



Faculty of Social and Life Sciences

Programme Study Plan

Social Analysis and Organizing

Programme Code: SGSOG

Programme Title: Social Analysis and Organizing

Credits/ECTS: 180

Approval: The programme study plan was approved by the Board of the Faculty of Social and Life Sciences on 16 November 2011 (Dnr FAK3 2011/233), and is effective from the autumn semester of 2012.

Language of instruction: Swedish

Degree Level: Bachelor's

Qualifications: General

Prerequisites General admission requirements, plus either
- field-specific eligibility A5 (Mathematics 2a or 2b or 2c, Social science 1b or 1a1 + 1a2) or
- field-specific eligibility 5 (Mathematics B and Social science A).

Elective programme courses may have different admission requirements.

Introduction

The programme Social Analysis and Organizing is designed to educate analysts with the skills to handle and produce knowledge of complex social processes related to the theme organizing. The disciplinary base is sociology and social psychology.

On the whole, the programme rests on three pillars: the organizing perspective, public sociology and departmental research.

Organizing is a key programme concept. Organizing refers to the processes in which people together create formal and informal organisations and networks. The concept organizing focuses on the constant negotiations through which groups are formed, changed and dispersed. This is an ongoing process in which people strive to create order and meaning in a changeable and complex world.

Programme students acquire knowledge to analyse organizing: knowledge of society, the individual in society, social change and complex social processes. The knowledge can be described as focusing on social organizing; how individuals are affected by, contribute to and resist these processes; how society has changed and keeps changing and how the processes of change are managed; and finally, the current increase of societal complexity. All these aspects involve organizing and social analysts can contribute understanding, knowledge and solutions to all of them.

Adopting an organizing perspective does not mean acquiring knowledge of solutions to be applied to different contexts. Rather, it is a matter of producing knowledge of an organisation and then come up with local solutions and methods for improving it. This is why the programme educates reflecting and critical social analysts for a changing and multifaceted society, in which large-scale, collective planning has become increasingly problematic.

The programme is also inspired by public sociology, a concept which has led to an internationally new interest in the social relevance of sociology, in which sociology as the guarantor of civic society, along with the state and market, exerts an influence on societal knowledge formation. The dominance of state and market means that a certain kind of knowledge is privileged in terms of resources and research at the expense of other knowledge areas. Public sociology clarifies the relation between power structures and knowledge as well as how social changes affect knowledge in our time. One example of this is the way in which the increasing economic and cultural influences of previously poor countries call for social science theories that are not based on Western prerogatives, or how women's inroad into the academic world has changed the research focus.

Central to public sociology is the conception of knowledge. The realisation that knowledge and power are closely connected has led to the emergence of a special research praxis in sociology and social psychology, based on the knowledge tradition that challenges the notion of objective research and instead builds on the idea that social analysts must compile other actors' perspectives on a phenomenon, while clarifying their own position. This is a constructivist knowledge conception, which is seen as a democratisation process.

Apart from being based on a specific view of knowledge, the programme has an emphasis on practical research and the students are expected to cooperate with the researchers in the department and conduct investigations of their own defined problems. Departmental research includes social media, normality, emotions, and gender in organizing and social interaction.

Investigations can also be in the form of commissioned research that students negotiate with external parties. The programme also includes an analytical degree project for which students are encouraged to cooperate with external actors. Students learn not only to produce knowledge but also to evaluate and critique it. Programme courses emphasise that knowledge rests on societal interests and therefore lend themselves to sociological analysis.

On completion of the programme, students can move on to Master-level studies in regional development, the social sciences, or project management.

