Psykologiska institutionen

Stockholms universitet

Course Description

Psychological and Organizational Perspectives on Work, Stress, and Health

(PSMT52, 7.5 hp, HT 2024)

Psychological and Organizational Perspectives on Work, Stress, and Health (PSMT52)

Course Content

The aim of the course is to illustrate deepened theoretical and practical aspects of work, stress, and health/ill-health from psychological and organizational perspectives. This includes the gradual transition towards more flexible work arrangements in terms of time, space and job content, insecure employment conditions, working hours, working conditions and organizational changes. The course relates job demands and job resources to the organization of work and the overall societal development. Associations between psychosocial working conditions and work-related as well as health-related outcomes are illustrated. The course also focuses on individual resources to handle demands at work (e.g., coping, recovery) as well as organizational efforts to improve working conditions and employee well-being (organizational interventions and health-promotion/preventative activities). Issues regarding gender, ethnicity, and social status will also be discussed in the course. A central characteristic of the course concerns how both individuals and organizations can contribute to a sustainable working life.

Course Structure

The course consists of lectures and seminars. The lectures introduce the various topics included in the course and provide the theoretical foundation for the seminars. For the case seminars, the class will be divided into two seminar groups which, in turn, will be divided into smaller units of around 3–4 students. The course concludes with an examination seminar, which is based on the presentation and discussion of individually authored papers. Teaching will be in English and/or Swedish according to the course leader's instructions.

The **lectures** provide a general introduction to the topics covered by the course. This includes an overview of the topic and the provision of theoretical perspectives. For each lecture, there is reading assigned. Make sure to read the selected articles/chapters in advance, and be prepared to discuss their content during the lecture.

The case **seminars** represent the basis for developing the final examination paper. During the case seminars you will have the opportunity to work in smaller units (around 3–4 students). These seminars, along with the course literature and the lectures, will be what the final individual examination is based upon. Further instructions regarding the case seminars and the examination paper will be given during the course, but the general structure is as follows:

- *Case seminar 1*: Students within seminar groups are to pair up in smaller units (around 3–4 students) and decide on a specific (type of) organization, occupation, or sector of interest. During the first case seminar, the smaller units start gathering information (official statistics, empirical articles, etc.) on potentially relevant topics concerning the chosen "setting", such as problems/symptoms characteristic of the setting, psychosocial factors that may give rise to such problems/symptoms, and general information about the chosen (type of) organization, occupation, or sector.
- *Case seminar 2*: The second case seminar involves the presentation and discussion of each unit's topic area in the selected organization, sector, or occupation. The

preparation for this involves that each student in the smaller unit selects and summarizes a scientific article focusing on the selected topic area. The unit should also find information (official statistics, etc.) characterizing the selected (type of) organization, occupation, or sector. There is time scheduled for the unit to integrate each student's work into a general overview before this is to be presented at case seminar 2. The unit's written material is to be presented orally at the seminar, where students will also be expected to give comments and opinions on other units' presentations. Please find the deadline for submitting the smaller unit's report and PowerPoint presentation in the schedule.

- *Case seminar 3*: As a preparation for case seminar 3, each member of a unit is to interview a representative of the selected (type of) organization, occupation, or sector to get additional information regarding the topic area (i.e., the problem[s]/symptom[s]). The interviewees can be, for instance, a manager/supervisor, employee, HR worker, union representative, occupational health care staff, or representative of the sector. By interviewing different types of actors, the group will be in the position to highlight similarities and differences between different actors/perspectives. Each student in the smaller unit summarizes their interview, and all respective interviews are to be *integrated into a group report*, which is to be presented orally at the seminar. Please find the deadline for submitting the smaller unit's report and PowerPoint presentation in the schedule.
- *Supervision session*: Students discuss their work and progress on the individual examination paper with other students and with their seminar group leader.
- *Examination seminar*: The examination will be based on an individually authored paper, taking the case seminars as point of departure. The paper should contain an overall analysis of a topic relevant for the selected (type of) organization, occupation, or sector. It should be explained why the topic is relevant and how the topic relates to theoretical models in the literature. The paper should also analyze implications for employee health and well-being, suggest interventions, and critically examine factors that may be crucial to whether an intervention may be successful. Further instructions regarding the examination paper will be provided during the course.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Upon course completion, students are expected to be able to:

- Describe and analyze how stress and health/ill-health may be affected by various factors related to the work environment and how work is managed in an organization;
- Critically analyze and compare theories and models relevant to work, stress, and health/ill-health;
- Evaluate the importance of individual differences when it comes to stress and stress-related health problems (e.g., in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, education, personality, and life experience);
- Based on the literature, plan health-promoting organizational interventions as well as investigations of work, stress, and health/ill-health in different contexts by analyzing and evaluating specific cases using appropriate methods;
- Both orally and in writing, evaluate, critically examine, and give feedback on academic work regarding work, stress, and health/ill-health as well as discuss the theories and methods that underlie the conclusions made in such work.

