Stockholm Business School

Stockholm University

Syllabus

for course at first level

Research Methods in Business Administration
Forskningsmetoder i företagsekonomi

7.5 Higher Education Credits
7.5 ECTS credits

Course code:	FE3822
Valid from:	Autumn 2013
Date of approval:	2013-11-04
Department	Stockholm Business School
Main field:	Företagsekonomi
Specialisation:	G1F - First cycle, has less than 60 credits in first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Decision

The syllabus was decided on by the educational committee of the School of Business, Stockholm University, 2013-11-04.

Prerequisites and special admittance requirements

45 credits from Business Studies I and II, or equivalent.

Course structure

Examination code	Name	Higher Education Credits
3822	Research Methods in Business Administration	7.5

Course content

This course focuses the social science research approaches, epistemological concepts, methods, research ethics, and the use of theories and concepts in research. The course constitutes the beginning of the bachelor's thesis semester, the culmination of your undergraduate studies. Case Study Methodology will be in the particular attention of lectures and seminars, as well as in some of the compulsory literature. Course learning activities consist of lectures, seminars, group project presentation and individual study. The lecture series covers the following areas and is based on the research process stages: problematization, literature, philosophy of science, scientific method, analysis and the process of essay writing. During the seminar series the opportunity is given to apply the various parts of the research and writing process. The seminars combine methodological surveys of research articles and practical case study work.

Learning outcomes

Intended Learning Outcomes

The overall aim of the course is to impart knowledge about research methods within the field of business studies and to develop students' ability to design and carry out scientific research studies, with a focus on case studies.

After completing the course students should be able to:

Knowledge and Understanding

1. demonstrate basic knowledge of social science concepts, research approaches and methods;

Skills and Abilities

2. implement a theoretically based discussion of problems of an empirically founded phenomenon;

3. based on a self-formulated objectives select, develop and motivate a research approach and methodology;

4. formulate an empirically feasible research design;

5. show scientific accuracy as well as accuracy and rigor in terms of text processing, and keeping time frames;

Judgment and Approach

6. critically and ethically evaluate business research.

Education

The course consists of a combination of lectures, seminars and group work and requires a significant portion of self-study on the part of students. Assessment for the course will be continuous and is carried throughout the different activities of the course.

The course workload (model: 40 hours per week equivalent to 1,5 ECTS) is allocated as follows:

Teacher-led lectures: 20 hours

Teacher-led seminars: 10 hours

Case study: 20 hours

Self-studies: 110 hours

Assessment: 40 hours

Total workload: 200 hours equivalent to 7,5 ECTS.

The language of instruction is Swedish or English.

Please note that all teaching and learning activities - such as lectures, seminars, assignments and assessment tasks – are carried out in English when the language of instruction is English.

Forms of examination

Assessment for the course will be continuous and is carried throughout the different course activities. Each assessment task is weighted in relation to its importance in the overall assessment of the course. The student's results from the different assessment tasks are added up to a total course score that will then translate into the final grade for the course.

Assessment tasks

The course contains the following weighted assessment tasks

1. Assessment task 1 (TP, a structured proposal for a research project, written in teams of two): assesses intended learning outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; constitutes 60% of total course points.

2. Assessment task 2 (individual MCQ-test): assesses intended learning outcomes 1; constitutes 20% of total course points.

3. Assessment task 3 (individual critical review of a TP): assesses intended learning outcomes 1, 5, 6; constitutes 20% of total course points.

Grading

After completion of the course, students will receive grades on a scale related to the intended learning outcomes of the course. Passing grades are A, B, C, D and E. Failing grades are Fx and F. A grade Fx can be

completed for a grade E.

A course comprises 0–100 course points. Receiving a final passing grade requires ≥ 50 course points. The scale for the final grade is tied to fixed score intervals: A: 90-100; B: 80-89; C: 70-79; D: 60-69; E: 50-59; Fx: 45-49; F: 45. The grades correspond to the total score points a student obtains (over a total of 100) for all the weighted assessment tasks combined as part of the continuous assessment for the course.

Each assessment task is awarded 0–100 points. The score for a single assessment task is the number of points multiplied by its percentage weight, and the combined total of score points for all weighted assessment tasks for the course are added up to a final score between 0 and 100 which then translates into a corresponding final course grade between A and F.

Assessment tasks number 1 and 2 are assessed on a 100-point scale.

