

SYLLABUS FOR:
Introduction to research program in sociology & social work:
from research idea via the draft for the research plan to the
research proposal¹

Uppsala University

Dept. of Sociology

Fall Term 2018 & Spring Term 2019: Period 1-4

Duration: October 2018 - May-June, 2019.

Credits: 7.5 ECTS

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Course description:

The course consists of two interconnected parts intended to complement each other. The first part focuses on *the craft of research* and offers insights into the different approaches one can take when tackling the numerous decisions that researchers have to make when they turn their research into a scholarly piece of work. The second part of the course focuses on *the everyday skills that academics need* in order to manage the different 'jobs' that academics do (i.e. research, teaching, administration, faculty-collegium related tasks etc.). This part introduces newly admitted doctoral students such as yourselves to what academic life can be like and most importantly, to the specific setting that is Swedish academia.

Course Objectives:

The Higher Education Ordinance (Högskoleförordningen SFS 2006: 1053) states the objectives that research programs in Sweden must achieve. Thus, you are all expected to familiarize yourselves with all of the objectives listed in this ordinance. This particular course will focus on the following objectives:

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate broad knowledge in and a systematic understanding of the field of research, together with deep and up-to-date specialist knowledge in a defined part of the field of research

Skills and abilities

- demonstrate an ability to engage in scholarly analysis and synthesis and in independent, critical examination and assessment of new and complex phenomena, issues and situations; demonstrate an ability to identify and formulate issues, critically, independently and creatively, and proceeding with scientific precision, and to plan and, using appropriate methods, conduct research and other advanced tasks within specified time limits, and to scrutinize and evaluate such work;
- demonstrate an ability to identify their need of further knowledge; and

Judgement and approach

- demonstrate deeper insight into the potential and limitations of scholarship, its role in society and people's responsibility for how it is used.

¹ This course is not usually open to applicants from outside the Department of Sociology.

Course design:

The course is designed with different requirements in mind as far as reading and preparation is concerned. The same holds true for independent and collective work that you are all expected to do. As such, this course stretches over two terms. The first part of the course – which focuses on *the craft of research* - will require both reading and preparation for the *seminars* that will be held throughout the course (primarily during the fall). In addition, this part requires a considerable amount of reading and writing to be completed at different stages of the process in order to *craft* the draft of the research plan, which we will end this term with, and the research proposal that doctoral students are expected to submit toward the end of the course; i.e. in May/ June of 2019.

The first part of the course is designed to assist you in making the numerous informed decisions that you will have to make as far as your dissertation work is concerned. This entails deciding the kind of dissertation that you are going to work towards and why (i.e. a monograph or a compilation of articles) as well as how you plan to approach your research and the pros and cons of these decisions. Thus, during the course of this introductory course (and mostly during the fall), we will work together on the dissection of other people's dissertations. It is because of this that I tend to describe the first part of this course as the most reading-, preparation-, discussion- and writing- intensive part out of the two parts that the course consists of.

Most of the seminars that we will have during the fall will depart from some of the reference literature and from the six-eight PhD dissertations that will be 'dissected' during the course of this first term (1 dissertation per course participant). Worth noting, is that I write dissect as opposed to discuss since these seminars are not meant to be 'anything goes- discussions' about the dissertations that end up making it into our final reading list. Instead, these seminars have a very specific purpose in mind. The seminars are namely meant to focus on the dissection of dissertations as testaments of a scholarly voice and as insights into a researcher's readership (for more insight into what this means see the reference book by Booth et al. (2008) and specifically the chapter on readers and writers).

The dissertations we will read and dissect together will be decided based on your own research interests. This means that the vast majority of reading done in this course is reading that you yourselves have picked and collectively decided on. Thus, in order for this course's literature list to be completed, you need to bring with you to the very first meeting on October 5th, at least two PhD dissertations in either Sociology or Social Work (written in English and defended within a Swedish university; one monograph and one compilation of articles). These are your individual suggestions to our literature list. Librarians at our university can help you find out how you can go about finding Swedish dissertations.

When we meet for the first time, we will decide which dissertations will end up making it into our reading list and which ones will not. The decision will be based on the balance we need to strike in order for the course to work optimally [which in this case is a balance between dissertation type (monograph vs. articles) and research approach (qualitative vs. quantitative)]. Worth noting is that ALL suggestions need to be in English since we have students enrolled in the program that have not yet mastered the Swedish language.

