



Faculty of Arts and Social Science
Human Geography

Syllabus

Research Methods and Essay in Social Sciences

Course Code:	KGGB53
Course Title:	Research Methods and Essay in Social Sciences <i>Samhällsvetenskaplig metod och uppsats</i>
Credits:	15
Degree Level:	Undergraduate level
Progressive Specialisation:	First cycle, has less than 60 credits in first-cycle course/s as entry requirements (G1F)

Major Field of Study:

KGA (Human Geography)

SKA (Political Science)

SOA (Sociology)

Course Approval

The syllabus was approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Science 2016-09-06, and is valid from the Spring semester 2017 at Karlstad University.

Prerequisites

At least 30 ECTS cr for semesters 1 and 2 of the Spatial and Social Planning Programme SGSAM, or equivalent

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

- give an account of different methods in the social science research field,
- give an account of central theories in a chosen social science area linked to spatial planning,
- identify and describe different phases, problems and situations of choice in quantitative and qualitative research processes,
- describe and give an account of basic differences between various perspectives of knowledge in classic methodological social science approaches.

Competence and skills

- use basic qualitative and quantitative methods
- seek and critically evaluate social science literature,
- formulate social science problems,
- use basic theories of social science and spatial planning to clarify and study different problems,
- apply methods and tools in the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data,
- present research work orally and in writing.

Judgement and approach

- critically review and evaluate qualitative and quantitative methods and their application in social science studies,
- evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of using different social science and spatial planning theories to study and clarify problems,
- reflect on ethical aspects of the research process, and
- critically review academic works on the basis of epistemological, methodological and ethical approaches.

Content

The course comprises two parts: methods, 7.5 ECTS cr and an independent research project, 7.5 ECTS cr.

The methods unit deals with social science research traditions and the different phases of the research process, including methods for collecting and processing data and the criteria of selection preceding the data collection. Students apply various methods components with an emphasis on the stages of the research process that are relevant to their independent project such as problem formulation, theory linking, choice of method, empirical collection, and presentation of result and analysis.

The independent project is linked to previous research and their own collected material. Students work with a real problem from different perspectives, that is, the individual, society and the environment and from various disciplinary perspectives such as human geography, political science, and sociology.

Instruction is in the form of lectures, mandatory seminars and supervision.

Reading List

See separate document.

Examination

Assessment of the methods unit is based on individual hand-in assignments, group tasks presented and discussed in seminars. The independent project, presented and discussed in a mandatory seminar, is assessed on the basis of its quality in content and form. Students are also required to review a fellow-student's project.

The number of examination opportunities is limited to five due to limited resources

Grades

One of the grades Fail (U), Pass (G), or Distinction (VG) is awarded in the examination of the course.

Quality Assurance

Follow-up relating to learning conditions and goal-fulfilment takes place both during and upon completion of the course in order to ensure continuous improvement. Course evaluation is partly based on student views and experiences obtained in accordance with current regulations and partly on other data and documentation. Students will be informed of the result of the evaluation and of any measures to be taken.

Course Certificate

A course certificate will be provided upon request.

Additional information

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

Required course for the Spatial and Social Planning Programme SGSAM 180 ECTS cr.