Assessment task number 3 is assessed on a 100-point scale in three intervals:

- Pass with distinction: 80% = 100 points.

- Pass: 50% = 50 points.

- Weak: 50% = 0 points.

The student is responsible for completing the course's assessment tasks: that a sufficient amount of course points is earned and a passing course grade is obtained. The course's final assessment task can be taken twice: 1) during the course's first scheduled occasion; and, if a passing result (≥ 50 course points) was not achieved at the first occasion, 2) at the course's second, scheduled occasion. All other assessment tasks are offered once during the course.

A passing grade (A–E) in the course is obtained when a student has achieved ≥ 50 course points.

A failing grade (Fx or F) in the course is obtained when a student has not achieved ≥ 50 course points:

- If 45–49 course points are achieved, a grade Fx is obtained, which can be completed for a grade E within 3 semester weeks after receiving instructions from the course director. If a complementary task is not completed within this time limit, and the course's two final assessment tasks have been accomplished, the course grade Fx is confirmed, implying that the student must re-register for the course and that previously acquired course points are forfeited. Note that first-time registered students have priority access to the seminar groups.

- If 45 course points are achieved, a grade F is obtained, implying that the entire course must be retaken and that previously acquired course points are forfeited.

Re-registration implies that:

- first-time registered students have priority access to the course's group registration;

- the final assessment task can be re-assessed without attendance at any of the course's other learning activities and without points from the course's other assessment tasks accredited.

Students receiving a passing grade may not retake the final examination or complete a previously not completed assessment task to attain a higher grade. A passing grade may not be turned into a failing grade upon the request of a student.

Assessment criteria

Assessment criteria are designed as overall assessments, combined qualitative descriptions of what the student is expected to do in order to demonstrate how well the course's learning outcomes are achieved. The assessment criteria are based upon the general abilities as expressed in the degree objectives of the Higher Education Ordinance (appendix 2, System of Qualifications). The list of abilities below is a compilation of these degree objectives. To pass the course (grade E) students should demonstrate general ability to:

- recall, understand and explain course content, the course subject and its scientific basis and methodology;

- apply course content;

- critically analyse course content;

- problematise course content;

- assess course content in terms of scientific, social, and ethical aspects;

- meet standards of written presentation and formal accuracy.

The following assessment criteria are used to decide to what extent students have demonstrated these abilities and hence fulfil the course's intended learning outcomes, whereby a grading decision can be made. A higher grade-level presupposes the abilities at lower levels.

A (Excellent)

The student demonstrates ability to evaluate and relate to the content of the course from a comprehensive, critically reflective perspective, as well as to transfer and apply insights in new, meaningful contexts.

B (Very Good)

The student demonstrates ability to, from an overarching and coherent perspective of the field, understand and use concepts to explain how different aspects of the course relate to each other, interconnect and become meaningful.

C (Good)

The student demonstrates ability to discuss the content, tasks and complex issues dealt with in the course from several well-developed but mainly independent perspectives.

D (Satisfactory)

The student demonstrates satisfactory ability to discuss the content, tasks and complex issues dealt with in the course in a way that, albeit in-depth and elaborate, is decidedly one-dimensional.

E (Sufficient)

The student demonstrates sufficient ability to discuss the content, tasks and complex issues dealt with in the course in a way that is decidedly one-dimensional.

Fx (Fail)

The student's knowledge, skills and abilities display minor flaws, overall or in significant parts.

F (Fail)

The student's knowledge, skills and abilities display major flaws, overall or in significant parts.

Interim

If the course is discontinued, or its contents are substantially altered, students have the right to be examined according to this syllabus once per semester for three further semesters.

Limitations

This course may not be included in a degree together with a course, taken in Sweden or elsewhere, of identical or partially similar content.

Required reading

Required Reading

- Bryman, Allan (2012) Social Research Methods. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Farquhar, Jillian Dawes (2012) Case Study Research for Business. London: Sage (available as E-book).

- A selection of academic articles (updated each semester, see the study guide).

Recommended Reading

- Resnik, David B. (1998) The Ethics of Science, an introduction. London & New York: Routledge.

- Doyal, Len &Harris, Roger (2013) Empiricism, Explanation and Rationality, Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Sciences. London & New York: Routledge.

- Potter, Elizabeth (2006) Feminism and the Philosophy of Science. London, New York: Routledge.

- Swanborn, Peter (2010/2012) Case Study Research, what, why and how? London: Sage.