



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND WORK SCIENCE

SC2208 Social Science as Expertise and Social Scientists as Experts, 7.5 credits

Samhällsvetenskap som expertis och samhällsvetare som experter, 7,5 högskolepoäng

Second Cycle

Confirmation

This course syllabus was confirmed by Faculty of Social Sciences on 2012-06-13 and was last revised on 2017-11-24 by Department of Sociology and Work Science to be valid from 2018-09-03, autumn semester of 2018.

Field of education: Social Sciences 100%

Department: Department of Sociology and Work Science

Position in the educational system

The course is a programme course within the Masters Programme in Sociology in the Faculty of Social Sciences. It is an optional component in the Masters Degree in Sociology. It can also be followed as a freestanding course on the advanced level.

The course can be part of the following programmes: 1) Programme for Master in Sociology (S2SOC), 2) Master's Programme in Strategic Human Resource Management and Labour Relations (S2HRM) and 3) Programme for Master in Sociology (S2SOS)

Main field of studies

Sociology

Specialization

A1F, Second cycle, has second-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Entry requirements

To be eligible to the course 15 higher education credits in Sociology at the advanced level is required or the equivalent. For students registered before 2007-07-01 at least 80 credits in Sociology, Social Psychology or Criminology is required. English 6/English B or the equivalent level of an internationally recognized test, for example TOEFL.

Learning outcomes

After completing the course the student is expected to be able to:

Knowledge and Understanding

- Explain the difference between basic and applied social science research; researcher controlled research versus social scientific research commissioned in the service of particular social interests
- Define and recognize the distinguishing characteristics of different social scientific perspectives on the nature and role of scientific expertise in society.
- Distinguish and account for significant variations in the scientific, political and ethical orientation of expertise in general, and social scientific expertise in particular, over historical time and across cultural space.

Skills and Abilities

- Critically reflect over and analyse in depth the role of expertise in society
- Creatively and independently apply different perspectives from the sociology of expertise to the analysis of different forms of expertise in society (i.e. technical expertise, social scientific expertise, medical and therapeutic expertise and so on)
- With fluency and eloquence in both written and oral presentations express the results of the analyses carried out in connection with the course
- Enter into meaningful dialogue about the role of expertise in society with different groups of non-experts

Judgment and Approach

- Reflect over the inter-relationship of different forms of expertise in society and the ambition of social science to extend its concerns to encompass the development of an expertise on expertise.
- Explain and evaluate the combined professional and ethical challenges which follow from accepting the role of an expert in society and offering scientific advice designed to inform governmental decisions.

Course content

This course addresses the differences between basic and applied social science research and between researcher-controlled social science and social scientific research commissioned by different public and private interests in society. Applied social science and the expertise it cultivates is knowledge developed and refined in collaboration with different social interests. How has the character of this expertise changed over time in response to the transformation of liberal democratic government? The course aims to enhance students knowledge of, and powers of reflection over the challenges that follow from acting as a social scientific expert and authority in society offering qualified advice

to public and private organizations. Drawing on perspectives from the sociology of science and the sociology of expertise to analytically dissect social science experts, the course not only clarifies the differences between basic and applied social science, but also between policy-oriented social science and public social science/public sociology. The course also brings students into conversation with different researchers in the Department of Sociology and Work Science to advance discussion of the professional challenges associated with the development of social scientific expertise and the different arrangements that currently exist for assuring the quality of this expertise and for holding social scientists publicly accountable for their expert actions in society.

Form of teaching

Language of instruction: English

Assessment

Grades

The grading scale comprises: Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass (G) and Fail (U). To pass the course it is not permitted to fail any examined moment in the course. To pass the course with distinction it is required to receive the grade of VG for 5 out of a total 7,5 higher education credits.

Course evaluation

The course shall be evaluated by the students after each time it is given. The course coordinator is responsible for arranging a written evaluation at some point during the course or at its culmination. To the extent that it is practically feasible the course evaluation should encompass discussions between course lecturers, examiners and student representatives. The protocol and minutes from such discussions should in summary form be delivered to the Director of Postgraduate Studies. This documentation should be used as an input for future course planning and refinement. A summary of earlier course evaluations should be used in the future promotion of the course, for example, on the departmental homepage.

Additional information

English language support shall be available to students during the course. Written assignments should be submitted firstly in English or Swedish.