Knowledge Assessment and Examination

Grades in the course are given according to the seven-point ECTS scale (A, B, C, D, E, Fx, F). The final examination of the course is in the form of an individually authored paper based on main concepts presented in the course. The paper should be 6–8 pages (Times New Roman 12, single-spaced, 2.5 cm margins) plus references and a cover page. It is to be based on the problem description, analysis of the organizational setting, and suggested measures presented and discussed in the case seminars. The paper is assessed according to the following criteria:

- Identification of a relevant topic based on the work environment problem characteristic of the selected organization, sector, or occupation
- The quality of the analysis of the organizational and structural basis of the work environment problem
- Connection to the course literature and other theoretical and empirical literature relevant to the assignment
- Clarity and structure of the description
- Inclusion of reflection and original reasoning about the problem

In order to pass the course, students must receive a grade of E or higher on the individually authored examination paper, as well as a passing grade on the oral presentation and all mandatory assignments (see below).

Course Requirements and attendance

The following requirements (which are graded pass/not pass) must also be met to receive a final grade in the course:

(a) Submission of written group assignments before the case seminars

(b) Oral presentation of the examination paper at the concluding examination seminar

(c) Opposition on another student's examination paper

Attendance at all seminars is mandatory. Absence from a mandatory seminar can be compensated by a compensation task. Students who do not pass on the (a) criterion above can submit complementary assignments. Students who do not pass the (b)–(c) criteria above will have an opportunity to have their examination paper examined on another occasion in the near future. The examination will be in English and/or Swedish according to the course leader's instructions.

Grading Criteria

Grade	Criterion
A	*Excellent. The expected study outcomes have been reached to an exceptionally high degree.* The student is able to combine concepts, theories, and models to explain actual examples and is also able to point out the explicatory limitations of the concepts/ theories/models through reference to the nature of the actual examples or to alternative theoretical views. The student engages in argumentation and discussion independent of the literature and in a manner that creates new syntheses and lines of reasoning that go beyond the course literature.
B	*Very good. The expected study outcomes have been reached to a very high degree.* The student is able to combine and compare concepts, theories, and models to explain actual examples. The student engages in independent argumentation and discussion in a manner that goes beyond the course literature and that, to some degree, creates new syntheses.
C	*Good. The expected study outcomes have been reached to a high degree.* The student is able to apply the concepts, theories, and models from the literature to explain actual examples. The student is able, to some degree, to draw independent connections between the various theories and lines of reasoning presented in the literature.
D	*Satisfactory. The expected study outcomes have been satisfactorily reached.* The student is able to describe the concepts, theories, and models in his/her own words. The student is able to refer to the concepts, theories, and models when discussing actual examples.
E	*Adequate. The expected study outcomes have been reached despite some deficiencies.* The student is able to define the concepts and describe what the theories and models are meant to explain. The student is able to utilize such lines of reasoning to some extent to describe the processes occurring in actual examples.
Fx	*Fail, some additional work required.* The learning outcomes have not been reached. In one or more areas the level of performance is judged to reflect "certain deficiencies that must be resolved," but "unsatisfactory" was not judged to apply to any single area. Compensatory work is required.
F	*Fail, much additional work required.* The learning outcomes have not been reached and reaching them is not judged to be possible. The level of performance in one or more areas is judged to be "unsatisfactory."

Plagiarism, cheating and unauthorized cooperation

It is included in your responsibility as a student to be aware of the examination rules at Stockholm University. Detailed information is available both at the web pages of the Department of Psychology and Stockholm University (www.su.se/regelboken). Teachers are obliged to report suspicion about cheating and plagiarism to the principal and the disciplinary board. Plagiarism and cheating are always disciplinary matters and can lead to shutting off from studies. One example of plagiarism is to verbatim (word-by-word), or almost verbatim, copy a text (this also concerns occasional sentences) without *quoting* the source of the text. This also concerns texts that you have yourself authored previously (self-plagiarism). To be involved in study groups (i.e., the smaller units within seminar groups) is developing and time efficient, but when it comes to examination tasks you will need to make sure that you are working on your own (if nothing else is instructed) in order not to risk that any collaboration will be considered unauthorized.

Course Leader

Magnus Sverke, Professor (magnus.sverke@psychology.su.se, 08 – 16 14 19)

Other Lecturers:

Anna Dahlgren, Associate professor (anna.dahlgren@su.se)

Helena Falkenberg, Senior lecturer and researcher (hfg@psychology.su.se)

Annika Härenstam, Professor emerita (annika.harenstam@psychology.su.se)

Constanze Leineweber, Associate professor (constanze.leineweber@su.se)

Jacobus Pienaar, Associate professor (jacobus.pienaar@psychology.su.se)

Course Literature

The course schedule provides information on what literature should be read for each lecture and for Case seminar 1. Please note that you need yourself to retrieve all literature (except some book chapter, uploaded in the plan General information about the course) through the SU library (www.su.se/biblioteket). Log in using your SUKAT account.

