

# Seminar in political ecology

Historical political ecology: constituting African resources and commodities

28-29 November 2024

## THURSDAY UNIL

Amphipôle 210 (morning)  
Géopolis 2129 (afternoon)

- 9h00-11h00 Circulating objects, African agency: local commodities, colonial entanglements
- 11h30-13h00 Constituting global commodities: building imperial plantations
- 14h30-16h00 Young scholars workshop
- 16h30-17h30 Plenary session

## FRIDAY

## Neuchâtel botanical garden

- 10h00-11h45 Visit of the *Business Plantes* exhibition with Elodie Gaille, curator
- 13h45-14h15 *La voie végétale du commerce triangulaire*, présentation by Elodie Gaille
- 14h30-16h00 Roundtable: How Can Museums Engage with Colonial Histories?

Info: <https://www.unil.ch/igd/historical-political-ecology-2024>

Registration: <https://framaforms.org/as-in-political-ecology-2024-1726750681>

Unil

UNIL | Université de Lausanne

Institute of Geography  
and Sustainability



28 november 2024

Amphipôle 210

8h45 **Welcome words**

Valérie Boisvert & Aurore Rimlinger (UNIL, CH).

9h00 **Circulating objects, African agency: local commodities, colonial entanglements**

Shantel George (University of Glasgow, UK). Casting the kola nut on new ground: Globalizing an African seed

Malika Kraamer (Global Heritage Lab, University of Bonn, DE). Abolitionism and Kente cloth: Early modern West African textiles in Thomas Clarkson's chest

Jonathan Robins (Michigan Technological University, USA). Palm oil or palm wine? Commodities and anti-commodities in colonial West Africa, ca. 1900-1960

Andrew Wardell (CIFOR, Copenhagen, DK). Globalizations in a nutshell - Tracing a 700-year history of the shea trade in West Africa

11h00 **Coffee break**

11h30 **Constituting global commodities: building imperial plantations**

Jelmer Vos (University of Glasgow, UK). The political economy of large versus small: Lessons from coffee and rubber production in Angola (19th-20th centuries)

Maria Do Mar Gago (Universidade Nova de Lisboa, PT). Ecology, colonialism and indigenous species: The case of Angola coffee in the Portuguese empire (1898-1939)

Alice Rudge (SOAS, University of London, UK). Cultivating "care": Colonial botany and the moral lives of oil palm at the twentieth century's turn

13h00 **Lunch, Geopolis Cafeteria, UNIL**

Geopolis 2129

14h30 **Young scholars workshop**

16h00 **Coffee break**

16h30 **Plenary session**

18h00 **Cocktail buffet, La Grange, UNIL**



international  
graduate school  
north-south



29 november 2024

8h15 Departure by train for the visit  
(meeting point: in front of Renens train station)

10h00 **Business Plantes, the true nature of the economy. Exhibition at the Neuchâtel Botanical Garden**

with Elodie Gaille, NBG curator and ethnobotanist

Essential to our survival, plants are the pillars of our economy. Neither gold, nor the rare metals in our telephones, nor even coins can meet so many of our basic needs.

Like the famous business plan of any company, this exhibition tells the story of how plants have influenced the history of mankind and how they impact our daily lives today. As climate moderators and purveyors of biodiversity, plants must be at the heart of not only our ecological concerns, but also our economic ones.



12h00 **Lunch, Neuchâtel Botanical Garden**

13h45 **«La voie végétale du commerce triangulaire», presentation by Elodie Gaille**

14h30 **Roundtable: How Can Museums Engage with Colonial Histories?**

Chanelle Adams (UNIL, CH)

Tomás Bartoletti (ETH Zürich, CH)

Malika Kraamer (Global Heritage Lab, University of Bonn, DE)

Fabio Rossinelli (UNIL, CH)

international  
graduate school  
north-south

CUO  
CONFÉRENCE UNIVERSITAIRE  
DE SUISSE OCCIDENTALE

jbn  
jardin botanique  
neuchâtel

Unil  
UNIL | Université de Lausanne  
Institute of Geography  
and Sustainability