The region concept is thematised naturally as a sociological and social psychological object of study in programme courses. The reason is that the organizing perspective is central to the understanding of the complex processes involved in maintaining regions as civic, cultural and identity constructions. Public sociology aims to spread sociology to different public areas; one such public area is the population in our region. The object of study in some of the research that the students can participate in is region. Finally, the region is an important aspect of the knowledge of society that the students are expected to learn more about. Consequently, students have the opportunity to apply for admission to the doctoral programme in sociology at the faculty graduate school for regional development

The sociological and social psychological competencies acquired are on demand in a wide range of professions and graduates can work as an analyst, investigator, behaviourist, researcher, method supporter, marketer, coach, or business developer. Future employers are to be found in the public and private sectors as well as non-profit organisations and society at large. Students also learn how to identify problems and communicate knowledge, which is the very basis for building networks and developing a consultancy business.

Programme aims

First-cycle courses and study programmes shall develop:

- the ability of students to make independent and critical assessments
- the ability of students to identify, formulate and solve problems autonomously, and
- the preparedness of students to deal with changes in working life.

In addition to knowledge and skills in their field of study, students shall develop the ability to:

- gather and interpret information at a scholarly level
- stay abreast of the development of knowledge, and
- communicate their knowledge to others, including those who lack specialist knowledge in the field.

(1 Ch. 8§ Higher Education Act, SFS 1992:1434)

Upon completion of the study programme, students should be able to (Higher Education Ordinance 1993:100, outcomes adapted to programme content):

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate knowledge of classic and contemporary sociological and sociopsychological theories with special regard to organizing,
- demonstrate knowledge of sociological and sociopsychological research methods and quantitative and qualitative applications,
- demonstrate awareness of current research issues,
- demonstrate specialised knowledge in an area of sociology or sociopsychology.

Competence and skills

- demonstrate ability to formulate and argue for a sociological and sociopsychological relevant problem and select established research questions from research literature relating to organizing,
- demonstrate ability to search for, gather, evaluate, analyse and critically interpret relevant information to the problem,
- demonstrate ability to present and discuss sociological and sociopsychological themes and arguments in writing,
- demonstrate ability to present and discuss acquired knowledge to different audiences orally.

Judgement and approach

- demonstrate ability to reflect on and assess central theoretical, methodological and ethical aspects of sociology and sociopsychology,
- demonstrate insight into the relation between sociological and sociopsychological research and other social practices such as political decision-making,
- demonstrate ability to consider and reflect on ethical aspects of research.

Independent project

For a Bachelor's degree students are required to:

- independently complete a sociological or sociopsychological study with advanced application of selected methods and theories,
- write a thesis meeting academic demands.

Programme structure

The programme Social Analysis and Organizing comprises six semesters.

Instruction is twofold: Firstly, the aim of courses is to provide knowledge in four areas: society, the individual, social changes and complex social processes. The first four semesters are thematised according to this division, while the fifth semester is elective and the sixth is intended to synthesize and apply acquired knowledge and skills. Secondly, the courses can be divided into subject-specific teaching methodology: introductory courses, theoretical and thematic courses and methods

All introductory courses take place in the first semester and provide understanding of organizing as a research area and of the subjects sociology and sociopsychology, thus offering a frame of reference for the courses to come. Students are equipped with tools to conduct group and project work knowledgeably, and the students practice group and project methods throughout the programme and many examination components are based on this type of student cooperation.

Instruction is designed to stimulate theoretical understanding as well as the ability to use and apply scientific knowledge. The theoretical frame is primarily derived from sociology and social psychology and students are expected to achieve not only theoretical understanding but also generally to develop abilities to read, understand and process theoretical and scientific texts by way of lectures, discussions and hand-in assignments.

Application of theory is ongoing in methods courses and in the examination format of the thematic courses. In the recurring seminars students also have the opportunity to discuss and constructively comment on each other's texts

The methods components aim to prepare students for the future professional practice and also for further study at Master's or Doctoral levels. The methodological courses are organised with a view to successive specialisation and to focus on different stages in the research process of sociological as well as sociopsychological investigation methods, including interview, conversation and observation methods. There are also elements of practical project and improvement work.

