



Faculty of Social Sciences

MIDM72, Development Studies: Theory of Science and Research Methodologies with a Focus on Development Studies, 7.5 credits

Utvecklingsstudier: Vetenskapsteori och forskningsmetodologi med fokus på utvecklingsstudier, 7,5 högskolepoäng
Second Cycle / Avancerad nivå

Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by Steering committee for the Master of Science Programme in International Development and Management on 2023-05-16 (STYR 2023/1359) and was last revised on 2024-11-18. The revised syllabus comes into effect 2024-11-19 and is valid from the autumn semester 2024.

General information

This course is offered during the first term of the Master of Science Programme in International Development and Management (LUMID).

Language of instruction: English

Main field of study *Specialisation*

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

Learning outcomes

On completion of the course, the student shall:

Knowledge and understanding

- show good understanding of different strands of theory of science and their relevance to development studies,
- be able to describe and explain the roles of theory, methodology and methods in the research process,
- demonstrate an understanding of the key characteristics and differences between a quantitative, a qualitative and a mixed method approach,

- show in-depth understanding of the main methodologies and research strategies applied in development studies.

Competence and skills

- demonstrate ability to formulate relevant research questions in development studies and link them to theory and methodology,
- demonstrate ability to identify appropriate research strategies for issues and topics in development studies,
- show ability to identify and discuss the methodological foundations and findings presented in published development studies articles,
- demonstrate skills in discussing and communicating results/ideas in both speech and writing.

Judgement and approach

- demonstrate the ability to evaluate critically the use and the usability of different strands of theory of science in development research strategies,
- demonstrate the ability to evaluate critically the usability and appropriateness of different theories and methodologies for research topics in development studies.

Course content

The aim of the course is to provide in-depth knowledge and understanding of the theory of science and research methodologies within social sciences. The course consists of presentations and discussions about philosophy of science and its links to social sciences. Student will be introduced to different theoretical perspectives in social sciences, but emphasis will be put on their relevance for contemporary development studies.

In the first section of the course, key perspectives in philosophy of science are presented and their relevancy to social sciences and development studies is discussed. Basic ideas (such as science, scientific research, scientific methods, ontology, epistemology, and so on) are introduced and problematized. Special attention will be given to critical theory and alternative knowledges. At the seminars, the focus will be put on the application of this content, as well as on the actual and potential application of philosophy of science in research and working life of the development practitioner.

In the second section, the student will be introduced to tools used by researchers to study social phenomena. In this part of the course tools such as units of analysis, scale, variables, hypotheses, theories and models and their roles will be discussed. The seminars of this module will be used by the students to reflect upon and problematize these tools.

In the third section of the course the focus will be put on the research process. The students will be introduced to different paradigms, as well as to qualitative and quantitative research methods and their application. During the seminars students will be given current development issues for them to reflect and apply the knowledge presented during the course. As part of this work, the student will learn to formulate research questions, apply theories and choose methods based on the research questions and the topic studied.

Course design

The teaching consists of lectures, seminars and group discussions. Attendance in seminars is compulsory, which means that student attendance in seminars is required for a pass grade on the course. Students who are not able to complete a compulsory component owing to circumstances beyond their control, e.g. accident, sudden illness or similar situation, will be offered the opportunity to compensate for absence. This also applies to students who have been absent because of duties as an elected student representative.

Assessment

Assessment is based on:

- A course portfolio composed of short reflection papers and oral presentations of own work (1.5 credits)
- An in-class exam (2 credits)
- One written individual take-home exam (4 credits)

In connection with the course, three test opportunities are offered; ordinary exams, re-exams and cumulative exams. Within one year after the course has undergone a major change or ceased, at least two additional exam opportunities are offered for the same course content. After that, the student is offered additional test opportunities, but in accordance with the then-current 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.

Grades

Grading scale includes the grades: U=Fail, E=Sufficient, D=Satisfactory, C=Good, B=Very Good, A=Excellent

For the course portfolio the applied grading scale in the course is: Pass/Fail

The student's performance is assessed with reference to the learning outcomes of the course. For the grade Pass on the course portfolio the student must submit assignments. For the grade Fail on the course portfolio the student must have failed to submit assignments.

For the written individual and group exams the applied grading scale in the course is: A-E + Fail

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 students 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 students must have shown unacceptable results.

Entry requirements

Students are required to have passed the first course (MIDA80, 15 credits) of the LUMID programme.

A high level of proficiency in the English language, equivalent to English 6/B in the Swedish secondary system is necessary. Equivalence assessments will be made according to national guidelines.

Further information

This course replaces MIDM12.