

Syllabus

for course at advanced level

Independent Research Project in Political Science
Självständigt arbete i statsvetenskap

**30.0 Higher Education
Credits**
30.0 ECTS credits

Course code:	SV7052
Valid from:	Autumn 2014
Date of approval:	2012-04-18
Changed:	2014-05-21
Department	Department of Political Science
Main field:	Political Science
Specialisation:	A2E - Second cycle, contains degree project for Master of Arts/Master of Science (120 credits)

Decision

This syllabus has been approved by the Head of the Department of Political Science, Stockholm University, 2012-04-18.

Date of latest revision, 2014-05-21

Prerequisites and special admittance requirements

A Bachelor of Arts Degree, 180 credits or the equivalent, with a major in Political Science and enrolled on the Master's Programme in Political Science, 120 credits, at the Department of Political Science, Stockholm University.

Course structure

Examination code	Name	Higher Education Credits
7051	Thesis seminar and discussant	3
7052	Master's Thesis	27

Course content

The course aims to develop skills and abilities in the writing and defense of an independent research project. Central components are the formulation of a research problem, choice and application of method and theory, and the implementation of an investigation. The course results in the presentation of a Master's thesis as well

as in performing the role of discussant on another master's thesis.

Learning outcomes

1. Knowledge and understanding

After completion of the course the student is expected to be able to demonstrate:

- * Deeper knowledge of a delimited theoretical and/or empirical political science problem area including understanding of current social scientific debates and research issues in the field;
- * Deeper insight into social science analytical approaches and applicable methods that are relevant to studies in the problem area;
- * Deeper understanding of the scientific approach and the attainment of skills required for Masters-level research, compared with bachelor level advanced political science investigation

2. Skills and abilities

After completion of the course the student is expected to be able to:

- * Critically and systematically analyze and integrate complex information and knowledge within a specific issue area;
- * Independently plan, justify, carry out and evaluate an advanced political science investigation and thus contribute to knowledge development in the area, including the ability to identify and formulate a defined research problem and objectives, describe the research field related to the problem area and the investigation's theoretical premises, identify the material that the investigation requires and carry out a scientifically credible argumentation and analysis using appropriate methods, and critically reflect on the study and its conclusions;
- * Present, discuss and defend the study and its conclusions orally and in writing according to scientifically established guidelines.

3. Judgment and Approach

After completion of the course the student is expected to be able to:

- * Relate the research project's problem area to social science theory, which requires the ability to apply social science theory in scientific analysis and the ability to reflect on the function of this knowledge in the research;
- * Critically evaluate and discuss the political science research and results, which requires the ability to make adequate assessments of both one's own and others' research on the basis of scientific, social and ethical premises.

Education

The course is taught in the form of supervision and seminars. The seminars are compulsory. Information about how absences may be compensated will be distributed at the beginning of the course.

Forms of examination

The first course module, Thesis seminar and discussant, will be graded on the basis of a scale comprising pass and fail.

For the second course module, Master's thesis, a seven steps grading scale will be used for grading. A, B, C, D and E are degrees of a passed grade. F and Fx are degrees of a failed grade. It is possible for a student to supplement an examination if the obtained grade is Fx and information about this possibility is included in the provided course information. Upon being informed of the need for supplement by the examiner, the supplementary task must be submitted within ten working days. If the examination supplement is accepted and has the character of supplementing a lack of understanding, minor misunderstanding, minor errors or too limited discussions for some part, the grade E will be applied. If the supplementary task is accepted and has the character of simple formality corrections, the grades A-E will be applied.

Students who have failed the course twice have the right to request another examiner. This request should be addressed to the department unit that has appointed the examiner. A student who have passed an exam may not take part in a re-examination in order to obtain a higher grade.

If a student receives pass on the first course module the grade on the second course module, Master's thesis, will be the grade that is reported on the course as a whole.

