



Lehrstuhl für
Computational
Economics

RWTHAACHEN
UNIVERSITY

Economics of Biodiversity

Prof. Dr. Thomas S. Lontzek

1. Content and Objectives

This research seminar explores the key insights of *The Dasgupta Review on the Economics of Biodiversity*, focusing on the relationship between natural capital, economic systems, and sustainable development. Students will engage critically with the report's core concepts, methodologies, and policy recommendations. As part of the seminar, participants will present selected chapters of the Review to deepen collective understanding and stimulate discussion. In addition, each student will prepare a short research paper that applies the Review's ideas to a specific policy, corporate, or regional context. The seminar combines theoretical reflection with practical application, fostering both analytical and presentation skills. Students will understand the core concepts of the Dasgupta Review, including natural capital, inclusive wealth, and ecosystem services. They will learn to explain the economic, ecological, and institutional drivers of biodiversity loss and their interconnections. Furthermore, they will become familiar with the main approaches to valuing biodiversity and natural capital, while reflecting on their limitations and ethical implications.

Building on this knowledge, students will develop the ability to critically assess policy instruments and governance approaches for integrating biodiversity into economic decision-making. They will also analyze case studies on the implementation of the Dasgupta Review's recommendations and draw practical conclusions. Finally, they will acquire the skills to develop scientifically grounded policy or corporate strategies that account for biodiversity as an economic asset.

2. Seminar Schedule

04.11.2025:	Kick-Off Session (WiÜ Hörsaal):
18.11.2025:	Short presentation: research questions (WiÜ Hörsaal)
11.11. – 15.12.2025:	Students will be assigned a paper/chapter/topic per group, conduct research, and engage in regular consultations with the lecturer within their respective groups.
16.12.2025 (10:30-12:00):	Final presentations part I (WiÜ Hörsaal)
17.12.2025 (15:30-17:00):	Final presentations part II (WiÜ Hörsaal)
07.01.2025 (15:30-17:00):	Final presentations part III (WiÜ Hörsaal)
After Presentations:	Students work on their research paper (Deadline 31.01.2025)

3. Grade Requirements

- Presentation: Short presentation of the research questions + final presentation (50% of the final grade)
- Written research paper in the style of a *Science* "Reports" article, see <https://www.sciencemag.org/authors/science-information-authors> (50% of the final grade)

4. Attendance Requirements

As with all sessions of the module, attendance is mandatory for the Kick-Off Event. Unexcused absence in the first session will generally result in the loss of the assigned spot. The spot will be allocated to interested students from the waiting list.

In general, any absence from a session must be communicated to the instructor in advance. The maximum allowable absence for the module must not be exceeded. For sessions that are part of the examination requirement, absence can only be excused with a medical certificate. The maximum allowable absence for a module also includes absences excused with a medical certificate.

5. Registration

Please inform the instructor immediately if you do not wish to accept an assigned spot.

The latest information on the registration process, including deadlines, is expected to be available from the beginning of March on the website:

<https://www.wiwi.rwth-aachen.de/cms/wirtschaftswissenschaften/studium/Im-Studium/Studienverlaufsplan/Module/~utiyw/Teilnehmerbeschaenkte-Module>

6. Exam registration

A separate registration for the examination is mandatory. This must be done via the Curriculum Support section of RWTHonline.

Please note: For didactic reasons, such as the use of case studies or colloquia, registration for the examination takes place during the first week of lectures. More information is available at the link above.

7. Contact

Module content

Prof. Dr. Thomas S. Lontzek,
lontzek@econ.rwth-aachen.de

Exam registration:

Dr. Sandra Silvertant
Prüfungs koordin atorin
Templergraben 64, Raum 622
pruefungen@wiwi.rwth-aachen.de