



Faculty of Social Sciences

RÄSN10, Critical Perspectives on Criminal Justice and Social Control, 7.5 credits

Kritiska perspektiv på brott, straff och social kontroll, 7,5 högskolepoäng
Second Cycle / Avancerad nivå

Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by the board of the Division of Sociology of Law on 2019-11-20 and was last revised on 2026-02-25 by the board of the Department of Sociology of Law. The revised syllabus comes into effect 2026-02-25 and is valid from the autumn semester 2026.

General information

The course is offered as elective course of semester 3 of the Master of Science programme in Sociology of Law, 120 credits. The course can also be taken as an optional course.

Language of instruction: English

Main field of study *Specialisation*

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

Learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

To pass this course, the student should:

- demonstrate specialised knowledge of critical approaches to crime, criminal justice and social control
- demonstrate specialised knowledge of current trends in criminal justice and criminal policy
- demonstrate understanding of alternative criminal policy and justice

Competence and skills

To pass this course, the students should show competence and skills to:

- demonstrate the ability to independently analyse the social construction of crime, criminal justice and social control in contemporary society
- demonstrate the ability to independently analyze the consequences of current criminal justice trends
- demonstrate an ability to independently analyse alternative criminal policy and justice

Judgement and approach

To pass this course, the students should:

- demonstrate insight into how crime, punishment, and social control in contemporary society can be understood from a social constructionist perspective
- demonstrate the ability to reflect on the consequences of today's criminal justice system based on relevant theoretical perspectives
- demonstrate the ability to reflect on alternative criminal policy strategies and justice, drawing on theory and empirical data

Course content

The aim of the course is to offer in-depth knowledge on crime, criminal law, criminal policy and social control, from socio-legal and criminological perspectives. The course takes as its point of departure a social constructionist perspective on crime.

During the course, the student will write and compile their work in a portfolio that is relevant to the course content. The student chooses the essay topic to be addressed and decides which assignments will be included in the portfolio. The teaching consists of lectures and seminars in the form of exercises and workshops where students present and comment on each other's ongoing work.

The course consists of one module that covers three themes.

Theme 1: The social construction of crime and control

The first topic aims to provide the student with knowledge about the social constructivist approach to crime, deviance and social control.

Theme 2: Criminal justice and policy in the 21st century

The second theme aims to go deeper into current trends in criminal justice and criminal policy,

Theme 3: Alternative criminal policy and justice

The third theme in this course aims to move beyond the traditional criminal law methods within criminal justice, politics, and social control, in order to broaden the perspective and examine some of the alternatives that are used and offered when it comes to ways of understanding and responding to undesirable social harms.

Course design

The teaching consists of lectures and seminars

Unless there are valid reasons to the contrary, compulsory participation is required in the seminars. 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 retake compulsory components. This also applies to students who have been absent because of duties as an elected student representative.

Assessment

The course is examined through an individual portfolio. Students work on the portfolio throughout the course. The portfolio is submitted at the end of the course and consists of 3–5 selected work samples, tied together by a reflective commentary.

Three examination opportunities are offered in connection with the course: an initial exam and two re-exams. Within one year after a major revision or discontinuation of the course, at least two additional re-exams with the same course content will be offered. Thereafter, further re-examination opportunities will be offered, but in accordance with the current course syllabus.

The time for supervision is limited to the semester the student first were registered on the course. Exceptions can be made if special reasons exist.

The examiner may, in consultation with pedagogical support services, deviate from the standard form of examination in order to provide a student with a permanent disability an examination format equivalent to that offered to students without disabilities.

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

The grade for a non-passing result is U. The student's result is assessed based on the learning outcomes. 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 Fail have the student shown an insufficient result.

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

To be admitted to the course, students must have at least Bachelor's degree including: 90 credits in the sociology of law or other relevant disciplines such as sociology, criminology, law, political science, social work, or the equivalent.

Oral and written proficiency in English equivalent to English 6/B from Swedish upper secondary school is a requirement. International qualifications will be assessed in accordance with national guidelines. International students are excepted from the general entry requirements on to master Swedish.