Instruction and examination of the thematic courses are designed to prepare students for making contributions to knowledge in a specifically delimited area and to involve them in departmental research. An important aspect of these courses is that the theme studied is related to the issue of organizing. Students will meet researchers and relevant research in the area and be assigned tasks such as data collection or analysis

Most course modules involve analysis in class and examination, requiring students to use theories in the analysis of given data.

Beyond theory application, students must also reflect on the more general connections between theory, method and the practical conditions of knowledge formation. Students are encouraged to create networks and work with projects to produce the knowledge required. Examination formats can include tasks that encourage the students to negotiate a problem with an external actor, use sociological/sociopsychological research practice to solve the problem and report to external partner.

The emphasis is on laboratory work, such as various role plays, a common method in social psychology, which help students to understand other people in a given situation and open up for sociopsychological and sociological reflection and analysis. The laboratory work also includes, for instance, site visits to interesting environments, observation of social interaction, short interviews. Guest lecturers will share their work experiences, which will give an overview of relevant empirical fields.

The regular and supervised writing workshops offered give students opportunity to develop creative writing skills. In some courses the workshops can be a component in assessment. Text production is a central part of the programme and students are introduced to techniques for conscious, qualitative and pleasurable writing.

Text production can also be linked to social media through, for instance, a joint student blog. The benefit of this is to allow them to test and reflect on collective knowledge production and knowledge dissemination.

Students must relate knowledge to themselves to make it vivid and relevant. But they will also learn the methods and techniques of empathy with and understanding of others. Pedagogically speaking, self-reflection and empathy are mutually inclusive: it is through self-reflection that students incorporate knowledge while achieving the distance that allows them to relate their own situation to that of others.

Many opportunities for career planning are also included, offering the chance to reflect on career choices and how to achieve them. On these occasions, advice on future employment is given, along with hands-on instruction on CV writing, for instance.

International student and teacher exchange is important for the programme's research updating and for its relevancy to a global labour market, which is why students are encouraged to spend the fifth semester at a partner university abroad.

The concluding degree project involves investigating and answering a question that the student has formulated independently. Students are encouraged to carry out the project in conjunction with an external partner.

Programme content

The programme Social Analysis and Organizing comprises six semesters and rests on the disciplinary base of sociology and social psychology. It is imbued by issues of the organizing perspective, public sociology and departmental research and centres on knowledge of society, the individual in society, social change and complex social processes. The first four semesters are devoted to one of these areas respectively.

In the first year, students are introduced to sociological and sociopsychological thinking to ensure that they get the necessary foundation to develop the so called sociological gaze, that is, the ability to see everyday phenomena in terms of their meaning and position in relation to social processes with an emphasis on knowledge of society and the individual in society. Students learn about the organizing of society and individuals' social identities, interaction and resistance.

The second year is thematic, involving the students in research practice, in-depth study of organizing in different thematically demarcated areas and applying tools in their own investigations. The emphasis is on knowledge of social change and complex social processes.

Courses in the fifth term are optional. Students can choose to study in another department, university or partner university abroad, or complete practical placement at a workplace of their own choice.

In the final semester students synthesise, clarify and further develop their theoretical knowledge of organizing and quantitative and qualitative methodology, and combine theory and method in a research design for an investigation. The idea is also that courses in this semester should take note of what the students learnt in their optional studies and relate this to programme content and aims.

Below a detailed description of programme content is provided.

Semester 1: Social organizing, public sociology and research practice

The first semester is designed to give students a basic idea of programme content, disciplinary base and the theme organizing through theoretical studies and exercises.

The first course is an introduction to the theory and practice of the subjects sociology and social psychology. This is followed by an introductory course in organizing with discussions on central concepts and laboratory work involving investigations and relating experiences to knowledge. The two courses also include the study of how principal Swedish social institutions are organised.

The methods course Roads to Knowledge provides basic knowledge of the theory of science, the different stages in the research process and methodological problems pertaining to sociological and sociopsychological investigations. The methods course gives feedback to

organizing through reflections on investigations. It also aims to give students a basis for reflection and assessment regarding how to deal with research ethical issues.

