



**LUND**  
UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Social Sciences

## MESS16, Social Sciences and Sustainability, 7.5 credits

*Samhällsvetenskap och hållbarhet, 7,5 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 2021-09-02 to be valid from 2022-08-24, autumn semester 2022.

### General Information

The course is a first term compulsory course within Lund University Master's Programme in Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science (LUMES).

*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

Upon the completion of the course, the student shall

#### Knowledge and understanding

- identify key issues and debates that affect the relation and the interaction between society and nature.
- understand and explain fundamental concepts in social sciences such as agency, structure, ideology, social change.
- describe and discuss how these concepts can be used to deepen and broaden different perspectives on sustainability.

### Competence and skills

- independently apply social science approaches, perspectives, theories and concepts in the analysis of sustainability.
- actively, constructively and independently participate in seminars, discussions, group assignments and presentations.

### **Judgement and approach**

- demonstrate good proficiency and independence in academic writing and in the independent use of scientific literature and other sources, including bibliographic databases.
- based on a scientific approach, critically evaluate, compile and use information that is relevant for responding to research questions and similar tasks.
- demonstrate the ability to consider different approaches and to assess their relevance to the understanding of societal questions and solutions in relation to sustainability.

### **Course content**

The course introduces social science approaches to sustainability in three parts: the origin, theory and practice for studying society in the close relation to nature.

The first section provides an introduction to the ideas that link and define the material conditions of our current societies, such as the use of natural resources, the evolution of property relations, and notions of progress.

The second part highlights different theories of society and relates them to environmental problems. This part of the course focuses on the tensions and synergies that arise in the interactions between different analytical concepts and categories such as individual/society, agency/structure and anthropocentrism/ecocentrism in relation to social change.

The third part provides basic understanding of current sustainability solutions. This is done from different perspectives, and practical examples are taken from various geographical origins including the Global South. The aim is to stimulate critical discussion and more in-depth reflection on existing solutions from diverse societal positions.

### **Course design**

The course consists of lectures, seminars, group exercises and individual exercises.

### **Compulsory components**

Unless there are valid reasons to the contrary, compulsory participation is required in the oral presentation of the individual written take-home exam and in the oral presentation of the written group take-home exam. 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

Course assessment is based on:

- Written group take-home exam (3 credits)
- Written individual take-home exam (4,5 credits)

To receive a passing grade on the course the student must also have participated in the compulsory components:

- Oral presentation of the written individual take-home exam
- Oral presentation of the written group take-home exam

The course includes opportunities for assessment at a first examination, a re-sit close to the first examination and a second re-sit for courses that have ended during that school year. Two further re-examinations on the same course content are offered within a year of the end of the course. After this, further re-examination opportunities are offered but in accordance with the current course syllabus.

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 a passing grade cannot re-take an exam or re-submit a paper to get a higher grade.

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

Marking scale: Fail, Three, Four, Five.

The compulsory components are exempted from the grading scale above. The grade awarded for these components is 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.

The highest grade for the course is Five and the lowest grade for passing is Three. Grades for a non-passing result is Fail. The student's results are assessed with reference to learning outcomes of the course. For grade Five, the student must show an excellent result in all learning outcomes. For the grade Four, the student must show a very good result in all learning outcomes. For the grade Three, the student must show a sufficiently good result in all learning outcomes. The grade Fail means that the student has not reached the learning outcomes of the course.

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

### Overall course grade:

The grade for the entire course consists of the average grade of the two exams that are assessed according to the Fail-5-4-3 grading scale. The written individual take-home exam is worth 60% of the final grade. The written group take-home exam is worth 40% of the final grade. For a grade of 3 on the entire course the student must have been awarded at least 3 on both exams. The student must also have participated in all compulsory components to pass the course.

Exam	Credits	Grades	Part of final grade for the course
Written individual take-home exam	4,5	Fail-3-4-5	60%
Written group take-home exam	3	Fail-3-4-5	40%
Oral presentaiton of written individual take-home exam (compulsory component 1)	0	Fail-Pass	-
Oral presentaiton of written group take-home exam (compulsory component 1)	0	Fail-Pass	-
	7,5		100%

Example: The student got the grade of 3 on the written individual take-home exam and the grade of 5 on the written group take-home exam (and the grade of Pass on the two compulsory components). The final grade is 4  $((3 * 60) + (5 * 40)) / 100 = 3,8$

## Entry requirements

To be admitted to the course, the student must hold a Bachelor's degree, including at least 180 ECTS.

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

## Further information

The course cannot be included in a degree together with MESS32 Social Theory and Sustainability, 10 credits.