SASE13, Economic History: Population Aging and the Welfare State, 7.5 credits

Economic History: Population Aging and the Welfare State, 7,5 högskolepoäng

First Cycle / Grundnivå

Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by The Board of the Department of Economic History on 2013-10-08 to be valid from 2014-01-01, spring semester 2014.

General Information

The course can be studied during the first semester of Economic History at the undergraduate level. It can be included as an optional course in several Bachelor programs and it can be studied as a single-subject course.

Language of instruction: English

Main field of studies	Depth of study relative to the degree requirements
Economic History	G1N, First cycle, has only upper-secondary level entry requirements

Learning outcomes

After having passed the course, students are expected to:

Knowledge and understanding

- be able to discuss and understand key theory, empirics and terms that constitute the foundation for modern as well as historical research as regards the link between population structure and macroeconomics

- be able to describe and understand the challenges that an aging population mean for societies today, linked to different welfare systems' commitments and way of financing

- be able to describe and understand the relationship between long-term changes in the population structure and their implications for the society's ability to care for their

net consumers

- be able to describe and understand differences between welfare systems, as well as their historical origins

- be able to describe and understand potential solutions to the challenges facing today's aging societies and their welfare systems

Course content

The content of the course is delimited to both teaching and literature.

The course problemizes current issues relating to aging societies. An increasing share of elderly, through an increasing life expectancy and– by historical proportions – low fertility has characterized Sweden and other developed countries for a long time. If this did not constitute a challenge before, why is it the case today? Is the welfare state as we today know it compatible with an aging society? How can we finance the welfare of an increasing share of elderly, with a steadily declining work force? Can this be done through increased immigration? Furthermore, what consequences does an aging society have for labor supply, savings, investments, and economic growth?

The course initially takes a broad perspective on the challenges that welfare states face, today and in the future. A focus is directed towards how the challenges are linked to an aging population and its implications for the costs of the welfare system and how it is financed. In order to better understand how current and future challenges have emerged, the historical origins of welfare systems, in Sweden and elsewhere, is discussed. Furthermore, historical fertility, mortality and migration patterns are discussed, linking short and long-term population changes – both size and composition – to economic growth. The student is also provided with a thorough review of key theoretical as well as empirical literature in the field. Finally, the course discusses a range of potential solutions to how welfare systems can be financed during coming decades, through savings, increased labor force participation, productivity increases, and taxes.

Course design

The course is designed as a series of lectures and also consists of seminars, tutorials and group work.

Assessment

The grading is based on both individual and group performance, via written exams, presentations and other mandatory activities. Examination may draw on teaching as well as the course literature.

The University views plagiarism very seriously, and will take disciplinary actions against students for any kind of attempted malpractice in examinations and assessments. Plagiarism is considered to be a very serious academic offence. The penalty that may be imposed for this, and other unfair practice in examinations or assessments, includes suspension from the University.

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.
At the School of Economics and Management grades are awarded in accordance with a criterion-based grading scale UA:

A: Excellent

B: Very good

C: Good

D: Satisfactory

E: Sufficient

U: Fail

Students have to receive a grade of E or higher in order to pass a course.

GRADE	CHARACTERISTIC	CRITERIA
A	Excellent	A distinguished result that is excellent with regard to the following aspects – theoretical depth, relevance for the subject matter, analytical ability and independent thought.
B	Very good	A very good result with regard to the above mentioned aspects.
C	Good	The result is of a good standard with regard to the above mentioned aspects and lives up to expectations.
D	Satisfactory	The result is of a satisfactory standard with regard to the above mentioned aspects and lives up to expectations.

E	Sufficient	The result satisfies the minimum requirements with regard to the above mentioned aspects, but not more.
U	Fail	The result does not meet the minimum requirements with regard to the above mentioned aspects.

Students who do not obtain grades A-E on their written class room exam will be offered opportunities to retake the exam in which case the student will be assessed according to regular procedure. In the case of home exams that are handed in after the set deadline the teacher can: a) hand out a new exam which will be assessed according to regular procedure, b) may penalize the student by handing out a lower grade on the assignment in question unless the student can demonstrate special circumstances for the delay.

Entry requirements

General requirements for university studies in Sweden

Further information

General admission requirements except for knowledge in Swedish which is not required

Subcourses in SASE13, Economic History: Population Aging and the Welfare State

Applies from H13

1301 Population Aging and the Welfare State, 7,5 hp
      Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A