

Syllabus

for course at advanced level

Methods in Political Science

Metoder inom statsvetenskapen

15.0 Higher Education

Credits

15.0 ECTS credits

Course code:	SV7096
Valid from:	Autumn 2017
Date of approval:	2017-12-12
Department	Department of Political Science
Main field:	Political Science
Specialisation:	A1N - Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Decision

The syllabus has been approved by the Department Board of the Department of Political Science, Stockholm University, 2017-12-12.

Prerequisites and special admittance requirements

A degree of at least 180 credits, with 90 credits in Political Science, or the equivalent.

English 6.

Course structure

Examination code	Name	Higher Education Credits
9601	Qualitative Methods	15
9602	Quantitative Methods	15

Course content

The course aims to introduce students to methods for a scientific study of politics. The course deals with planning, execution, reporting and evaluation of small research projects in political science. The course illuminates the overall research process in terms of problem formulation, design and data collection, processing and analysis, and evaluation. Within this context, the course provides more advanced theoretical and applied knowledge of a selection of qualitative or quantitative approaches and methods. The course is intended for students who plan to undertake an independent research project in political science for a master's degree or who plan to participate in other qualified research and report work.

The course consists of the following two modules, of which students select one:

Qualitative Methods, 15 credits:

Course module Qualitative methods aims to give students an introduction to, but also an in-depth understanding of, central qualitative methods in the scientific study of politics. The course deals with planning, execution, reporting and evaluation of minor research projects in political science. The course illuminates the overall research process in terms of problem formulation, design and data collection, processing and analysis, and evaluation. Within this context, the course provides more advanced theoretical and applied knowledge of qualitative approaches and methods. Central approaches include process tracing, discourse analysis, idea/argument analysis and political ethnography.

Quantitative Methods, 15 credits:

Course module Quantitative methods aims to give students an introduction to, as well as in-depth understanding of, important quantitative methods in the scientific study of politics. We will deal with the question of how one best describes patterns in, and generalizes from a dataset. A number of central quantitative techniques associated with explanatory approaches to politics are also covered. Some of the main themes are descriptive statistics, statistical inference, regression analysis time-series analysis and experimental approaches. Throughout the course, the techniques will be applied using statistical software.

Learning outcomes

Upon completion of the course students are expected to be able to:

1. Knowledge and understanding

- Show insight into central steps in a political science research process, as well as critically reflect on design and method decisions associated with these steps.
- Demonstrate advanced methodological knowledge within the chosen part of the course (quantitative or qualitative methods), as well as show insight into the methodological grounds that support these approaches.

2. Skills and abilities

- Demonstrate the capacity to motivate and apply the methods that are included in the chosen part of the course (quantitative or qualitative methods) in a consistent and for political science research adequate way.
- Demonstrate the capacity to generate, analyze, interpret and evaluate quantitative or qualitative data in a consistent and for political science research adequate way.

3. Evaluation and Approach

- Demonstrate the capacity within the chosen part of the course (quantitative or qualitative methods) to assess research with respect to relevant scientific, coherent and ethical aspects.

Upon completion of course module Qualitative Methods, 15 credits, students are expected to be able to:

1. Knowledge and understanding

- Show insight into central steps in a political science research process based on qualitative methods, as well as critically reflect on design and method decisions associated with these steps.
- Account for central qualitative approaches and methods used in political science research, as well as the methodological grounds that support these approaches.

2. Skills and abilities

- In a consistent manner motivate and apply the qualitative approaches and methods that are included in the course for data collection and analysis.
- Interpret results based on the qualitative methods included in the course in oral and written form.

3. Evaluation and Approach

- Critically reflect on and discuss alternative qualitative approaches, methods and methodological choices in relation to a given research problem.
- Evaluate and assess the validity of existing qualitative research with respect to relevant scientific, societal and ethical aspects.

Upon completion of course module Quantative Methods, 15 credits, students are expected to be able to:

1. Knowledge and understanding

- Show insight into central techniques in quantitative analysis, and be able to describe the assumption underlying these techniques

2. Skills and abilities

- Be able to interpret the results of analyses using the methods covered by this course in written form.
- Apply the methods covered by this course using statistical software

3. Evaluation and Approach

- Evaluate the societal importance of results from quantitative methods included in the course
- Show the ability to discuss advantages and drawbacks of alternative quantitative approaches to a given research problem
- Evaluate existing quantitative research

Education

The course consists of lectures and seminars.

The seminars are mandatory to attend and it is also mandatory to hand in written seminar assignments. Absence from a maximum of two seminars can be compensated. More information about how to compensate for absence will be provided at the beginning of the course.

The course description is available one month before the course starts at the latest.

The language of instruction is English.

Forms of examination

a) Course module Qualitative methods, 15 cr, is examined through two written exams.

Course module Quantitative methods, 15 cr, is examined through two written exams.

When grading the students on each module, the grades from the two written exams will be given equal weight.

b) Grades will be set according to a sevenpoint scale related to the learning objectives of the course:

A = Excellent
B = Very good
C = Good
D = Satisfactory
E = Adequate
Fx = Inadequate
F = Totally Inadequate

c) Students will be informed of the written grading criteria when the course starts.

d) In order to pass the course, students must receive a grade of E or higher on all examinations in either course module Qualitative methods or Quantitative methods, complete all mandatory assignments and fulfil the attendance requirement.

e) At least two examination opportunities should be offered for each time the course is given. During a semester when the course is not given, at least one examination opportunity should be offered.

Students who receive the grade Fx or F twice by the same examiner are entitled to have another examiner appointed for the next examination, unless there are special reasons to the contrary. Such requests should be made to the Director of Studies.

Students who receive the grade E or higher may not retake the examination to attain a higher grade.

f) The completion of a supplementary assignment in order to convert the grade Fx into a passing grade may be permitted if the student is close to meeting the criteria for a passing grade. The assignment should be submitted within a week of the examiner notifying the student of the need to complete a supplementary assignment. Adequate corrections of simple mistakes related to formatting will be graded using the grades A-E. Adequate corrections of flaws related to understanding will receive the grade E.

Interim

When the syllabus is discontinued or when the content has been significantly modified, students have the right to be examined according to this syllabus once each semester during a transition period of three 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.

The course may not be included in a degree together with SV7010 Research Design or SV7056 Research Design, in English.

Course module Qualitative methods may not be included in a degree together with SV7003 Discourse

Analysis, SV7014 the Study of Political Ideas and Textual Analysis, SV7015 Interactive Methods or SV7016 Comparative and Case Study Method.

Course module Quantitative methods may not be included in a degree together with SV7019 Quantitative Methods.

Misc

The course is mandatory within the International Master's Programme in Political Science and electable within the International Master's Programme in Environmental Social Science.

Required reading

The course literature list will be published on the website of the Department at least two months before the course starts.

<http://www.statsvet.su.se/english/education/courses-and-programmes/second-level/advanced-level-courses>