



## DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM, MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

### **MK2201 Political communication in the digital age, 30 credits**

Politisk kommunikation i den digitala tidsåldern, 30 högskolepoäng

*Second Cycle*

---

#### **Confirmation**

This course syllabus was confirmed by Department of Journalism and Mass Communication on 2018-06-21 and was last revised on 2020-05-24 by Department of Journalism, Media and Communication to be valid from 2020-09-01, autumn semester of 2020.

*Field of education:* Social Sciences 100%

*Department:* Department of Journalism, Media and Communication

#### **Position in the educational system**

The course can be given as a single subject course.

The course can be part of the following programmes: 1) Master's program in political communication (S2MKG) and 2) Master's program in political communication (S2MKV)

#### *Main field of studies*

Media and Communication Studies with Specialization in Political Communication

Media and Communication Studies

#### *Specialization*

A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

#### **Entry requirements**

For admission to the course is required that the student satisfy requirements for Degree of Bachelor.

**Learning outcomes**

On successful completion of the course the student will be able to:

*Knowledge and understanding*

explain central concepts and theories that are applied in the research field of political communication.

*Competence and skills*

plan enquiries and carry out analysis of opinions by means of appropriate methods and theoretical starting points

analyze strategic communication efforts by means of appropriate methods and theoretical starting points.

interpret and critically review results of opinion analyses as well as analyses of strategic communication efforts based on prevailing social, medial and organizational preconditions.

formulate and communicate analysis tasks within political communication such as public opinion polls and strategic communication.

*Judgement and approach*

independently evaluate the validity in knowledge claims made in research on political communication

reflect critically over how applicable different theories and concepts are on central phenomena in political communication, based on ethical and democratic perspectives.

**Course content**

The course intends to give a broad orientation in the research field of political communication as well as specialization in some of its subfields. The student should become familiar with central scientific concepts, theories and empirical research in the field, as well as obtain proficiency in planning and analyzing political communication efforts. A particular focus is placed on digitization and how it changes the conditions for political communication.

An initial overview cover research traditions in political communication, including their historical emergence and their contemporary applications. In relation to this, more general ideas of what can be understood as “political” and “communication” are discussed and problematized. Furthermore, normative ideas about the role of political communication in democratic processes are discussed by employing the concepts ‘the public’ and ‘the public sphere’. Theories about the media and their roles in political communication are discussed throughout the course. The media are regarded both in their role as actors and forum, as well as media as a general context for political communication.

Particular emphasis is given two central subfields of political communication: *strategic communication* and *opinion analysis*. Within these subfields, the student should obtain an advanced theoretical knowledge as well as proficiencies in analyzing opinions and strategic communication efforts in different social, organizational and medial contexts.

Analysis of how opinions are formed, mediated, and interpreted, as well as their influence is in focus in the first subfield. An overview of opinion research, including normative and descriptive theories about the characteristics of public opinion, is given. Theories of how opinions are formed on both individual and societal level are highlighted. The role of media in forming and communicating opinions is also discussed.

The second subfield concerns strategic communication with respect to political goals. Such goals include influencing public decision making in a broad sense, as well as influencing public and specific opinions. Actors in focus are political parties, interest groups, activists, public agencies, decision-making bodies (e.g. parliaments), commercial companies, PR and communication firms, media organizations, as well as citizens. By means of research the course present theoretical perspectives and empirical results concerning different forms for political strategic communication such as public opinion formation, lobbying, and marketing.

### **Form of teaching**

In the course, several types of instruction and learning activities occur: reading of literature, seminars, lectures, laboratory sessions/workshops (data analysis). Study visits and guest lectures can also occur.

*Language of instruction:* English

As a rule, English is the language of instruction. In case all students are Swedish-speaking the course may be given in Swedish.

**Assessment**

a) Essay research traditions	5 credits	individual	Fail/Pass/Pass with distinction
b) Case study democracy	5 credits	individual	Fail/Pass/Pass with distinction
c) Opinion analysis	4.5 credits	group	Fail/Pass/Pass with distinction
d) Written examination opinion	3 credits	individual	Fail/Pass/Pass with distinction
e) Essay strategic communication	4.5 credits	individual	Fail/Pass/Pass with distinction
f) Literature seminars research traditions	5 credits	individual	Fail/Pass
g) Seminars strategic communication	3 credits	individual	Fail/Pass

If a student, who has failed the same examined component twice, wishes to change examiner before the next examination, a written application shall be sent to the department responsible for the course and shall be granted unless there are special reasons to the contrary (Chapter 6, Section 22 of Higher Education Ordinance).

In the case where a course has been discontinued or has undergone major changes, the student will normally be guaranteed access to at least three examination occasions (including the ordinary examination) during a period of at least one year, based on the earlier planning of the course.

**Grades**

The grading scale comprises: Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass (G) and Fail (U). To obtain the grade Pass in the course is required that all examinations have been assessed with at least the grade Pass.

To pass the course with distinction is required in addition to the above that at least 17 credits of the 22 credits that are assessed with scale Fail/Pass/Pass with distinction has been assessed with the grade Pass with distinction.

**Course evaluation**

Course evaluations are made continuously both orally and in writing. Results are compiled and used in the department's running quality assurance procedures.

The results of the evaluation and possible changes to the course will be shared with students who participated in the evaluation and new students who are starting the course.