

SOCN24, Sociology: The Research Process, 15 credits

Sociologi: Forskningsprocessen, 15 högskolepoäng

Second Cycle / Avancerad nivå

Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by the board of the Department of Sociology on 2025-04-24. The syllabus comes into effect 2025-05-27 and is valid from the spring semester 2026.

General information

The course is offered as a freestanding course and as a compulsory course in the Master's programme in Sociology, 120 credits.

Language of instruction: English

*Main field of
study*

Specialisation

Sociology

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

Learning outcomes

For a grade of Pass on the course, the students shall be able to

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the variations in research approaches and processes within the discipline of sociology,
- demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the different stages of the research process and how they are interrelated,
- demonstrate in-depth knowledge and understanding of the different roles that theory can play in a research project,
- demonstrate in-depth knowledge and understanding of how different methodological approaches can be used to answer different types of research questions,

- demonstrate an in-depth understanding of how an individual study can build on and contribute to a field of research,

Competence and skills

- demonstrate the ability to formulate research questions that are theoretically grounded and accessible for investigation with a high degree of independence,
- demonstrate the ability to synthesise research in a defined field of study with a high degree of independence and identify areas relevant for future research,
- demonstrate the ability to design a feasible sociological study with a high degree of autonomy, taking into account limited financial and time resources,

Judgement and approach

- assess the suitability and feasibility of a research design for identified research areas,
- critically reflect on debates about research paradigms,
- critically reflect on the ethical issues involved in a given research project.

Course content

The course aims to deepen the student's overall understanding of the research process, with a particular focus on research design and the integration of different theoretical and methodological approaches in sociological studies. The course prepares the student for the degree project, as well as research-related activities and project planning more generally. The course consists of two modules:

Module 1: The module addresses the central traditions of philosophy of science and examines contemporary applications of different research approaches. Furthermore, students gain insight into how theories can be used and developed in different types of research projects. The student also gains knowledge of how different methodological approaches, and combinations of these, can be used to address different types of research questions.

Module 2: The focus is on research design and the relationship between the different stages of the research process. The course begins with the role of the literature review in anchoring and motivating a research question. Then, based on the first module, the student is trained in how to link the different parts of the research process in a concrete study and how to design a coherent, well-motivated and practically feasible research proposal.

Course design

The teaching consists of lectures, seminars and workshops. Participation in seminars and workshops is compulsory. Non-participation is compensated for by an assignment later in the course.

Assessment

Module 1 (9 credits) is assessed through an individual written take-home exam.

Module 2 (6 credits) is assessed through an individual written take-home exam.

The course includes opportunities for assessment at the first examination, a resit close to the first examination and a second resit for courses that have ended during that academic year (catch-up exam). At least two further re-examinations on the same course content are offered within a year of the course undergoing a major revision or being discontinued. After this, further re-examination 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.

Grades

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

The grade for unacceptable results is Fail. The student's results are assessed based on the learning outcomes of the course. For the grade of E, the student must demonstrate sufficient 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 has demonstrated unacceptable results. At the start of the course, the student is informed about the learning outcomes stated in the syllabus and the grading scale and how this is applied during the course.

Full course grades are calculated as below:

1. The letters on module 1 and module 2 are converted into numbers as follows:
A = 5, B = 4, C = 3, D = 2, and E = 1.
2. The numerical grade is multiplied by the number of credits in the examination.
3. The products from the tests are added together.
4. The sum is divided by the total number of credits from module 1 and module 2, which is 15 credits.

Grades are given according to the following table.

$\geq 4.5 = A$
 ≥ 3.5 and $\neq B$
 ≥ 2.5 and $\neq C$
 ≥ 1.5 and $\neq D$
 $< 1.5 = E$

To pass the course, students must have been awarded at least the grade of E on modules 1 and 2. At the start of the course, the student is informed about the learning outcomes stated in the syllabus and the grading scale and how this is applied during the course.

Entry requirements

Admission to the course requires 90 credits in a social sciences subject comprising sequential courses. English 6.

Further information

The course cannot be included in a degree together with SIMM51, Social Sciences: Social science research: design and process, 15 credits and SIMM52, Social Sciences: Social science research design, 7.5 credits.