These readings are supplemented with self-selected literature (additional articles may also be assigned).

Books

(Available as e-books at *www.su.se/biblioteket*)

D Day, A., Kelloway, E. K., & Hurrell, J. (2014) (Eds.). *Workplace well-being: How to build psychologically healthy workplaces*. New York: Wiley (selected readings; the numbers in the schedule refer to the chapters).

N Näswall, K., Hellgren, J., & Sverke, M. (2008) (Eds.). *The individual in the changing working life.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (selected readings; the numbers in the schedule refer to the chapters).

Articles for lectures

DB Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Nachreiner, F., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2001). The job demands resources model of burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 86*, 499–512. DOI: https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.499

DC Dewe, P. J., & Cooper, C. L. (2017). Coping with stress: Future directions and challenges. In P. J. Dewe & C. L. Cooper (Eds.), *Work stress and coping: Forces of change and challenges* (pp. 142–170). SAGE. DOI: 10.4135/9781526421678

G Geurts, S. A. E., & Sonnentag, S. (2006). Recovery as an explanatory mechanism in the relation between acute stress reactions and chronic health impairment. *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health, 32*(6), 482–492. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5271/sjweh.1053

H Härenstam, A. (2017). Inclusion, sustainability and equality: How can research contribute? *Society, Health and Vulnerability, 8*, supplement 1. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/20021518.2017.1332856

HM Härenstam, A. & the MOA Research Group (2005). Different development trends in working life and increasing occupational stress require new work environment strategies. *Work, 24*(3), 261–277.

I Innstrand, S.T., Langballe, E.M., Espnes, G.A., Falkum, E., & Aasland, O.G. (2008). Positive and negative work–family interaction and burnout: A longitudinal study of reciprocal relations. *Work & Stress, 22*(1), 1–15. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/02678370801975842

DJ de Jong, T., Wiezer, N., de Weerd, M., Nielsen, K., Mattila-Holappa, P., & Mockałło, Z. (2016). The impact of restructuring on employee wellbeing: A systematic review of longitudinal studies. *Work & Stress, 30*(1), 91–114. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/02678373.2015.1136710

L Leineweber, C., Falkenberg, H., & Albrecht, S.C. (2018). Parent's relative perceived work flexibility compared to their partner is associated with emotional exhaustion. *Frontiers in Psychology, 9*(640), 1–12. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00640

TN Nilsson, T. (2009). New principles of work organization. In K. Elgstrand & N. F. Petersson (Eds.), *OSH for Development* (pp. 465–473). Stockholm: Royal Institute of Technology. (*This chapter is available in the topic for Lecture 2 and in General information about the course on Athena*.)

R Ryff, C.D., & Singer, B.H. (2000). Biopsychosocial challenges of the new Millennium. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics, 69*, 170–177. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1159/000012390

vH van Harten, J., de Cuyper, N., Knies, E., & Forrier, A. (2022). Taking the temperature of employability research: A systematic review of interrelationships across and within conceptual strands. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 31*(1), 145–159. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2021.1942847

vTS von Thiele Schwarz, U., Nielsen, K., Edwards, K., Hasson, H., Ipsen, C., Savage, C., Abildgaard, J. S., Richter, A., Lornudd, C., Mazzocato, P., & Reed, J. E. (2020). How to design, implement and evaluate organizational interventions for maximum impact: the Sigtuna Principles. European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 30(3), 415–427. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2020.1803960

Readings for Case seminar 1

AFS AFS 2015:4. Organisatorisk och social arbetsmiljö, föreskrifter (Organisational and social work environment, provisions). Stockholm: Arbetsmiljöverket (Swedish Work Environment Authority).
SV: https://www.av.se/arbetsmiljoarbete-och-inspektioner/publikationer/foreskrifter/organisatorisk-och-social-arbetsmiljo-afs-20154/
ENG: https://www.av.se/en/work-environment-work-and-inspections/publications/foreskrifter/organisatorisk-och-social-arbetsmiljo-afs-20154-foreskrifter/

S Sverke, M., Falkenberg, H., Kecklund, G., Magnusson Hanson, L., & Lindfors, P. (2016). Kvinnors och mäns arbetsvillkor: Betydelsen av organisatoriska faktorer och psykosocial arbetsmiljö för arbets- och hälsorelaterade utfall. Stockholm: Arbetsmiljöverket. Kunskapssammanställning 2016:2. (**Swedish** version)
https://www.av.se/globalassets/filer/publikationer/kunskapssammanstallningar/kvinnors-och-mans-arbetsvillkor-kunskapssammanstallning-rap-2016-2.pdf

S Sverke, M., Falkenberg, H., Kecklund, G., Magnusson Hanson, L., & Lindfors, P. (2017). Women and men and their working conditions: The importance of organiational and psychosocial factors for work-related and health-related outcomes. Stockholm: Arbetsmiljöverket. (**English** version)
https://www.av.se/globalassets/filer/publikationer/kunskapssammanstallningar/women_and_men_and_their_working_conditions.pdf