



**LUND**  
UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Social Sciences

## **SIMP56, Using Social Theory, 15 credits**

*Att använda samhällsvetenskaplig teori, 15 högskolepoäng*  
Second Cycle / Avancerad nivå

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### **Details of approval**

The syllabus was approved by Graduate School Board on 2021-09-27 to be valid from 2022-01-17, spring semester 2022.

### **General Information**

The course is offered as an interdisciplinary single subject course in Social Sciences at the second-cycle level, as a mandatory course within the Master Programme in Social Scientific Data Analysis and as an optional course within the Master Programmes in Global Studies, Development Studies and Social Studies of Gender.

*Language of instruction:* English

<i>Main field of studies</i>	<i>Depth of study relative to the degree requirements</i>
Development Studies	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
Political Science	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
Social Anthropology	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
Social Work	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

## Learning outcomes

Upon completion of the course, the student shall be able to:

### Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate knowledge of key features that can be used to classify and understand a social theory, including its concepts and their interrelations, function(s), and levels of analysis;
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how social theories are applied in an empirical project, including the formulation of a research question, the logic of appropriateness applied to the collection and analysis of data, and the theoretical implications of research results.

### Competence and skills

- demonstrate the ability to identify the structure and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of social theories;
- demonstrate the ability to summarize and critique the theoretical structure of a social scientific work;
- demonstrate the ability to craft research questions relevant to a given theory;
- demonstrate the ability to communicate the theoretical implications of research results;
- demonstrate the ability to apply the techniques of data collection introduced in the course;
- demonstrate the ability to apply the techniques of data analysis introduced in the course.

### Judgement and approach

- identify and reflect upon the normative implications of social theories;
- judge the appropriateness of given methods of data and analysis for a given research question and theoretical frame;
- evaluate the implications of using a given data collection technique for the research analysis and results;
- evaluate the implications of using a given data analysis technique for the research results.

## Course content

The student will learn to use theories in two ways. First, they will learn to understand and review the structures of theories themselves (meta-theory), and second, they will learn how theory is connected to the gathering and analysis of empirical data (applied theory).

In contrast to courses that teach theory only from the perspective of given scholars, themes, and content, this course aims to demystify theory-driven research by making the practical knowledge of both meta-theory and applied theory explicit. The student will thereby acquire the practical tools to understand, evaluate, and use theories in general in terms of both the structure (Part 1) and application of theory (Part 2).

In Part 1, the student will learn how to understand and critique theory. The 'Structure of Social Theory' part highlights (a) concepts and their relationships as the building

blocks of theory and teaches students how to identify these as well as (b) the levels of analysis (e.g. micro, meso, or macro) and (c) functions and their corresponding levels of abstraction (e.g. 'middle-range,' 'critical,' or 'grand' theories) of theories. Each week will introduce one of these 'building blocks' of theory structure and illustrate how these blocks work in the context of an example topic area of social theorizing. Students will then learn to directly apply these in understanding and critiquing a specified body of theoretical content. Part 1 will culminate with students simultaneously using all of these 'building blocks' within their critical reviews of selected theories.

In Part 2, 'Applying Theory within Research,' the student will apply the same body of social theories used as examples in Part 1 ( e.g. theories of identity) to concrete research projects. Students will adapt the theoretical content introduced in Part 1 and design their own research questions. Students will proceed by operationalizing these research questions and gathering relevant data. They will then complete an analysis task, focusing on the relevance of their findings for the original theory.

## Course design

The teaching consists of lectures, compulsory seminars, and workshops.

The course is split into two subcourses, 'The Structure of Social Theory' (7.5 credits) and 'Applying Theory within Research,' (7.5 credits).

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

## Assessment

The assessment of the course consists of two separate parts: a book review for 'The Structure of Social Theory' (50% of the final course grade) and two lab reports for 'Applying Theory within Research' (50% of the final course grade, each lab report worth 25%): one lab report or the equivalent for the data collection phase as well as one for the data analysis phase.

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 reexamination opportunities are offered but in accordance with the current course 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.

*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 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.

The book review counts for 7.5 credits of the overall grade of the course and the lab reports count for 7.5 credits. The grade for the entire course consists of an average grade of all assessed assignments (A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1) divided by the number of credits awarded for each component. For a grade of Pass on the entire course, the student must have been awarded at least E on all assessments for which the grading scale A-E+Fail applies. The student must also have participated in all compulsory components.

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 on the course.

## Entry requirements

To be eligible for the course students must have a Bachelor's degree with a major (i.e. at least 90 ECTS credits) in Development Studies, Gender Studies, Human Geography, Political Science, Social Anthropology, Social Work, Sociology or Sociology of Law, or the equivalent.

Oral and written proficiency in English equivalent to English 6/B (advanced) from Swedish upper secondary school is a requirement. International qualifications will be assessed in accordance with national guidelines.

## Subcourses in SIMP56, Using Social Theory

Applies from V22

- 2201 The Structure of Social Theory, 7,5 hp  
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A
- 2202 Applying Theory within Research, 7,5 hp  
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A