Stockholm University
Department of Psychology
Master program in Psychology

The history of psychology and philosophy of science (7.5 credits)

Leader of the course
Pehr Granqvist

Aims and objectives
This course aims at a deepened understanding of different perspectives in the philosophy of science, with particular relevance for psychology. The course comprises three modules. The first module provides a *historical overview* of how contemporary academic psychology has grown from philosophical thinking since antiquity and developed successively along the progress in the natural and social sciences and the humanities. The second module addresses central concepts and distinctions within the *philosophy of science* generally, with particular emphasis on theories of scientific development. The third and final module focuses on the *philosophy of psychology*, including nomothetic versus idiographic approaches to psychological knowledge, the psychology of science, and philosophical problems with special relevance for psychology (e.g, the mind-body problem, the question of free will, the role of values).

Learning outcomes
In order to pass the course, students are expected to be able to:

- on the basis of general knowledge of the history of philosophy and the theory of science, develop and discuss assumptions behind different types of psychological research;
- analyse how different ideas in psychology, other sciences and societal changes have shaped developments within specific areas of psychology;
- analyse and describe how differences and contradictions between different psychological theories relate to different approaches within philosophy and the theory of science;
- independently identify a problem relevant to the course and discuss this problem based on literature and their own arguments.

Teaching
The course consists of 9 lectures, 3 discussion seminars, and one seminar in which students present their written assignments. Active student participation is required in the seminars, which are mandatory.

Eaxamination
Examination of the course is based on two assignments:

Assignment 1. A number of essay-questions, reflecting the first three learning outcomes (about 1000 words in total). The essay questions will be made available about two weeks prior to deadline.

Assignment 2. An essay, 'paper' around a problem or question relevant for the area of the course, reflecting the last learning outcome (about 2000 words). The problem/question to be discussed in the paper is selected by the student. It may but does not have to be relevant for the student's own area of research. The 'papers' will be presented and discussed in a seminar at the end of the course.

Grading
The total examination, consisting of two parts, will be graded on a seven-point ECT-scale (A, B, C, D, E Fx, F). The evaluation is based on the following criteria:

Examination assignment 1: Essay-questions.
Relevance for the actual question.
Link to the course-literature or other relevant literature.
Clarity and 'main thread' in the reasoning
Quality and maturity of the reflection and reasoning.
Examination assignment 2: 'Paper'. As for the essay-questions but more weight is assigned to the structure, reflection, and argumentation in the written composition and the presentation at the seminar.

Course evaluation
An opportunity is offered for evaluation of the course at the end of the course.

Course literature

- Lundh, L-G, Nilsson, A. (2018). Psykologin som vetenskap: Vetenskapsteoretiska och forskningsmetodologiska grunder. Lund: Studentlitteratur. (L&N)*
- Leahey, T., H. (2018/2013). A history of psychology: Pearson new international edition – from Antiquity to modernity (8th/7th edition). Routledge/Taylor & Francis/Pearson Higher education (Leahey)

* For non-Swedish speaking students Lundh and Nilsson may be replaced by Benton, T., & Craib, I. (2011). Philosophy of social science (2nd ed.). New York: Palgrave.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory at the introduction lecture and the seminars.

Instructors

Course leader and teachers

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