SIMM41, Social Science: Methods for Research in the Social Sciences, 15 credits

Samhällsvetenskap: Samhällsvetenskaplig forskningsmetod, 15 högskolepoäng

Second Cycle / Avancerad nivå

Details of approval

The syllabus is an old version, approved by Graduate School Board on 2015-10-02 and was last revised on 2015-09-28. . The revised syllabus applied from 2015-09-29. , autumn semester 2015.

General Information

The course is offered as single subject course in Social Sciences and is included in the Master of Science Programs in Development Studies, Global Studies and Social Studies of Gender, 120 higher education credits.

Language of instruction: English

Main field of studies	*Depth of study relative to the degree requirements*
Social Work	A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements
Political Science	A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements
Education	A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements
Sociology	A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements
Human Geography	A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements
Social Anthropology	A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements
Gender Studies	A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements
Sociology of Law	A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

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

Learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding
On completion of the course, the students shall

- demonstrate in-depth knowledge of qualitative and quantitative methods used in the Social Sciences, including being able to identify epistemological foundations of the methodological approaches dealt with during the course.
- demonstrate an understanding of the importance of selecting appropriate methods for different types of research questions.
- demonstrate an understanding of how research results can be presented and contextualised, with regards to the purpose and the audience.

Competence and skills
On completion of the course the students shall, independently and with proficiency, show ability to

- translate abstract ideas based on theoretical considerations into precise empirically observable measures and viable research questions
- Critically assess the utility and appropriateness of different techniques of data collection and research methods in relation to research questions relevant to the Social Sciences
- Collect, interpret, and report data in the form of research interviews, survey material, material from statistical databases and textual analyses
- Demonstrate an ability to assess advantages and disadvantages of different research methods and methodological approaches in relation to different research questions in the Social Sciences, and in ways that are informed by relevant disciplinary traditions and ethical considerations

Judgement and approach
On completion of the course, the students shall

- demonstrate reflexivity and social awareness in planning, executing and appraising research projects in the Social Sciences
- show the ability to consider and adhere to ethical guidelines while operationalising research questions.
- demonstrate an awareness of the responsibility of the individual researcher for the ways in which research is carried out and its results are used.

Course content

The course aims at providing a comprehensive understanding of different and mixed methods approaches in the Social Sciences, as well as providing necessary skills required for their application. The emphasis of the course is on the planning and execution of a research project. The research tasks are based on a predefined theme. The course is divided into four parts, following the logic of the research process: Introduction – Outlining the project – Understanding quantitative and qualitative

methods – Fieldwork – Writing and presenting.

The course offers a comprehensive view of and practical orientation in mixed methods, providing students with practical experience on how to plan and execute a research project based on both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. Reflexivity is trained through continual peer review practices focused on getting students to reflect on what, how, and why they do research.

Information literacy goals are addressed, such as evaluating the appropriateness, reliability and accuracy of different types of information sources. Familiarity with sources of available data is developed as students participate in generating new data as well as through interpreting empirical information within a specific analytical framework.

Course design

Course activities are based on lectures, seminars and lab sessions. Lectures introduce core concepts by drawing on course literature and the accumulated experience of the teacher. Seminars are organized around structured feedback and peer review. They provide a space for the student to train their abilities to identify and communicate on strengths and weaknesses in their own and others' research process. Lab sessions provide students with a space to work with and receive teacher support on computer-based data analyses. Seminars and lab sessions are mandatory.

Assessment

Assessment is based on

- Three written individual assignments, two of which require the student to reflect critically on the development of the research project and the individual development of skills in collecting and interpreting data; and one of which is a final paper in the form of a research application, requiring the student to present a viable research project based on a mixed methods approach including a presentation of ethical considerations, previous research, theoretical framework and preliminary research results.
- Active participation in seminars, including active participation in the final seminar wherein students present team projects and comment on other students' projects.

Three opportunities for examination are offered in conjunction with the course: a first examination and two re-examinations. Within a year of the end of the course, two further re-examinations on the same course content are offered. After this, further re-examination opportunities are offered but in accordance with the current course syllabus.

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.
The highest grade is A and the lowest passing grade is E. The grade for a non-passing result is Fail.

The student's performance is assessed with reference to the learning outcomes of the course. 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 of Fail the student must have shown unacceptable results.

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.

The following assignments are exempted from the above mentioned grading scale: seminars, lab sessions and diagnostic test. For these assignments the grading scale Pass or Fail (G or U) will be used.

Entry requirements

To be eligible for the course, the student must have at least 150 higher education credits, including a graded thesis for the degree of Bachelor in the Social Sciences.

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

Further information

The course cannot be included in a degree toghether with the course SIMM31 "Methods for Research in the Social Sciences".

Subcourses in SIMM41, Social Science: Methods for Research in the Social Sciences

Applies from V16

1501 Lab sessions, 0,0 hp
       Grading scale: Fail, Pass
1502 Reflection paper I, 2,5 hp
       Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A
1503 Reflection paper II, 2,5 hp
       Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A
1504 Individual paper, 10,0 hp
       Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A