

Environmental and Spatial Planning in an International Context: Seminar



1. Background and Relevance

In an era defined by global climate change, rapid urbanization, and transnational infrastructure networks, spatial planning can no longer be viewed solely through a national lens. This proposed seminar, "Environmental and Spatial Planning in an International Context," is designed to broaden students' perspectives beyond the rigid, statutory German "Raumordnung" system and introduce them to diverse international planning cultures. The seminar will address environmental challenges through a post-colonial lens, examining how historical, socio-economic, and institutional factors shape contemporary land-use patterns and ecological vulnerabilities in the Global South and transitioning economies.

The course introduces students to the legal, ecological, and socio-economic instruments used to manage spatial development across differing political systems. By analyzing diverse global

case studies—ranging from European cross-border networks to rapid urbanization challenges in the Global South—the seminar equips future planners with the tools to navigate complex, multi-scalar governance structures.

2. Key Objectives

The focus is on comparing spatial planning systems, instruments, and planning cultures of at least two distinct global regions.

By the end of this seminar, students will be able to:

- Analyze and compare international planning systems, governance structures, and environmental policies.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of informal planning instruments vs. formal binding regulations in different geographic contexts.
- Apply quantitative and qualitative methods (including GIS-based remote sensing data and qualitative document analysis) to track long-term land-use changes.
- Assess the transferability of international best practices (e.g., climate resilience, nature-based solutions) to the German planning framework.

3. Didactic Approach and Grading

The seminar will be conducted as an interactive, research-oriented course combining input lectures and student-led case study analyses.

Grading: Presentation/written report.