

ARKN30, Archaeology and Ancient History: Theory, method and ethics on advanced level, 15 credits

Arkeologi och antikens historia: Teori, metod och etik på avancerad nivå, 15 högskolepoäng

Second Cycle / Avancerad nivå

Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by The Pro Dean of First and Second Cycle Studies at The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology on 2025-12-01 (U 2025/861). The syllabus comes into effect 2026-01-15 and is valid from the autumn semester 2026.

General information

The course is included as a compulsory component in the Master of Arts (120 credits) programme in Archaeology and Ancient History - Theory and Practice (HAAAHH). The course is also offered as a freestanding course. The course can normally be included in a general qualification for first or second-cycle studies.

Language of instruction: English

Main field of study

Archaeology and Ancient History with specialization in Archaeology

Archaeology and Ancient History with specialization in Classical Archaeology and Ancient History

Archaeology and Ancient History

Archaeology and Ancient History with specialization in Historical Osteology

Archaeology and Ancient History with specialization in Historical Archaeology

Specialisation

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

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Learning outcomes

On completion of the course, the students shall be able to

Knowledge and understanding

- account for the scientific relationships between theory, method and empirical material, consisting of text and material culture
- account for ethical considerations regarding the choice of theoretical perspective and method.

Competence and skills

- relate current theoretical perspectives to relevant issues and empirical material
- take a position on ethical aspects regarding the choice of theory and method linked to current societal issues, such as cultural heritage, justice and power.

Judgement and approach

- critically reflect on the implications of theoretical positions for archaeological practice
- critically discuss archaeology as a science, its possibilities and limitations, its role in society and their own professional role.

Course content

The course provides a broad introduction at an advanced level to theoretical and methodological aspects of archaeology and ancient culture and society, and serves as a gateway to further specialisation in these subjects.

The focus is on the relationship between theory and practice, i.e. how starting points and choice of perspective affect method, analysis and results. Attention is also given to ethical aspects of the scientific process and the field's role in society at large.

The course explores theoretical approaches to the study of empirical material as a means to help students develop a critical understanding of the relationship between theory, method and material. Ethical considerations regarding the choice of perspective and method are integrated in the course components. Different theoretical perspectives are explored and different types of material are taken as examples and starting points for discussion. For example, the understanding of how material culture from different geographical regions and time periods can be interpreted using different perspectives and analysis methods is discussed. Emphasis is placed on providing students with an overview of the latest methodological developments in documentation, analysis and archiving. Common to all course components is a link between theoretical considerations and practice.

In addition, students will reflect on the archaeological profession and the societal role of archaeology and related ethical issues, linked to archaeological knowledge and experience, communication and use of history.

Course design

The teaching consists of 8-10 lectures and 6-8 seminars. All components are compulsory.

Compulsory attendance entails participation in at least 80% of the teaching sessions. If total participation is between 70 and 80%, the student must complete a supplementary assignment according to the lecturer's instructions to receive a grade of Pass for the course.

If participation falls below 70%, a final grade will not be awarded for the course, and the student will be instructed to repeat the course when a place is available. However, if a student has been unable to attend a teaching session due to circumstances beyond their control, such as an accident, sudden illness or similar, they will be given the opportunity to complete one or more supplementary assignments according to the lecturer's instructions to receive a grade of Pass for the course. This also applies to students who are carrying out an assignment as an elected student representative.

Assessment

The assessment is based on a written assignment.

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.

Grades

Grading scale includes the grades: Fail, Pass, Pass with distinction

Entry requirements

Admission to the course requires a level 3 (first cycle) course, including a degree project for a Bachelor's degree, in Archaeology (ARKK04, 30 credits), Classical Archaeology and Ancient History (AKSK04, 30 credits), Historical Archaeology (ARKH04, 30 credits) or Historical Osteology (HOSK04, 30 credits), or equivalent knowledge, and English 6.

Further information

- The course is offered at the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Lund University.
- The course has overlapping content with ARKN11 and ARKN 15.
- The number of credits allocated for course content that is shared in whole or in part with another course can only be credited once for a degree.
- For further details, see the current registration information and other relevant documentation.