The Future of the Commons
Convened by Dr Dustin Garrick, Associate Professor and Research Fellow, Green Templeton

The commons is a powerful metaphor for understanding human cooperation, one of the most enduring puzzles for science and society. 2020 marks the 30th anniversary of Governing the Commons, the landmark study by the late Nobel laureate, Elinor Ostrom. Ostrom and many colleagues demonstrated the potential for self-governance to avoid the collapse of shared resources, propelling a global research programme and interdisciplinary network of scholars spanning from anthropology to artificial intelligence. There are two billion more people since Ostrom’s classic, and urban populations have nearly doubled, accelerating regional and global challenges that outstrip capacity for local collective action to solve alone. The topic of the commons has arguably never been more relevant: a Science feature in 2018 traced the growing reach of the concept from classic areas – water and land – to new frontiers of data, medicine, and other global challenges.

The lecture series will explore the commons in a world approaching peak population, deepening inequality, and growing threats to democratic forms of governance. The series will follow an arc that starts with lessons from the history of the commons, and outlines the frontiers of research and innovation. The series will contribute to a University-wide and global dialogue on the next wave of the commons, charting emerging governance innovations for a connected world.

Invited Speakers

Dates

Thursday 23 January 2020: Professor Tine De Moor, University of Utrecht
[Theme: What the history of the commons means for the future]

Thursday 6 February 2020: Assistant Professor Jampel Dell’Angelo, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
[Theme: Pushing the frontiers – the grabbed commons and the next wave of water governance]

Wednesday 4 March 2020: Associate Professor Dustin Garrick, University of Oxford
[Theme: Pushing the frontiers – environmental markets and the future of the commons]

Additional lectures across the University may be included as part of the seminar series¹, if other seminars already planned for next term address relevant concepts and approaches.

Location

EP Abraham Lecture Theatre, Green Templeton College, 43 Woodstock Road, Oxford, OX2 6HG

¹ For example, Prof. Josephine van Zeben will present on her new book on Polycentricity in the EU on 12 Feb 2019.