SK2212   The Quality of Government in a Comparative Perspective, 15 credits

The Quality of Government in a Comparative Perspective, 15 högskolepoäng
Second Cycle

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Confirmation

This course syllabus was confirmed by Faculty of Social Sciences on 2008-05-29 and was last revised on 2019-05-17 by Department of Political Science to be valid from 2020-01-20, spring semester of 2020.

Field of education: Social Sciences 100%
Department: Department of Political Science

Position in the educational system

The course is given as a single subject course and also a semi-elective course in the Master's Programme in Political Science, Master's Programme in International Administration and Global Governance or Master's Programme in European Studies at Gothenburg University.
This is an in-depth course in Political Science in the second cycle.

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

Entry requirements

Admission to the course requires the successful completion of a minimum of 15 credits from courses at the second cycle in Political Science or a minimum of the successful completion of 15 credits from courses in one of the programmes Master's Programme in European Studies or Master's Programme in International Administration and Global Governance or equivalent knowledge. Applicants must prove their knowledge of English: English 6/English B from Swedish Upper Secondary School or the equivalent level of an internationally recognized test, for example TOEFL, IELTS.

Learning outcomes

A student who has passed the course will be able to:

Knowledge and understanding
- Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the concept of the quality of government, and distinguish it from related concepts
- Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of advanced theoretical frameworks showing the impact of high/low quality government on human development

Competence and skills
- Critically evaluate and compare advanced theoretical frameworks, as well as their methodological implications, showing the impact of high/low quality of government on human development and other valuable social outcomes
- Review and critically assess empirical findings from the literature
- Critically evaluate theoretical frameworks and empirical findings to identify contradictions and under-researched areas
- Critically use existing theoretical frameworks to analyze empirical cases

Judgement and approach
- Independently prepare an original piece of research about some central aspects of the QoG research agenda, based on a critical assessment of the literature
- Independently produce a text in accordance with the academic writing requirements
- Effectively communicate complex ideas to academic audience

Course content

This course explores problems of the quality of government (QoG) and corruption in a comparative perspective.

The background to this is the recent consensus among social scientists about the importance of high-quality government for economic and democratic development as well as for social and environmental sustainability. Government organizations that are trustworthy, reliable, impartial, uncorrupted and competent are currently seen as one of the most important determinants of human well-being. Until recently the "general wisdom" was that corruption and related phenomena (patronage, clientelism and cronyism) had many positive effects ("greasing the wheels"). New theories and better data have turned this argument around.

Corruption is now seen as having detrimental effects on economic growth, public goods provision, the democratic processes and trust among citizens. Quality of government is

not a problem of developing countries only, but exists also in economically advanced democracies where trust in government institutions and the sustainability of welfare programs have been questioned.

The central issues that will be addressed in the course are: What is QoG? How can QoG be defined and measured? What do you get from high QoG and what are the mechanisms through which the effects of high/low QoG work? What explains the great variation between countries in QoG? How is QoG related to democracy, economic growth, the rule of law, social capital, inequality, social policies, and people's collective and individual well-being? Lastly, for those who aspire to win the Nobel prize: What does it take for countries to change from low to high quality government institutions?

Form of teaching
Teaching is conducted through lectures, compulsory seminars and individual tutorials.

Language of instruction: English

Assessment
Student performance is assessed through three written assignments: memo (10% of the total course grade), home-take exam (40% of the total course grade) and the final paper, which is a research-proposal (50% of the total course grade). All three written assessments have to be carried out individually, and students are not allowed to discuss answers and/or formulate answers to the assessments in collaboration with others.

A student who is not able to attend a compulsory part of the course can do a compensatory assignment. The assignment is described in the course guide.

If students fail the memo or the research-proposal, they may be asked to re-work graded assignments and re-submit them. Student will be required to retake the exam within a period of time specified in the course guide. If the student does not re-submit the assessment on time, the student will fail the assignment.

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).

At least five occasions shall be offered the students to pass a course or part of a course (Chapter 6, Section 21 of Higher Education Ordinance).

In cases where a course has been discontinued or has undergone major changes, the student shall normally be guaranteed at least three examination occasions (including the ordinary examination) during a period of at least one year from the last time the course

was given. This may not be in conflict with Chapter 6 Section 21 of Higher Education Ordinance.

Grades

The grading scale comprises: Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass (G) and Fail (U).

Each assignment is graded on a 7-points grade, where 0-2 denotes Fail (U), 3-5 denotes Pass (G) and 6-7 denotes High Pass (VG).

To obtain the Pass grade for the course as a whole, students must achieve at least a pass grade for each individual assignment.

In obtain the High Pass grade for the course as a whole, the weighted average of the three grades should be 5.5 or more.

To obtain the grade Pass with Distinction the work of the student should demonstrate a very good knowledge on the main themes covered by the course and very good skills to connect theory and data through independent analyses and to fulfil high academic standards in terms of structure and language.

Course evaluation

The student will be given the opportunity to do a course evaluation. The results of and possible changes to the course will be shared with students who participated in the evaluation and students who are starting the course.