Worth noting is that I write *craft* a research proposal as opposed to write a research proposal because the course is designed to assist you in the *process* of formulating a research idea, making informed-decisions about what your research should focus on and why and in designing the plans you need to embark on as you go about the business of designing your individual dissertation projects. This is why the course is titled as it is (see the allusion to moving from the research idea, to the draft of a research plan and finally to the research proposal) and why the course is meeting intensively during the fall of 2018 but less so during the spring of 2010.

The second part of the course – which focuses on the everyday skills that academics use and need – requires some reading (to be done during the Spring 2019) but above all it requires that you all actively engage in the kind of skills-assessment process that everyday life as an academic constantly requires. This entails asking questions such as: Where I am at skills-wise?, Where do I need to be in four years?, and What can I do to get there? This part of the course will require, in other words, active participation in the *lectures and discussion forums* that are scheduled. This means that the second part of the course is reading- and discussion- intensive but requires very little preparation in the true sense of the word and no writing.

Assessment forms:

- **Formative Assignments:**
 - one presentation of a dissertation at a seminar (each student or student-pair is responsible for presenting the dissertation they have chosen for inclusion into the course's reading list at a seminar)
 - discussant role for seminars that will be open to senior faculty members in our department (i.e. the ones in which you are expected to present your research idea, the draft of the research plan and research proposal)
 - active participation at all seminars
 - contribution to the agenda for the January 19th discussion (which entails e-mailing to all course participants the passages you want to discuss on January 15th)

- **Summative assessments:**
 - presentation of own research idea, plan and proposal at senior faculty attended seminars

- **Attendance:**
 - Mandatory for all scheduled meetings (lectures, seminars, discussion forums and workshops). In other words, you need to let me know in advance if you need to miss a class.
 - Extra writing assignments will be required if seminars are missed.

Deadlines for written assignments:

- Research idea: one page to be submitted by October 5th (To be discussed during the seminar scheduled for October 9th)
 - The one page should only answer the following question: what is the research problem I am interested on; why am I personally interested in this problem and who do I envision my future readers to be? (no references needed)
- Research draft: 4,000-5,000 words to be submitted by December 8th (To be discussed on the one day seminar which will be either on Dec. 14th – 15th – this is a whole day seminar including a joint lunch)
 - This draft should include some of the customary sections a piece of scholarly work usually include (i.e. Introduction, Literature Review, Theory and Methods as well as a timeline and references)
- Research proposal: 8,000-10,000 words to be submitted by (actual date to be decided) and discussed at the end of Spring 2018 (actual date to be decided)

Course reading (in the order in which the reading is assigned):

- Biebier, J. P. & Worley, L. K. (2006). Conceptualizing the academic life: graduate students' perspectives. *Journal of Higher Education*, vol. 77, no. 6, p. 1009-1035
- McAlpine, L. (2012). Identity trajectories: doctoral journeys from past to present to future. *Australian Universities Review*, vol. 54, no. 1, p. 38-46.
- Thorne, B. & Hochschild, A. R. (1997). Feeling at home at work: life in academic departments. *Qualitative Sociology*, vol. 20, no. 4, p. 517-520
- Weidman, J. C. & Stein, E. L. (2003). Socialization of doctoral students to academic norms. *Research in Higher Education*, vol. 44, no. 6, p. 641-656
- 4-8 dissertations in sociology written in English and defended in a Swedish university
- Booth, W. C; Colomb, G. C; Williams, J. M.; Bizup J. & Fitzgerald, W. T. (2016). *The Craft of Research*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press [Part I: 'Research. Researchers and Readers' and Part II 'Asking Questions, Finding Answers']
- Back, L. (2016). *Academic Diary or Why Higher Education Still Matters*. London: Goldsmiths Press.

