



LUND
UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Social Sciences

SIMM41, Social Science: Methods for Research in the Social Sciences, 15 credits

Samhällsvetenskap: Samhällsvetenskaplig forskningsmetod, 15 högskolepoäng

Second Cycle / Avancerad nivå

Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by Graduate School Board on 2015-10-02 and was last revised on 2019-09-10. The revised syllabus applies from 2019-09-10, autumn semester 2019.

General Information

The course is offered as single subject course in Social Sciences and is included as a compulsory course within several Master Programmes, 120 higher education credits, at the Faculty of Social Sciences.

Language of instruction: English

Main field of studies

Depth of study relative to the degree requirements

Political Science

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

Gender Studies

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

Sociology of Law

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

Social Work

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

Human Geography

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

Social Anthropology

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

Development Studies

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

Sociology

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

Education

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

Learning outcomes

Upon completion of the course, the student shall:

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate comprehensive understanding of the different elements of research design
- demonstrate familiarity with diverse approaches to research and the ability to locate them in different traditions
- demonstrate understanding of the role of theory of science in designing research
- demonstrate proficiency in the basic terms used in theory of science
- demonstrate understanding the roles of theory in the research process
- demonstrate awareness and knowledge of how a wide range of methods – both qualitative and quantitative – are integrated in the social scientific research process
- demonstrate an understanding of the importance of selecting appropriate methods for particular research questions

Competence and skills

independently and with proficiency, show ability to design a research project, and more specifically:

- translate relevant and theoretically underpinned research ideas into feasible research questions
- situate a research project both in a concrete context and in a field of research, by collecting secondary data, performing a literature overview and integrating these into a research project
- select, describe, critically discuss and assess the appropriateness of research methods and techniques that are suitable for the analysis of the own research problem, in ways that are informed by relevant disciplinary traditions as well as ethical considerations
- operationalise research questions by identifying a relevant empirical material and appropriate methods to collect or produce it
- write a research plan

Judgement and approach

- demonstrate an understanding of the philosophical, ethical and political issues at the heart of social research
- assess and communicate the suitability of a research design for examination of particular research problems
- be able to practice reflexivity on ethical and political aspects of research in social sciences throughout the research process
- reflect on relationships between theory, concepts and methods in the context of relevant epistemological and ontological discussions.

Course content

The course aims to provide the student with an understanding of and skills in research design and research process in the social sciences. More specifically, the following issues are covered by the course: research approaches, applied philosophy of science in the social sciences, selection of a research topic, literature overview, contextualising the research topic, role of theories in research, formulation of research questions, research design, choice of methods, planning of research, research ethics, and reflexivity in the research process. The course introduces these issues through theoretical discussions and practical exercises. The student works both in groups and individually.

Course design

Course activities are based on lectures, seminars and workshops. Lectures introduce core concepts by drawing on course literature and the accumulated experience of the teachers. Seminars require active participants of the students and focus on practical exercises of diverse types. Among other things, they provide a space for the student to train the above mentioned skills and apply the knowledge to develop own research project in a continuous dialogue with other students and the teacher. Workshops are designed to support students in their group work, by providing them with tools for team building and problem solution in the specific context of academic collaboration.

Unless there are valid reasons to the contrary, compulsory participation is required in seminars and workshops. Students who have been unable to participate due to circumstances such as accidents or sudden illness will be offered the opportunity to compensate for or re-take compulsory components. This also applies to students who have been absent because of duties as an elected student representative.

Assessment

Assessment is based on

- Two written assignments: one individual and one group.

Three opportunities for examination are offered in conjunction with the course: a first examination and two re-examinations. Within a year of the end of the course, two further re-examinations on the same course content are offered. After this, further reexamination opportunities are offered but in accordance with the current course syllabus.

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 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.

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

The grade for the entire course consists of the average grade of all assessed assignments (A = 5, B = 4, C = 3, D = 2, E = 1) divided by the number of credits awarded for each component. For a grade of Pass on the entire course, the student must have been awarded at least E on all assessments for which the grading scale A–E+Fail applies, and the grade of Pass on all assessments for which the grading scale Pass – Fail applies. The student must also have participated in all compulsory components.

Entry requirements

To be eligible for the course, the student must have at least 150 higher education credits, including a graded thesis for the degree of Bachelor in the Social Sciences.

A good command of English language both spoken and written, equivalent to English 6/B (advanced) proficiency in the Swedish secondary system, is required. Equivalence assessments will be made according to national guidelines.

Further information

The course cannot be included in a degree together with the course SIMM31 "Methods for Research in the Social Sciences".

Subcourses in SIMM41, Social Science: Methods for Research in the Social Sciences

Applies from H19

- 1901 Group work, 6,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A
- 1902 Individual paper, 9,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A

Applies from H17

- 1701 Lab sessions, 0,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, Pass
- 1702 Reflection paper I, 1,5 hp
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A
- 1703 Reflection paper II, 1,5 hp
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A
- 1704 Group work, 3,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A
- 1705 Individual paper, 9,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A