The course Public Sociology, Research Environment and Practice introduces students to sociological research at the university and gives opportunity to discussing with researchers and to conduct research-related laboratory work. They also reflect on the relation between context, power and knowledge formation from a public sociology perspective

Courses:

The Basics of Sociology 7.5 ECTS cr

Organizing 7.5 ECTS cr

Roads to Knowledge 7.5 ECTS cr

Public Sociology, Research Environment and Practice 7.5 ECTS cr

Semester 2: The Individual in Society

The second semester provides the tools necessary for understanding the individual in society, how individuals are affected, interact and resist. A theoretical course linking society and the individual by means of the concepts organizing, categorisation and resistance opens the semester. Students study theories on how individuals are organised by society through categorisation and how they organise resistance. Then follows a further theoretical course related to departmental research on interaction and strategic action based on and introducing social psychology. The third course is a methods course with an emphasis on students' knowledge and skills in qualitative and quantitative methods. The focus is on theory of science and data collection. Students conduct a minor investigation and discuss theory of science in relation to their own research.

The semester is concluded with an in-depth study of the role of knowledge formation in society and public sociology arguments. The concept of knowledge is problematised from different perspectives parallel to the students' involvement in external tasks and activities. There is a certain focus on providing an overview of the organisation of some major external fields of activity.

Courses:

Organizing, Categorising and Resisting 7.5 ECTS cr

Social Interaction and Strategies 7.5 ECTS cr

The Scientific Method 7.5 ECTS cr

Public Sociology 7.5 ECTS cr

Semester 3: Social Change

In the third semester thematic courses deal with social change through three central examples: demographic change, media and technology, and globalisation. The semester starts with analysis and discussion of the current and historical changes of Swedish society with the help of national and international demographic data. This course has a special emphasis on the demographic changes facing Swedish society, and the role of the region in change processes. In the second course the impact of the media on the changes of social space is analysed, especially in terms of the emergence of the social media. The course also includes a component on technology and social change research.

The third course broadens students' knowledge and understanding of organizing by introducing a global perspective. It also offers insight into how local, regional and other processes are

affected by globalisation. The semester concludes with an independent project which can be included in a University Diploma.

Courses:

Social Change in a Demographic Perspective 7.5 ECTS cr
Media, Technology and Social Space Changes 7.5 ECTS cr
Global Perspectives and Processes 7.5 ECTS cr
Project on Social Analysis and Organizing 7.5 ECTS cr

Semester 4: Producing Knowledge of Complex Social Processes

The fourth semester focuses on complex processes. These are processes that cannot be described in a single theory but requires interaction between several theories and methods. Students learn to reflect on and problematise the acquired knowledge and skills.

The semester is divided into two thematic courses. The first has a focus on complex processes at the societal or global level, while the second investigates knowledge formation and the conditions of change efforts in different types of organisations. The latter course centres on business development and evidence-based practice as examples of change efforts. Students learn to use different kinds of management to form knowledge, find solutions to specific problems and implement them. Research and theory on management and change are related to practical exercises in order to provide tools for reflection and develop students' abilities to lead projects and improvements in organisations.

Both courses include examples from current research, for instance, research on network processes, emotions in organisations, environmental sociology understanding of the interaction between environmental and social systems, and so on. Theory, method and laboratory work alternate to allow students to discuss sociology and sociopsychology as the theoretical frame for knowledge formation in contexts characterised by complex processes.

Courses:

A Complex World 15 ECTS cr
Organisations, Organizing Processes and the Social Analyst 15 ECTS cr

Semester 5: Optional courses

Courses in the fifth term are optional. Students can choose to study in another department, university or partner university abroad. Political science, human geography and environment science are three examples of subjects that students can choose to study. The idea is that they can acquire knowledge of other processes than social ones—political, geographical or ecological—to enrich the last semester and relate to the programme content. Students also have the opportunity to complete practical placement at a workplace of their own choice.

