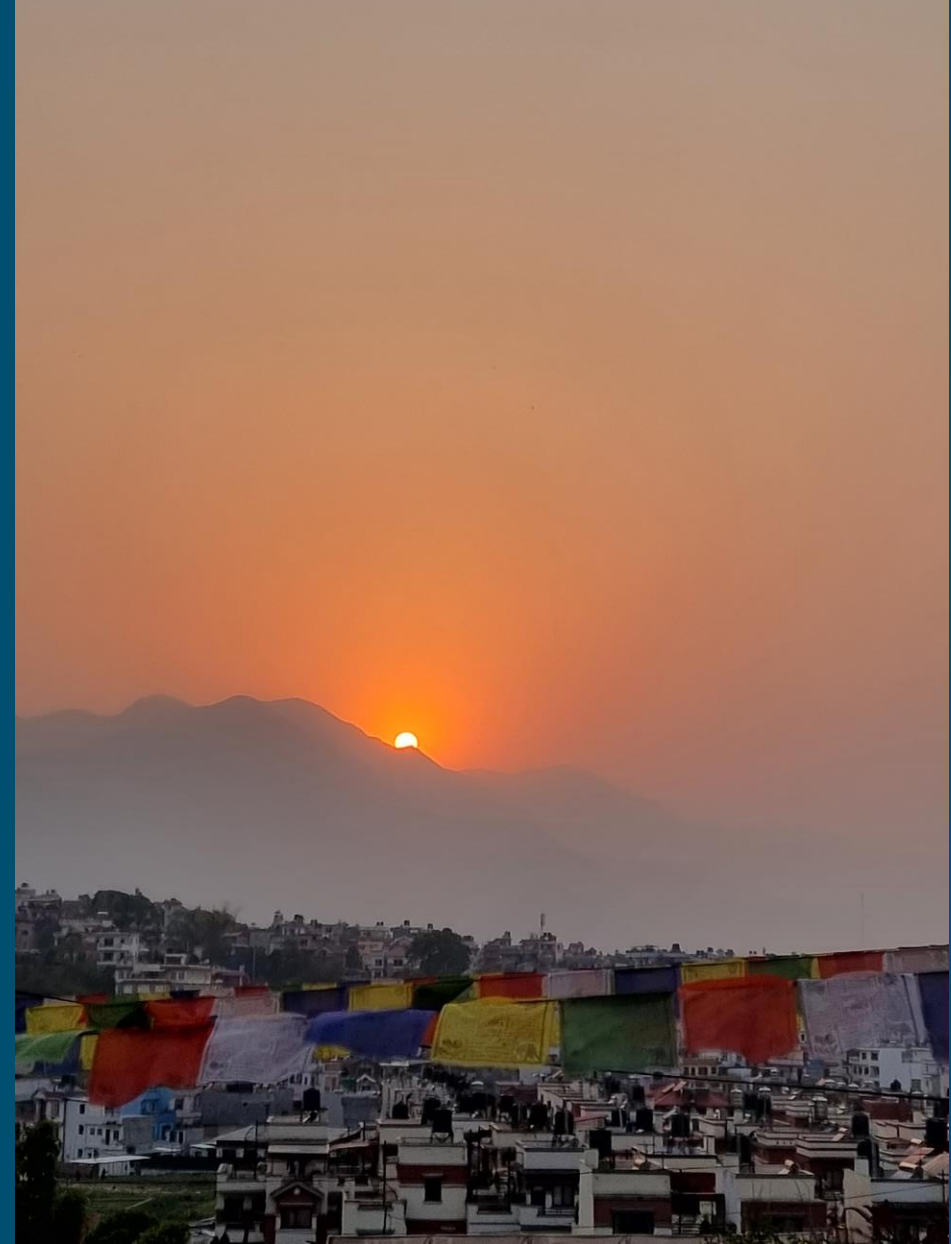
Other activities include

- Cohort activities 2-3 times per semester
- Meeting your lecturers during their guidance/office hours
- Independent study includes:
 - ☐ Reading to prepare for class (typically 2-3 journal articles per class)
 - ☐ Preparing assignments e.g. meeting your student group, independent reading
 - ☐ Study groups: many students choose to study together
 - ☐ Attending courses at the Institute of Academic Development
- ☐ S2 also includes:
 - ☐ Dissertation planning and proposal writing
 - ☐ Preparation for Environment and Development in 'the field' course (typically runs in April)



Professional Skills in E&D

- Co-designed with experienced professionals working in various environment and development fields, and in different countries
- You will have a unique opportunity to learn the skills required for the workplace – and its evolving nature
- Learn professional and technical skills, making you ready to apply your academic insights in practical ways
- Connects the conceptual learning from Semester 1 to the skills required for the job market



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Field trip and application of professional skills

- You will have a unique opportunity to experience first-hand the intersection of environment and development issues
 - through collaboration with leading research organisations e.g. in Nepal
- Engage with a wide-range of practitioners working in the field of environment and development
- Learn professional and technical skills, making you ready to apply your academic insights in practical ways



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- Please note that field course locations may vary year to year, but will always align with course learning outcomes



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Career opportunities

- This programme will prepare you for a wide range of roles within:
 - International and national development agencies
 - State agencies
 - Think tanks
 - NGOs
 - Consultancies
 - and the private sector
- Examples of where graduates have secured positions include:
 - The UN
 - Oxfam
 - Plan Vivo
 - Water Witness
 - LTS Consulting Intl.
 - Save the Elephant
 - Natural England
 - A range of NGOs and government departments around the world.



Our alumni...

I am currently working for Oxfam Ireland, as the Programme Quality Officer. In this role, I support our development programmes, which have significant environmental aspects/considerations, in Southern and Eastern Africa, through all parts of programme cycle management. Looking back on the course, I think it helped not only **to develop my technical expertise** in the areas of environment and development, but it **has influenced how I approach the challenges** I am faced with at work, making me question and consider how to approach different activities from a **well-rounded** and **ethical** perspective.



Our alumni...

"The MSc offered a turning point for me, opening up a new direction. The course gave me a space to learn **new ideas and ways of thinking**, as well as **unlearn** past assumptions and ingrained perceptions, broadening my horizons considerably **from a personal perspective** as well as for my career. My work now is doing a PhD at the University of Cambridge in conservation (something I never even thought I would do until I did the MSc)."



When to apply?

- Due to high demand for this programme, we operate on a series of early application deadlines.
- We strongly recommend you apply as early as possible.
- You should avoid applying to more than one degree. Applicants who can demonstrate their understanding and commitment to a specific programme are preferred.
- If you plan to apply to more than one programme, you should discuss your choices with us before you submit your application.
- Where possible, we may make an alternative programme offer if you have been unsuccessful in your chosen programme.

Student cohort

- We welcome students from the environmental and natural sciences to the social and political sciences and humanities, as well as those with practical experience in environment and development
- 296 applicants for 2025 entry
- 23 new students on course in 2025/26



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Scholarships and funding

- Featured funding
 - [Mastercard Foundation Scholarships](#)
 - [Chevening Scholarships](#)
- School of GeoSciences Scholarships
 - [See potential funding for GeoSciences students](#)
- You are encouraged to research the range of potential scholarships and other funding outside the University for which you may be eligible.
 - [Search for funding](#)



Next steps...

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



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Contact details for follow-up questions

- We apologise if we did not get through all of your questions in the time allotted for this session. If you have further questions that have not been answered, please email: futurestudents@ed.ac.uk
- *Alternatively, Dr Clare Barnes: c.barnes@ed.ac.uk*





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Thank you

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