



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Media and Communication Studies

Syllabus

Social Media & Social Theory

Course Code: MKGA92

Course Title: Social Media & Social Theory
Sociala medier och samhällsteorier

Credits: 7.5

Degree Level: Undergraduate level

Progressive Specialisation: First cycle, has only upper-secondary level entry requirements (G1N)

Major Field of Study:

MKA (Media and Communication Studies)

Course Approval

The syllabus was approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences 2018-08-22, and is valid from the Spring semester 2019 at Karlstad University.

Prerequisites

Registered for MKGA02 Introduction to Media and Communication Studies 15 ECTS cr, and MKGA03 Text, Communication and Organisation 15 ECTS cr, or equivalent.

Learning Outcomes

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

- summarise the evolution of social networking platforms since the late 1990s in terms of functionalities and business models under different cultural circumstances,
- compare major social theory concepts and approaches explaining the impact of social media in terms of economics, politics, and social relations,
- reflect on their own media practices with regard to different social theory perspectives,
- problematise how the design and function of different social media platforms frame and affect social relations, and
- give an account of how social relations can be explored by means of digital media analyses and discuss their potentials and limitations.

Content

The course deals with the representation of social relations in networked digital media with an emphasis on the corresponding impact on social interactions. It provides an overview of the development of social media platforms and discusses the evolution of new media practices as a result of these platforms. The focus is on the ways social theories frame, explain and reflect upon social media phenomena. Furthermore, the course deals with the means of connecting theoretical approaches to data analyses. Four different perspectives, namely political economy, participation and activism, values inscribed in technology, and everyday media practices, are introduced as a basis for discussing the development of social media. Instruction is in the form of lectures and seminars, and

individual/group assignments.

Reading List

See separate document.

Examination

Assessment is based on a group assignment, presented orally and in writing and discussed in a mandatory seminar, and on individual written assignments as well as a written exam. Assessment is also based on oral group peer review performance.

Grades

One of the grades Distinction (VG), Pass (G), or Fail (U) 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.