



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Media and Communication Studies

Syllabus

Data, Power and Ethics

Course Code:	MKGB92
Course Title:	Data, Power and Ethics <i>Data, makt och etik</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 2021-09-13, and is valid from the Spring semester 2022 at Karlstad University.

Prerequisites

Registered for MKGB90 Technical Foundations of Digital Media and Digital Design (15 ECTS credits) and MKGB91 Digital Analysis Methods (15 ECTS credits), or equivalent

Learning Outcomes

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

1. differentiate between different categories of data with regard to ownership, accessibility, and the interests of different actors,
2. identify and describe ethical and policy-based frameworks that apply to data analysis,
3. critically discuss problematic cases of data analysis with a focus on issues of ethics and power,
4. reflect on the relationship between data, ethics, and society in terms of privacy and surveillance, discrimination and information asymmetries, the social construction of data, the biases of algorithms, and the instrumentalisation of statistics, and

5. evaluate societal conditions for data analysis with regard to furthering diversity, equality, inclusion, sustainability and fairness.

Content

The course deals with critical and ethical issues arising from the use and interpretation of data. It blends social and historical perspectives with case examples to help students develop a workable understanding of current ethical issues in data analysis. Students are acquainted with discourses concerning bias in socio-technical systems, algorithmic openness and accountability, ideologies of data, information asymmetries and the current political economy of data. Frameworks, concepts, and theories are discussed in order for the students to appreciate the perspectives of multiple actors involved in data analysis and understand how data are socially constructed. A central concern of the course is how the benefits of data analysis can be mobilised beyond notions of efficiency, automation and rationalisation in order to advance a more democratic and sustainable development of society.

Reading List

See separate document.

Examination

Assessment of learning outcomes 1-5 is based on two individual written hand-in assignments, a group assignment presented in writing and orally at a mandatory seminar, and on the group performance as peer reviewers of the project of another group, both orally and in writing.

If students have a decision from Karlstad University entitling them to Targeted Study Support due to a documented disability, the examiner has the right to give such students an adapted examination or to examine them in a different manner.

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.