

# Syllabus

for course at advanced level

**Master Thesis in Economics**

**Masteruppsats i nationalekonomi**

**30.0 Higher Education**

**Credits**

**30.0 ECTS credits**

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Course code:</b>      | EC9901  |
| <b>Valid from:</b>       | Spring 2012   |
| <b>Date of approval:</b> | 2009-05-14  |
| <b>Changed:</b>          | 2011-11-10  |
| <b>Department</b>        | Department of Economics   |
| <b>Main field:</b>       | Economics   |
| <b>Specialisation:</b>   | AXX - Second cycle, in-depth level of the course cannot be classified |

## Decision

This syllabus was approved by the Board of the Department of Economics on November 10, 2011.

## Prerequisites and special admittance requirements

Admission to this course requires that the student has (1) enrolled in a Masters Programme in Economics at Stockholm University and (2) has completed the mandatory courses on the program.

## Course structure

| Examination code | Name                              | Higher Education Credits |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 990B             | Master Thesis in Economics        | 27                       |
| 990C             | Opposition and seminar attendance | 3                        |

## Course content

The aim of this course is to provide training in how to critically and systemically analyse economic issues; to demonstrate the ability to critically, independently and creatively identify and formulate issues; to plan, complete and evaluate advanced assignments within specified time frames using appropriate methods, and thereby contribute to the development of knowledge. This is done by conducting an individual study to be presented in writing.

The course essay should be written individually. The essay supervision may take place individually or in seminar form (so-called “workshops”). The structure of the supervision in seminar form is mostly determined by the supervisors themselves, but may, for example, be organised in the following way: supervisors with expertise in the same field, e.g. International Trade, Microeconomics, Macroeconomics or Applied Econometrics, may supervise together a group of students who plan to write about one of these fields. A number of seminar meetings are scheduled throughout the essay semester (4th semester) which all students and supervisors should attend. At the first meeting, the students are expected to present proposals for essay topics. The supervisors help each other steer the students towards relevant and conductible essay projects. The students are expected to participate actively in the seminars by offering opinions on each other’s essays. Each student, however, has one of the supervisors as their formal supervisor. How much supervision takes place outside of the seminars is up to the formal supervisor.

## Learning outcomes

Upon completion of this course, the student is expected to be able to:

- conduct an independent, advanced economic study using a scientific method of analysis without undue delay;
- adopt a critical position in relation to the material used in the study;
- clearly order and present the results of the analysis as well as argue orally and in writing for the validity of his or her own results;
- analyse and evaluate the results of other studies at the same level.

### **Education**

Instruction is given in the form of essay supervision. The student is entitled to ten hours of supervision throughout the course.

### **Forms of examination**

The course is examined on the basis of a written essay and the defence of this essay at a public seminar, opposition on another essay at a public seminar, and through attendance to three additional essay seminars.

In the case of individual supervision, the student is examined by an independent examiner at an examination meeting where the examiner and the supervisor have met beforehand to discuss the essay. At the examination meeting, the student is given about 20 minutes to present his or her essay. Next, the student reviewer will ask questions and offer opinions on the essay for about 20 minutes. The grade is then based on the examiner's assessment of the essay, the discussion with the supervisor prior to the meeting, and on the outcome of the student's presentation and defence of the essay during the meeting.

The process of examination in the case when supervision is done in the form of workshops is in principle the same in the case of individual supervision. The examiner is the other supervisor who attended the same workshop as the student. The grade is based on the same criteria as in the case of individual supervision, as well as on the student's performance during the workshops.

Students will receive letter grades on a seven-point scale related to the learning objectives of the course: Passing grades are A, B, C, D and E, where A is the highest grade and E the lowest. Failing grades are F and Fx, where F is lower than Fx.

Assessment criteria for the essay:

- A (Excellent): Innovative choice of issue and/or interpretation. New and valuable results. Very convincing presentation and argumentation with critical distance to the results of the study. Very well implemented economic theory and empirical data. Good scientific accuracy. No undue delay in conducting the study.
- B (Very Good): Interesting choice of issue and/or interpretation. New and valuable results. Convincing presentation and argumentation with critical distance to the results of the study. Very well implemented economic theory and empirical data. Good scientific accuracy. No undue delay in conducting the study.
- C (Good): Issues, study and analysis are coherent. Partly new results. Fairly convincing presentation and argumentation with critical distance to the results of the study. Well implemented economic theory and empirical data. Scientific accuracy. No undue delay in conducting the study.
- D (Satisfactory): Issues, study and analysis are coherent. Partly new results, but of limited value. Some weaknesses in the presentation and argumentation. Some critical distance to the results of the study. Relevant economic theory and empirical data. Scientific accuracy.
- E (Adequate): Issues, study and analysis are mostly coherent. Partly new results, but of limited value. Weak presentation and argumentation with incomplete critical distance to the results of the study. Fairly relevant economic theory and empirical data.
- Fx (Inadequate): The student fulfils the requirements above for E in principle, but has not met requests to revise the essay.
- F (Totally Inadequate): The essay does not fulfil the requirements for E.

Assessment criteria for the opposition:

- A (Excellent): Very thorough review of another student's essay. Independently performed task. Correct assessment of the work's strengths and weaknesses. Relevant prioritisation of central versus peripheral problems in the essay. Careful check of scientific accuracy performed.
- B (Very Good): Thorough review of another student's essay. Independently performed task. Fairly correct assessment of the work's strengths and weaknesses. Relevant prioritisation of central versus peripheral problems in the essay. Careful check of scientific accuracy performed.
- C (Good): Thorough review of another student's essay. Independently performed task. Uncertainties in the assessment of the work's strengths and weaknesses. Fairly relevant prioritisation of central versus peripheral problems in the essay. Check of scientific accuracy performed.
- D (Satisfactory): Correct review of another student's essay. Possible uncertainties in the assessment of the work's strengths and weaknesses. Some confusion of central versus peripheral problems in the essay. Check of scientific accuracy performed.
- E (Adequate): Fairly correct review of another student's essay. Uncertainties in the assessment of the essay's strengths and weaknesses. Confusion of central versus peripheral problems in the essay. Check of scientific accuracy performed.
- Fx (Inadequate): The student fulfils the requirements above for E in principle, but has not participated in an opposition seminar satisfactorily.
- F (Totally Inadequate): The opposition does not fulfil the requirements for E.

Weighting of course grade:

- A (Excellent): The seminar attendance requirement has been fulfilled, the student has received an E or higher on the opposition and an A on the essay.
- B (Very Good): The seminar attendance requirement has been fulfilled, the student has received an E or higher on the opposition and a B on the essay.
- C (Good): The seminar attendance requirement has been fulfilled, the student has received an E or higher on the opposition and a C on the essay.
- D (Satisfactory): The seminar attendance requirement has been fulfilled, the student has received an E or higher on the opposition and a D on the essay.
- E (Adequate): The seminar attendance requirement has been fulfilled, the student has received an E or higher on the opposition and an E on the essay.
- Fx (Inadequate): The seminar attendance requirement has been fulfilled, but the student has received an Fx on the opposition or on the essay.
- F (Totally Inadequate): The seminar attendance requirement has not been fulfilled or the student has received an F on the opposition or on the essay.

If students fail a course unit and receive the grade Fx or F on an examination, there are no restrictions on how many times they are allowed to retake the examination in order to obtain a grade of E or higher.

### **Interim**

If this course is discontinued, students have the right to be examined on the course once per semester for three further semesters.

### **Required reading**

Arai, Jacobsson, Lundholm and Muren, How to write a master thesis in economics at Stockholm University, latest edition, see the home page and/or the Mondo site.