



Faculty of Social Sciences

## MIDM12, Development Studies: Theory of Science and Methods, 15 credits

*Development Studies: Theory of Science and Methods, 15  
högskolepoäng*

Second Cycle / Avancerad nivå

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### Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by Steering committee for the Master of Science Programme in International Development and Management on 2018-11-29 to be valid from 2019-01-21, spring semester 2019.

### General Information

The course is offered as the second course of Lund University's Master of Science Programme in International Development and Management (LUMID). The course prepares students for the courses in the second, third and fourth terms of the programme.

*Language of instruction:* English

*Main field of studies*

Development Studies

*Depth of study relative to the degree requirements*

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

### Learning outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students shall be able to:

#### Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate deeper knowledge of interdisciplinary perspectives on theory of science and methods in development studies in general and quantitative methods in particular; and
- demonstrate deeper understanding of how methodological issues are central both to our understanding of development issues and to our means of working to further human development.

### **Competence and skills**

- identify and critically reflect upon analytical and normative issues in research design, data collection and analysis of development problems and practice;
- identify, understand, and critically review the institutions and functions of census and survey organisations and similarly analyse data collection routines as part of management systems in development programmes and projects;
- analyse quantitative as well as qualitative data collection methods and the assumptions and requirements underlying their use;
- formulate and develop methodological strategies for studying complex research questions regarding development issues, projects and programmes, including identifying the appropriate qualitative and quantitative techniques for data collection and analysis in a developing-country context;
- work effectively in an interdisciplinary context;
- make informative oral presentations on research design and methodology in development studies;
- write critically on methodological issues in development studies; and
- access policy documents and quantitative data from governments, nongovernmental organisations, international organisations, academic journals and public data-bases and adopt an analytical and critical approach to this data and information.

### **Judgement and approach**

- demonstrate an ability to assess qualitative and quantitative data in the field of international development, taking into account relevant scientific, social and ethical aspects, and demonstrate an awareness of ethical aspects of research and development work;
- demonstrate insight into the potential and limitations of knowledge in the social sciences, its role in society and people's responsibility for how it is used; and
- demonstrate an ability to identify their need of further knowledge and to take responsibility for developing their knowledge.

### **Course content**

This interdisciplinary course focuses on the theory of science and methods in development studies and management. The course deals with methodological issues central both to our understanding of development issues and to our means of working to further human development. Special emphasis will be given to quantitative methods, as general knowledge about these are considered crucial for a development practitioner, both as a prerequisite for conducting needs assessments/situation analyses and evaluations, and as a prerequisite for assessing academic literature and other secondary sources relying on statistical material, such as reports by international organisations.

The intention is to provide students with an advanced methodological overview as well as specific skills in methods relevant to the field. A number of current key issues in the methodology of development studies are discussed and analysed. This includes the broad themes of qualitative and participatory methods as well as quantitative and computerised analyses of data. Students are given the opportunity to deepen their understanding of a broad range of more specific methods and methodological perspectives, including participatory methods, surveys and censuses in the context of developing countries.

Students will also be encouraged to reflect critically on ethical and normative issues connected to research in development. In this process students will acquire the knowledge and concrete skills to understand, assess and work with basic and applied research in development.

The course is divided into three modules:

*Module 1: Theory of Science and Qualitative Methods, 4.5 credits*

This module first introduces epistemology and theory of science, along with an overview of how to build a research design. A presentation of different methodological strategies and techniques will follow. Qualitative methods will be introduced mostly as a way to prepare for the field semester, whereas further skills and in-depth knowledge about qualitative methods will be acquired by the students during the course MIDM18 Field Methods, which is given at the end of term three.

*Module 2: Quantitative methods and SPSS, 9 credits*

The module gives students the opportunity to develop their skills in working with quantitative or mixed methods research and data collection in a developing country context and with the analysis of such data. The module offers basic competence in statistical methods and covers univariate, bivariate, multiple regression and logistical regression analysis. Students will also be encouraged to critically reflect on ethical and normative issues in connection with quantitative research.

*Module 3: GIS, 1.5 credits*

The module provides students with a general introduction to geographical information system (GIS), including an overview of the history, potential and limitation of GIS. The aim is to enable students to identify when and how GIS can be used as a tool to structure and analyse geographical data in development research and work.

## Course design

The course is organised around a series of lectures and seminars or labs covering key issues in the modules described above. Lectures and seminars are followed by project work in which theoretical, methodological and ethical aspects of research design and implementation are treated.

Students are expected to work individually as well as in groups with exercises and applications of the methods and techniques presented. The course will conclude with a series of seminars in which the students' group papers are discussed and examined.

## Assessment

The three modules described above will be assessed separately and will be based on:

- individual paper written in connection with Modules one;
- group paper written in connection with Modules two;
- group paper written in connection with Modules three; and
- active participation in seminars.

Examinations will be scheduled during the academic year only. Re-examination will be offered after the end of the course. If necessary, a second re-examination will be arranged at a later date.

The examiner, in consultation with Disability Support Services, may deviate from the regular form of examination in order to provide a permanently disabled student with a form of examination equivalent to that of a student without a disability.

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

## **Grades**

Marking scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A.

The grades awarded are A, B, C, D, E or Fail. The highest grade is A and the lowest passing grade is E. The grade for a non-passing result is Fail.

The student's performance is assessed with reference to the learning outcomes of the course. For the grade of E the student must show acceptable results. For the grade of D the student must show satisfactory results. For the grade of C the student must show good results. For the grade of B the student must show very good results. For the grade of A the student must show excellent results. For the grade of Fail the student must have shown unacceptable results.

Course components such as conversation practice, study visits, group exercises are exempted from the grading scale above. The grades awarded for such components are Pass or Fail. For the grade of Pass the student must show acceptable results. For the grade of Fail the student must have shown unacceptable results.

At the start of the course students are informed about the learning outcomes stated in the syllabus and about the grading scale and how it is applied in the course.

## **Entry requirements**

The course is part of the Master of Science Programme in International Development and Management (LUMID).

A good command of English language both spoken and written, equivalent to English6/B (advanced) proficiency in the Swedish secondary system, is required. Equivalence assessments will be made according to national guidelines.

## **Further information**

The course code replaces MIDA20.

## Subcourses in MIDM12, Development Studies: Theory of Science and Methods

Applies from H12

- 1201 Theory of Science and Qualitative Methods, 4,5 hp  
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A
- 1202 Geographical Information System (GIS), 1,5 hp  
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A
- 1203 Quantitative Methods and SPSS, 9,0 hp  
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A