Semester 6: Independent specialisation

The sixth semester includes a summing up and an independent project. Students who have studied elective courses in the fifth semester or completed practical placement have the chance to relay their knowledge to other students and relate it to programme content and aims. The last courses will be adjusted to accommodate this knowledge to strengthen students' abilities to analyse the complex interaction of social processes and other courses of events.

The semester starts with a theoretical course designed to sum up, complement, compare and problematise the theories of organizing addressed in the programme, thus developing and deepening students' abilities to acquire, compare and use theory

The course Understanding and Analysis is a methodology and methods specialisation in social science research with regard to generalisation, conclusions, explanatory approaches and the role of theory in research with a special emphasis on qualitative and quantitative data material. Students are expected to reinforce their skills in adopting a reflexive and critical approach through the alternation between methodology and analysis. The course Degree Project in Sociology is an independent work giving the students the opportunity to produce their own knowledge under supervision. Students are encouraged to complete the project in conjunction with external partners.

Courses:

Theories of Organizing and Complexity 7.5 ECTS cr

Understanding and Analysis 7.5 ECTS cr

Degree Project in Sociology 15 ECTS cr

Degree title

Bachelor of Social Science. Major: Sociology

Transfer of credits

Students have the right to transfer credits from other universities in Sweden or abroad. The recognition of previous education as credit for part of a course is subject to approval by the examiner. The recognition of previous education as credit for an entire course is subject to approval by Student Centre officers.

Additional information

Scope

The scope of the education is stated in terms of the number of credits earned for full-time studies in an academic year of 40 weeks, which corresponds to 60 ECTS credits (Higher Education Ordinance, Ch. 6, section 2, SFS 2006:1053).

Moving up

To be admitted to programme courses, the students must meet the special requirements stated in the respective course syllabus.

Priority access

Programme students have priority access to courses offered at Karlstad University in accordance with the general rules applying to programme students at the university.

Studying at another university

Students who wish to study courses at other universities in Sweden or abroad must make their own application and arrangements.

Local regulations

Local regulations for the Bachelor and Master levels at Karlstad University stipulate the rights and obligations of staff and students.

Expulsion

As stipulated in the Higher Education Act Ch. 2, sect. 6, SFS 1992: 1434, and Regulations of Student Expulsion from Higher Education SFS 1987: 915, a student who suffers from mental disorder, abuses alcohol or drugs, or has been guilty of a serious offence endangering others or valuable property can be expelled until further notice. In such a case, the Rector files a complaint to the Expulsion Board of higher education, which investigates the matter and makes a decision. A decision of expulsion shall always entail that the student must discontinue the education until further notice. The Expulsion Board of Higher Education is responsible for all Swedish higher education institutions.

Attachment: Programme Outline

Outline: Social Analysis and Organizing, 180 ECTS cr

Semester 1			
The Basics of Sociology 7.5 ECTS cr	Oganising 7.5 ECTS cr	Roads to Knowledge 7.5 ECTS cr	Public Sociology, Research Environment and Practice 7.5 ECTS cr

Semester 2			
Organizing, Categorising and Resisting 7.5 ECTS cr	Social Interaction and Strategies 7.5 ECTS cr	The Scientific Method 7.5 ECTS cr	Public Sociology 7.5 ECTS cr

Semester 3			
Social Change in a Demographic Perspective 7.5 ECTS cr	Media, Technology and Social Space Changes 7.5 ECTS cr	Global Perspectives and Processes 7.5 ECTS cr	Project on Social Analysis and Organizing 7.5 ECTS cr

Semester 4	
A Complex World 15 hp	Organisations, Organizing Processes and the Social Analyst 15 ECTS cr

Semester 5
Optional courses 30 ECTS cr

Semester 6		
Theories of Organizing and Complexity 7.5 ECTS cr	Understanding and Analysis 7.5 ECTS cr	Degree Project in Sociology 15 ECTS cr

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