



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Media and Communication Studies

Syllabus

Digital Analysis Methods

Course Code:	MKGB91
Course Title:	Digital Analysis Methods <i>Digitala analysmetoder</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:
MKA (Media and Communication Studies)

Course Approval

The syllabus was approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences 2019-02-07, and is valid from the Autumn semester 2019 at Karlstad University.

Prerequisites

Registration on the courses MKGA91 Media Audiences in the Digital Age, 7.5 ECTS credits, MKGA92 Social Media and Social Theory, 7.5 ECTS credits, and MKGA93 Strategic Communication and Organisation Analysis, 7.5 ECTS credits, or equivalent

Learning Outcomes

Module 1 Methods Introduction, 5 ECTS cr

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

- give an account of the research methods used in media and communication studies,
- give an account of the steps of the research process, and
- identify and give arguments for the most suitable method(s) to investigate research problems in media and communication studies,

Module 2 Digital Research Methods, 10 ECTS cr

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

- describe the possibilities and problems of conducting research-based analyses in digital environments,
- plan, design, and carry out analyses in digital media based on clearly defined scholarly or strategic objectives,
- collect and process internet data manually, or in partly or fully automated ways, with the use of basic script programming and data processing,
- identify and employ relevant tools for accessing, processing, analysing, and visualising data,
- assess the quality of analyses in terms of their technical configurations and analytical potentials, and their contribution to deeper understanding of social interaction online, and
- argue for the choice of analytical tools regarding both concrete research questions and a broader outlook on the philosophy of science.

Content

Students develop skills in investigating research problems in media and communication studies. The focus is on the challenges of doing research in digital environments and practical questions such as the choice of analytical tools, accessibility of data, economic resources and technological possibilities. An overarching question is how to strategically combine several methods in order to arrive at a deeper and more complex understanding of online phenomena. Students also reflect on the methodological aspects of data collection and data analysis from philosophical and historical perspectives.

The course comprises two modules:

Module 1 Methods Introduction, 5 ECTS cr

Students acquire knowledge of the steps of the research process and methodological problems in media and communication research. The module introduces different methods in relation to all stages of the research process. The emphasis is on research design and methods for data collection and result presentation, rather than analysis. Ethical issues relevant to research and development are treated. The module is based on application opportunities and practical exercises.

Module 2 Digital Research Methods 10 ECTS cr

The module introduces methods for investigating social interaction in digital environments. The focus is on accessing content (text, images, sound, films) on platforms, and measuring instruments and software designed to map and analyse social interaction in digital environments. Students develop skills in handling analytical tools, data sampling, basic statistics, network analysis, and data visualisation. The focus is on the explorative use of such approaches, with an emphasis on flexibility and adaptability in relation to shifting research perspectives and requirements. It also provides an introduction to current methodological debates in fields such as digital methods, digital humanities, and Big Data. Instruction is in the form of lectures, workshops, seminars, and supervised group work.

Reading List

See separate document.

Examination

Module 1 is assessed on the basis of a group work presented orally and in writing at a mandatory seminar, a written exam, and performance as peer reviewer of the work of another group.

Module 2 is assessed on the basis of a group work presented orally and in writing at a mandatory seminar, an individual hand-in assignment presented orally and in writing at a mandatory seminar, and performance as peer reviewer of both group and individual assignments.

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.