Reference literature (in Swedish; to be read by those who can and to be discussed so that everyone can get an idea about the specifics of the Swedish context):

- Alvensson, M. (2003). Avhandling: metatenta eller kunskapsbidrag? I L. Strannegård (red). *Avhandlingen: om att formas till forskare*. Lund: Studentlitteratur (sammanlagt 15 sidor)
- Kärreman, D. (2003) Avhandlingsprojektet som identitetsarbete. I L. Strannegård (red). *Avhandlingen: om att formas till forskare*. Lund: Studentlitteratur (sammanlagt 18 sidor)
- Appel, M. & Bergenheim, Å (2005). *Reflekterande forskarhandledning: om samarbete mellan handledare och doktorand*. Lund: Studentlitteratur [Kap. 1 'I historiens backspegel'; Kap. 2 'Vad är forskarutbildning?' och Kap. 3 'Livet i akademien' inom ramen för bokens del 1; Kap. 1 'Vad är forskarhandledning?' och Kap 2 'Relationen' för bokens del 2 och Kap. 4 'Doktorandens olika stadier' i bokens del 3]
- Skogmyr, I. (2007). *Doktorandpraktikant*. Lund: Studentlitteratur [Kap. 5 'Hur man utvecklas']
- Wetterström, J. (2003). Tankearbetets lärling. I L. Strannegård (red). *Avhandlingen: om att formas till forskare*. Lund: Studentlitteratur

Course schedule, type of meeting and syllabus:

Friday, October 5th 10:15-12:00 (lecture; room 3-0014)

Short introductory lecture to the course, its aims and its design as well as discussion to decide which PhD dissertations will become course literature (based on your own suggestions). Thus, each and every one of you are expected to bring two dissertations with you to our first meeting. Both of them have to be in English; one has to be based on a quantitative study and the other in a qualitative study and/ or one based on a monograph and one based on a compilation of articles. Only dissertations in either sociology or social work can be chosen.

Friday, October 12th 10:15-12:00 (lecture & discussion; room 22-1017)

Lecture about academic life as a graduate student and the peculiarities that surround the role of PhD students within Swedish institutions. In this context, doctoral students are namely students and colleagues at the same time. They are, as such, in an in-between category. This has all kinds of ramifications that doctoral students within this context need to understand. Students are required to do the reading that is in English below. The lecture will cover the Swedish literature, which is not accessible to all participants due to the language barrier. Worth noting, is that this lecture is expected to be interactive since students are expected to ventilate their questions. You are, in other words, expected to have read everything below (even if those of you who do not read Swedish yet are, of course, not expected to have read the bits in Swedish).

- Biebier, J. P. & Worley, L. K. (2006). Conceptualizing the academic life: graduate students' perspectives. *Journal of Higher Education*, vol. 77, no. 6, p. 1009-1035
- McAlpine, L. (2012). Identity trajectories: doctoral journeys from past to present to future. *Australian Universities Review*, vol. 54, no. 1, p. 38-46.
- Thorne, B. & Hochschild, A. R. (1997). Feeling at home at work: life in academic departments. *Qualitative Sociology*, vol. 20, no. 4, p. 517-520
- Weidman, J. C. & Stein, E. L. (2003). Socialization of doctoral students to academic norms. *Research in Higher Education*, vol. 44, no. 6, p. 641-656

Reference literature (in Swedish):

- Alvensson, M. (2003). Avhandling: metatenta eller kunskapsbidrag? I L. Strannegård (red). *Avhandlingen: om att formas till forskare*. Lund: Studentlitteratur (sammanlagt 15 sidor)
- Kärreman, D. (2003) Avhandlingsprojektet som identitetsarbete. I L. Strannegård (red). *Avhandlingen: om att formas till forskare*. Lund: Studentlitteratur (sammanlagt 18 sidor)
- Appel, M. & Bergenheim, Å (2005). *Reflekterande forskarhandledning: om samarbete mellan handledare och doktorand*. Lund: Studentlitteratur [Kap. 1 'I historiens backspegel'; Kap. 2 'Vad är forskarutbildning?' och Kap. 3 'Livet i akademien' inom ramen för bokens del 1; Kap. 1 'Vad är forskarhandledning?' och Kap. 2 'Relationen' för bokens del 2 och Kap. 4 'Doktorandens olika stadier' i bokens del 3]
- Skogmyr, I. (2007). *Doktorandpraktikant*. Lund: Studentlitteratur [Kap. 5 'Hur man utvecklas']
- Wetterström, J. (2003). Tankearbetets lärling. I L. Strannegård (red). *Avhandlingen: om att formas till forskare*. Lund: Studentlitteratur

