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Sociologiska institutionen

Syllabus of "Master's Thesis in Demography (the 1 year programme)", SC, 15 ECTS
(Kursplan för magisteruppsats i demografi, AN, 15 högskolepoäng)
Instructor: Livia Oláh, livia.olah@sociology.su.se

Decision

The syllabus is approved by the Board of the Department of Sociology, Stockholm University as of April 23, 2015.

Educational entry requirements

Population Development and Social Change 7.5 ECTS, Basic Demographic Methods 7.5 ECTS, Population Processes 7.5 ECTS, and having been admitted at the 1-year Master's program in Demography (SDEMO).

Course content

The course is provided at full-time basis over ten weeks. In the course the student will acquire the ability to independently carry out a research project with demographic relevance and report the outcome in a thesis.

Learning outcomes

Upon the completion of the course the student is expected to be able to:

In terms of knowledge and understanding:

- Interpret demographic data and research results and discuss their validity

In terms of accomplishments and competence:

- Formulate relevant demographic research questions and hypotheses
- Link theory and appropriate methods for a specific demographic research question
- Work independently to carry out a minor scientific study of demographic relevance
- Write and present a scientific text with demographic content
- Write and present a report on demographically relevant questions that can be understood by persons without special knowledge in the area

In terms of attitudes and values:

- Search for, compare and critically review demographic data and literature relevant for a particular research question
- Identify and deal with ethical questions in demographic research

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Teaching

Teaching is provided via two introductory seminars (before mid-March), a mid-term seminar (April), thesis supervision, and thesis seminars. Exact date and time for the seminars, and the exam-slots (May-June, August-September, December-January) are announced at the course site in Athena. Students are entitled to 20 hours supervision, of which amount one third is assigned as contact time.
Under extraordinary circumstances, students can be granted a change of supervisor. A request, specifying the grounds for the request, shall be sent to the instructor in charge of the thesis course. In case a change is granted, the number of hours so far consumed will be deducted from the hours of supervision with the new supervisor.

Assessment and examination

a. The thesis is presented at a public seminar by the author and critically reviewed by an examiner with a PhD degree. Appointed discussant should be a student, a Ph.D. Candidate or other person with relevant competence. All students are expected to participate at three thesis seminars as well as to provide a thorough discussion of another student's thesis at one seminar.

b. The thesis is graded as Good, Sufficient or Not sufficient on each of the following criteria:

1. Relevance of the arguments for the importance of research and the particular research question in the applied context.
2. Comprehensiveness and synthesis of relevant theory and previous research in the applied context.
3. Critical approach to relevant previous research, identifying strengths and weaknesses and gaps filled by the thesis research.
4. Logical organization of theory and previous research with respect to the research question.
5. Appropriateness of data and methods in the applied context.
6. Clear and comprehensive description of data and research methods, including ethical reflections of relevance.
7. Clear and comprehensive presentation of results.
8. Interpretation of results in relation to previous theory and research in the applied context.
9. The oral defense (incl. presentation) of the thesis at a thesis seminar, proper referencing inclusive reference list.

In the case that a thesis demonstrates exceptional skills with regard to theoretical argument, data management, or application of analytic methods, the total number of criteria evaluated as "good" may be increased by one.

The overall grade for the thesis is then determined as follows:
A - Excellent: Good on at least 8 of the 9 criteria, Sufficient on all others
B – Very good: Good on 7 of the 9 criteria, Sufficient on all others
C - Good: Good on 5 or 6 of the 9 criteria, Sufficient on all others
D - Satisfactory: Good on 3 or 4 of the 9 criteria, Sufficient on all others

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E - Sufficient: Good on none or at most two of the 9 criteria, Sufficient on all others
Fx - Not sufficient: Not sufficient on 1-4 criteria
F - Fail: Not sufficient on 5-9 criteria

c.Students with grade Fx are given an opportunity to revise the thesis to achieve a grade of E at least. Students who received grade Fx or F can redo the exam as long as the course is provided to achieve a grade of E at least. A student with grade E or higher is not entitled to another examination to raise his/her degree.

