



Course syllabus

Faculty of Social Sciences

Department of Social Work

4SA81E Självständigt arbete - examensarbete, 15 högskolepoäng
Master Degree - Dissertation, 15 credits

Main field of study

Social Work

Subject Group

Social Work and Social Welfare

Level of classification

Second Level

Progression

A1E

Date of Ratification

Approved 2009-07-01

Revised 2014-10-27 by Faculty of Social Sciences.

The course syllabus is valid from spring semester 2015

Prerequisites

NO VALUE DEFINED

Objectives

After completing the course, students shall be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

- independently identify and formulate research questions relevant to the subject field of social work
- independently and with a critical approach search for scientific literature within the subject field in question and in a qualified manner use this literature
- independently and in a reflective manner account for theories and previous research relevant to the chosen research problem

Skills and abilities

- independently and in a creative manner plan and by the use of suitable scientific methods collect and process empirical data
- conduct a qualified and stringent analysis of collected data with the support of social scientific theories and link the analysis to the current state of the art within the subject field of social work
- produce an academic paper that meets the academic established requirements on formalities and good linguistic quality
- demonstrate the ability to identify shortages and strengths in their own degree

projects as well as in others', and contribute in an essential manner to a seminar discussion

Assessment ability and approach

- in a detailed manner account for and apply research ethical regulations and agreements

Content

The main element of the course is the writing of a scientific degree project/thesis, comprised of 15 credits within the subject field of social work. The degree project may preferably be related to one of the research domains represented at the department of Social Work, at the Linnaeus University.

Through these studies, students are expected to practice their skills in formulating a research question, plan and conduct an academic study, compile and present the results, and report the assignment in writing. Students shall also at a public discussion and examination seminar defend their own degree project as well as discuss and examine another student's degree project.

Type of Instruction

Teaching is mainly carried out in the form of regular supervision and seminars. The period of supervision is limited to the semester in which the student was initially registered. Exceptions may be granted if special circumstances apply. Instruction is based on active knowledge acquisition, critical thinking and problem solving. Lectures, group discussions and seminars may be held. Teaching is mainly conducted in Swedish. However, the degree project may also be written in English.

Examination

The course is assessed with the grades Fail (U), Pass (G) or Pass with Distinction (VG).

To be awarded a grade of Pass, it is required that the degree project as well as a public discussion and examination of another student's degree project on the advanced level (Master's degree) are assessed with the grade Pass. The final grade of the course is awarded only when all the course components have been approved. To be awarded a grade of Pass with Distinction, it is required that I) the student demonstrates advanced abilities and skills in writing an academic paper by formulating, analysing and reflecting on a research problem, and by answering a research question in a manner that is well in relation to the state of the art in terms of method, theory and the research status within the main subject field of social work. The research problem should give an indication of clear independence and reflective ability, II) that the student demonstrates an advanced ability to, based on one or several relevant theoretical perspectives, argue for and conduct a well performed and thorough analysis of their own collected empirical data and adopt a critical reflective approach to their own conclusions, methodological choices and the chosen theoretical perspectives, III) that the student demonstrates that all the parts included as well as the whole of the thesis are of consistent and high quality (such as the sections of the thesis being clearly linked to the purpose and the questions, in which research problem, theory, method, analysis and results form a whole that is consistent and logical). The degree project may be presented either as a cohesive document in the form of an academic paper or as a scientific article. The degree project is performed individually or in pairs.

To be awarded the grade of Pass, active participation in public discussions of papers is required. Examination takes place at a public discussion of a paper, arranged once every semester, and a retake is offered close to the scheduled examination date. A seminar is arranged once a year for those who have to retake the public discussion. Retake of the exam (a new seminar) includes a new public discussion and examination even though

this may have been approved previously. The degree project shall be submitted electronically in accordance with the department's regulations, to be published in the open access data base (DIVA) on a server belonging to the Linnaeus University. Should there be valid reasons for not publishing the paper, exemption may be granted following a written application to the Head of the Department.

Course Evaluation

A written course evaluation is carried out at the end of the course. The evaluation results are compiled and filed by the department. The results are presented to the students who have completed the course, and to the students at the following course date together with any measures taken.

Required Reading and Additional Study Material

The required reading in connection with the degree project is chosen in consultation with the examiner and based on the topic of the paper.