Assessment criteria

In the Master thesis the student is expected to demonstrate the ability to identify, plan, justify, carry out, and critically evaluate a political science research project. The examination of the course also includes an oral defense of the thesis, as well performing the discussant's task on another Master's Thesis. When grading, the following areas of assessment will be considered:

- Delimited and motivated research problem and objectives;
- Knowledge of the field of research related to the problem area and the theoretical premises of the study;
- Method and source material that is justified and appropriate for the study;
- Implementation of the research project, including argumentation, analysis and interpretation of results;
- Integration of different parts of the essay;
- Written and oral presentation and discussion of one's own essay and the oral review and discussion of another student's essay project;
- Independence and a critical approach to the work, including the ability to critically reflect on the study, its various parts and conclusions;
- The essay's relevance and contribution to the research field.

The grading is based on criteria of assessment that will be distributed at the beginning of the course. Examination occurs continuously in conjunction with teaching and/or at the end of the course.

Interim

When this course is repealed or when its content has been significantly modified, the student has the right to be examined according to this syllabus once each semester during a period of three semesters

Limitations

Prerequisites and special admittance requirements:

A Bachelor of Arts Degree (180 ECTS credit points or the equivalent), with a major in political science and enrolled on the Master's Programme in Political Science at the department of Political Science, Stockholm University.

To be registered to the course the student must have completed the following courses:

SV7031/SV7054: Analytical Approaches in Social Science and the Study of Power

SV7035/SV7054: Institutions and governance

and one Method course

Misc

Language of instruction: Swedish and English. Students admitted to the Master's in political science, SPOSO can write the essay and be examined in English or Swedish. Students accepted to the International Master's in political science, STVEO, can only write the essay and be examined in English.

The benchmark for supervision is 16 hours/student. These hours include individual supervision and the time it takes for the supervisor to read the texts that the student provides for these occasions, time for preparation, e-mail correspondence and other communication. Supervision will be provided the first semester the student is enrolled to the course and during that semester. Students who do not finish their essay within the term that they commenced the course are not entitled to more supervision time. However, students always have the right to submit their essay for examination at subsequent scheduled examinations. If there are particular reasons, a student may change supervisors in consultation with the seminar leader. The supervisor is not the examiner. Further information will be provided at the beginning of the course.

The essay is recommended to be a maximum of 50 pages long and contain 15,000 to 20,000 words (usually 35-50 pages, 1.5 line spacing, size 12). This length recommendation encompasses notes, references and bibliography, but not appendices.

Plagiarism

To plagiarize is to imitate or copy another person's work, for instance a text, a picture or a chart, and to describe the material as one's own. Plagiarism is not accepted in the scientific community, the same applies on the Department of Political Science at Stockholm University.

It is therefore critical that you always specify the sources you use by way of citing and referring in a correct way. The master's thesis has the character of a degree project and its authenticity is therefore monitored particularly rigorously.

Required reading

Recommended Reading:

Carroll, Jude and Carl-Mikael Zetterling. 2009. Guiding Students Away from Plagiarism. Stockholm: Kungliga tekniska högskolan. (83 s) <http://people.kth.se/~ambe/KTH/Guidingstudents.pdf>.

Kantola, Johanna. 2008. "Why Do All the Women Disappear?" Gendering Processes in a Political Science

Department,” Gender, Work and Organization 15 (2): 202-225. (23 s) Karolinska Institutet. Source Reliability (1 s). (Will be handed out at the seminar.)

Vedde, Anton and Robert Wachbroit. 2003. “Reliability of Information on the Internet: Some Distinctions,” Ethics and Information Technology 5: 211–215 (5 s).

Weinholtz, Donn and Charles P. Friedman. 1985. Conducting Qualitative Research: Conducting Qualitative Studies Using Theory and Previous Research: A Study Reexamined,” Evaluation & the Health Professions 8 (2): 149-176 (27 s).

Literature on plagiarism

Reference <http://www.plagiarism.org/>

<http://www.bridgewater.edu/WritingCenter/Workshops/PlagiarismCases.htm>