Students who received grade Fx or F on exams twice from the same examiner can request to be evaluated by another examiner. Such request should be sent to the Director of Studies. Students can request to have examination according to this syllabus up to three semesters after it has stopped to be valid. Such request should be sent to the Director of Studies.

Cheating, plagiarism and AI

Part of your responsibility as a student is to know the rules for examination. Detailed information is available on Stockholm University's website. Teachers are obligated to report suspicions of cheating and plagiarism to the Director of Studies and the Disciplinary Board. Plagiarism and cheating are always a disciplinary matter and may lead to suspension. An example of plagiarism is copying a text verbatim or almost verbatim (including a single sentence or lines of programming) and not indicating where it came from. Always ensure the source of the text is clearly referenced or that citations are used when submitting a text for examination where you refer to other texts. This also applies to texts you have written before (self-plagiarism).

Having study groups together is stimulating and time-saving, but when it comes to examination tasks, care must be taken to ensure that the work submitted for examination is done independently to avoid the risk of it being considered unauthorized collaboration. Cheating also includes, for example, the use of unauthorized aids, such as mobile phones or generative AI, during an examination. Producing a text with the help of an AI chatbot which is submitted for examination is considered cheating or plagiarism because it cannot be considered an independent, self-made work.

Use of an AI chatbot or similar tools in exam tasks without the expressed permission of the examiner or course supervisor is considered cheating and will be reported to the Disciplinary Board. Read the course instructions carefully to take part in the information that applies to AI chatbot and its use for the course.

Generative AI (chatbots) can be useful, for example in editing your own writing. The usage of an AI-chatbot must however comply with the following specific guidelines:

- A thesis is the result of student's independent work, this applies also to preparing a discussion of other's thesis. Submitting text produced by an AI-chatbot as own work, is considered cheating and will be reported to the Disciplinary Board of Stockholm University.
- In order to improve a text composed by a student, it is **allowed** to rely on an AI-chatbot with respect to i) spell-check and grammar-check, ii) stylistic improvement, iii) improve the structure within different sections of the text.

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- It is **allowed** to exchange ideas with an AI-chatbot on different parts of the entire thesis.
- It is **allowed** to use an AI-chatbot in coding and programming for data analyses, but an AI-chatbot **must not be used for** interpreting the results of such analyses.
- If an AI-chatbot was used, student must discuss *which* AI-chatbot and *how* it was used in the thesis work in the methods section. Student's reflections on advantages and disadvantages of using AI-chatbot in thesis writing should also be presented there. In addition, the entire chat-history with the AI-chatbot must be saved and shared upon request.

For further details see Stockholm University "Guidelines on using AI-powered chatbots in education and research" at https://medarbetare.su.se/en/our-su/communicate-su/communication-support/guidelines-on-using-ai-powered-chatbots-in-education-and-research

Other issues

Student who does not complete the thesis within the course period can apply to have remaining hours of supervision transferred to a later semester. This can be granted provided that the supervisor and the Director of Studies give their approval.

Literature and data

Literature and data are chosen as appropriate for the thesis project.

APPENDIX

Recommended readings

Corti, L., Van den Eynden, V., Bishop, L. & Woollard, M. (2020). *Managing and Sharing Research Data*. 2nd edition, SAGE.

Cresswell J.W. & Cresswell, J. D. (2017). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 5th edition. SAGE.

Furseth, I. & Everett, E.L. (2013). *Doing Your Master's Dissertation: From Start to Finish*. SAGE.

Greetham, B. (2020). *How to Write Your Literature Review*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Parker, J. & Stanworth, H. (2015). *Explaining Social Life: A Guide to Using Social Theory*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Pears, R. & Shields, G. (2022). *Cite them right: The essential referencing guide*. 12th edition. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Ransome, P. (2013). *Ethics and Values in Social Research*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Richardson, D. & Robinson, V. (2020). *Introducing Gender and Women's Studies*. 5th edition. Bloomsbury Publishing.