Friday October 19th 10:15-12:00 (lecture & discussion forum; room 3-0014)

As already stated, the dissertations that will be part of this course's reading list will be chosen during the very first meeting. Each seminar will focus on one dissertation. The student who has suggested the dissertation to be discussed will present the content of the dissertation (max. of 15-20 min.) and the presentation will be followed by a joint discussion of it. Because the idea is that the dissertations will be 'dissected' as testaments of different types of research crafts, you need to become acquainted with the following reading:

- Booth, W. C; Colomb, G. C; Williams, J. M.; Bizup J. & Fitzgerald, W. T. (2016). *The Craft of Research*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press [Part I: 'Research. Researchers and Readers' and Part II 'Asking Questions, Finding Answers']

Thus, this lecture & discussion forum will focus on this particular reading in order to make sure that we all understand the primary premise for our upcoming seminars.

Friday November 2nd 10:15-12:00 (idea seminar; room 2-0025// senior faculty members will join us)

This is the seminar when you will present your *dissertation idea* (see page 3) to an audience comprised of your classmates and a few senior members of faculty. The seminar will entail brief discussions of the research ideas that you are interested on in order to get you to think about your own work in relation to the kind of potential readerships that you could end up aiming for (see parts of book mentioned above).

After this idea seminar, you are all expected to begin your journey toward *crafting* the draft of your research plan and later on into your dissertation proposals. In order to do this, you should rely on Part III and IV of the book above.

Monday November 5th 10:15-12:00 (seminar based on dissertation; room 3-0014)

Seminar on dissertation chosen by Ph.D. Candidate (ADD NAME HERE)

Friday November 9th 10:15-12:00 (seminar based on dissertation; room 2-0025)

Seminar on dissertation chosen by Ph.D. Candidate (ADD NAME HERE)

Monday November 26th 10:15-12:00 (seminar based on dissertation; room 2-0025)

Seminar on dissertation chosen by Ph.D. Candidate (ADD NAME HERE)

Friday November 30th 09:15-12:00 (seminar based on dissertation; room 3-0014)

Seminar on dissertation chosen by Ph.D. Candidate (ADD NAME HERE)

Monday December 17th 9:00-15:00 (dissertation draft seminar; room 7-0050/// senior faculty members will join us)

This is when you will all present your *dissertation drafts* (see page 3) to an audience comprised of fellow students and senior members of faculty. One of the course participants will be assigned the role of discussant for each draft but all drafts will be discussed by all seminar participants.

Friday, January 11th 10:15-12:00 (discussion forum; room 2-0025)

This discussion forum will focus on Les Black's diary. You are all expected to read the book prior to this discussion. By Monday January 15th at the latest you are expected to e-mail to everyone which passages (actual dates) you would like to discuss. Thus, our discussion on Friday January 19th will be based on the diary dates you have chosen.

Friday, January 25th 10:15-12:00 (lecture and discussion forum; room 2-0025)

This lecture will focus on the skills (and approach) needed to manage everyday life as an academic. The lecture will present some of the skills we all need to cope with everyday demands and will give tips on what you can do to develop these. As part of the lecture, you will get to do a survey often used for professors. This will be done in order to raise your awareness regarding the numerous everyday skills that academics need. The idea being that you will get a chance to reflect upon some of the skills you have and/or should acquire during the research program so that you have the best possible preparation for life after you have completed your PhD.

February-May 2018 (individual work to be done in order to craft the research proposal)

The remainder of the spring term is dedicated to individual work in order to revise research drafts and craft the *research proposal*. Just like the draft, these proposals will be discussed at a seminar with an audience comprised of fellow students and senior members of faculty. As is the case in all seminars, one of you will be assigned the role of discussant for a draft but everybody is expected to actively contribute to the discussion. A supervisor will be assigned to you during the spring so you will have their supervision during the crafting process.

Sometime in late May/ early June (dissertation proposal seminar open to faculty members)

This is the seminar when you will present your *dissertation proposal* (see page 3) to an audience comprised of your classmates and a few senior members of faculty. The seminar will entail discussions of your research proposals and the various questions they raise.