



## MESS32, Social Theory and Sustainability, 10 credits

*Samhällsteori och hållbarhet, 10 högskolepoäng*

Second Cycle / Avancerad nivå

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### Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by The Board of the Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies on 2013-10-22 to be valid from 2013-08-28, autumn semester 2013.

### General Information

The main field of study is *Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science*. The course constitutes the 2nd course at LUMES, Lund University International Master's Programme in Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science.

The course is compulsory for all the LUMES students.

*Language of instruction:* English

*Main field of studies*

Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science

*Depth of study relative to the degree requirements*

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

### Learning outcomes

On completion of the course, the student shall demonstrate

- A clear understanding of competing theories of modernity and their mechanisms of social change, as well as how these theories relate to rival perspectives on sustainability and sustainable development;
- In depth understanding of fundamental concepts in social theory such as agent, structure, social change, human nature, rationality, ideology, etc;
- The skill to approach and analyse a concrete environmental problem from the perspectives of various theories of modernity, and to identify the necessary measures for a sustainable solution consistent with each approach;
- The ability to effectively communicate within group and equally to convey the scientific analysis of environmental questions to a broader public in a non-specialist style.

## Course content

The course discusses different theories of modern society and relates them to different approaches to sustainability and environmental problems. The focus is on:

- Theories of modern society and economy (e.g. Rousseau, Adam Smith, Marx, Hayek, Keynes, Habermas, Foucault, Feminist theories)
- The complex interactions between different spheres of economy, politics and civil society when dealing with environmental questions as a social problem;
- The tensions and trade-offs in the interactions between e.g. individual/society, economy/politics, cultural values/technical efficiency, environment/economy.
- An overview of different philosophies of scientific knowledge (ontology and epistemology), empiricism, positivism, constructivism, critical realism; and the ability to identify and compare the underlying theory of science in each perspective.

## Course design

The course is comprised of lectures, seminars, group activities and presentations, and individual assignments. Assessment is carried out by means of evaluation of e.g. group work, individual assignments, and the individual paper.

Consistent, regular class attendance and fully engaged participation is expected from all students in LUMES. Attendance at the sessions where graded course activities take place is compulsory to pass the course.

## Assessment

For a passing grade the student must (a) have an overall passing mark on the individual assignments; (b) have an overall pass on combined group work and individual assignments; (c) have participated in the mandatory sessions;

Students who fail a test have the right to re-examination. An opportunity for re-examination will be offered after the end of the course. If necessary, a second re-examination will be arranged at a later date. A student who has taken two examinations in a course or a part of a course without obtaining a pass grade is entitled to the nomination of another examiner, unless there are special reasons to the contrary. Students getting pass mark cannot re-take an exam or re-submit a paper to get a higher grade.

*Subcourses that are part of this course can be found in an appendix at the end of this document.*

## Grades

Marking scale: Fail, Three, Four, Five.

The grades awarded in examinations are 5-4-3-Fail. The highest grade is 5 and the lowest passing grade is 3. The grade for a non-passing result is Fail. The student's performance is assessed with reference to the learning outcomes of the course. The grade "5" denotes outstanding performance in *all* learning outcomes. The grade "4" signifies very good performance in *all* learning outcomes. To receive the grade of "3",

the student must obtain minimum criteria in fulfilling *all* the course learning outcomes. The grade of Fail signifies that the student has not fulfilled the learning outcomes of the course, or that additional work is required before the credit can be awarded.

### **Entry requirements**

Admittance to the LUMES programme is required for admittance to the course.

### **Further information**

This course cannot be included in a degree together with MESS02.

The syllabus was adopted by the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Lund University, on December 13, 2012.

## Subcourses in MESS32, Social Theory and Sustainability

Applies from H13

1201 Social Theory and Sustainability, 10,0 hp  
Grading scale: Fail, Three, Four, Five