UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND WORK SCIENCE

SC2210 Sustainability Science and Expertise: Sociological Perspectives, 7.5 credits

Hållbarhetsvetenskap och expertis: Sociologiska perspektiv, 7,5 högskolepoäng
Second Cycle

Confirmation

This course syllabus was confirmed by Department of Sociology and Work Science on 2023-05-29 and was last revised on 2023-11-10 to be valid from 2024-01-15, spring semester of 2024.

Field of education: Social Sciences 100%
Department: Department of Sociology and Work Science

Position in the educational system

The course is an elective programme course that is included in the master's programme in sociology. It can also be taken as a freestanding course at the second-cycle level.

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

Main field of studies	*Specialization*
Sociology	A1F, Second cycle, has second-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Entry requirements

Admission to the course requires at least 15 credits in sociology at the second-cycle level or equivalent prior knowledge. In addition to this, a knowledge of the English language, the equivalent of English B/English 6, is also required.

Learning outcomes

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

Knowledge and understanding

- Explain and apply key theories and concepts relating to the expert role of sociologists in society and their involvement in sustainability transitions.
- Define and identify the distinguishing characteristics of different patterns of science and society relations shaping contemporary environmental policy and practice.
- Distinguish and account for the different conceptions of environmental justice driving the transition from a high-carbon to a low-carbon economy.

Competence and skills

- Critically reflect over and interrogate the nature of science and expertise in society.
- Creatively and independently apply different perspectives from the sociology of expertise to the analysis of sustainability transitions
- Coherently and precisely express the knowledge gained in the course through written and oral presentations
- Carry out a meaningful dialogue about science and expertise in sustainability transitions with different lay audiences and publics.

Judgement and approach

- Reflect over and discuss the combined ethical, legal, social and political implications of sustainability science and expertise
- Reflect over and evaluate the different conceptions of justice and fairness informing sustainability transitions.

Course content

How can sociology contribute to sustainability transitions research? How do the challenges of ecological crisis call for new patterns of science and society relations including the creation of new forms of sociological expertise? How can different perspectives from environmental sociology and the sociology of science and expertise contribute to the struggles for a 'just' transition?

This course commences by interrogating visions of a more publicly engaged and accountable sociology responding to the grand challenges of achieving a just and fair transition from a high-carbon to a low-carbon economy. These visions portraying sociologists as engaged and committed experts are discussed as moving beyond the traditional 'linear model of expertise' where science is tasked with 'speaking truth to power'. In contrast to this model, expertise is approached as a distributed and relational phenomenon cultivated within social and material networks stretching across the worlds of science and politics.

Growing disaffection with the linear model of expertise is related to the history of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and debates surrounding its

configuration as an institution of science advice to government. This opens up for discussion of the many and varied interactions between politics and expertise shaping environmental policy and practice today. Attention will be paid, for example, to new forms of citizen and community research where academics partner with activists to get 'undone science done' further evidencing environmental risk and harm. In addition, the importance of expert activism and advocacy will be highlighted for bounding science and politics in the transdisciplinary fields of sustainability transitions research. Different combinations of expertise and activism will be related to the varying conceptions of justice shaping climate, energy and environmental transitions research which have created the challenge of coordinating and unifying the struggles for a 'just transition'.

Form of teaching

Teaching on the course takes place through lectures, seminars, workshops and project work with group supervision.

Language of instruction: English

Assessment

The course is examined through individually written examination assignments and one oral group assignment.

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

If a student has received a recommendation from the University of Gothenburg for study support for students with disabilities, the examiner may, where it is compatible with the learning outcomes of the course and provided that no unreasonable resources are required, decide to allow the student to sit an adjusted exam or alternative form of assessment.

In the event that a course has ceased or undergone major changes, students are to be guaranteed at least three examination sessions (including the ordinary examination session) over a period of at least one year, but no more than two years after the course has ceased/been changed. The above is also applicable to internships and on-the-job-trainings, with the exception that examination is given on only one occasion.

Grades

The grading scale comprises: Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass (G) and Fail (U).
To gain a pass with distinction for the course both individual written assignments must be awarded a VG or one individual written assignment and the group assignment must

be awarded a VG. If a U is received for any course assignment then this must be completed again if a pass is to be achieved for the course.

Course evaluation

The course will be evaluated upon completion. The results of the evaluation will be communicated to the students and will function as a guide for the development of the course.