



Dnr HS2018/545

Syllabus

Course Approval

The syllabus was approved by the Faculty Board for Economic Sciences, Communication and IT on 2018-06-12 and is valid from the autumn semester of 2018 at Karlstad University.

Doctoral study subject

Political Science

Course name

Vetenskapsteori (Theory of Science)

Credit points

7,5

Degree Level

Doctor

Language of Instruction

English or Swedish. Contact the course coordinator for information about the current language.

Target group and prerequisites

The target group for the course is PhD-candidates in general and the course is open to students from all disciplines. However, it is assumed that participants have been acquainted with basic theory of science as part of their undergraduate studies.

Aims

After completing the course the doctoral student should be able to:

- Explain central concepts and debates within contemporary theory of science
- Compare major schools of thought in theory of science with respect to their different takes on central concepts
- Assess the implications for conducting research when following different schools of thought within theory of science
- Apply theories and concepts from theory of science to questions derived from the student's own research
- Theorize ongoing discussions concerning race, gender, power and politics in the practice of doing science
- Extrapolate implications of various choices related to theory of science to unknown domains of research

Course Content

The course revolves around contemporary theory of science and is organized around a series of seminars where each one address a particular theme, topic or school of thought. While the first seminar is dedicated to discussing central concepts and theories during the history of science, the course is not focused on the evolution of scientific thought. Rather, it assumes that students are familiar with the general development of theory of science including the debates and questions issued by the works of Karl Popper and Thomas Kuhn. Thus, we focus on ‘modern’ thinking in theory of science and relate these new schools of thought to each other as well as to the classical thinking. The themes, topics and schools of thought covered in the seminars includes, but are not limited to, the following:

Critical Realism – mechanisms, emergence and laws in science

(Post)Structuralism – the role of language, discourse and power in the construction of truth claims

One science? – Differences and similarities between the natural and social sciences as well as the humanities

Gender, race and class – science, privilege and ‘the view from nowhere’

Post-humanism – Actor Network Theory (ANT), Science and Technology Studies (STS) and agency for non-humans in social systems

Subjectivities – methodological individualism, actors and the splintered self

Reading List

See separate document.

Examination

Examination consists of participation in five seminars. For each of them a short reflective text must be written based on the assigned literature for the seminar. In addition, students must write a longer (about 5000 words) essay and present it to the rest of the class. This presentation round mimics a conference panel and students are expected to participate in discussions as well as reading each other’s papers.

Quality Assurance

Follow-up relating to learning conditions and goal-fulfilment takes place both during and upon completion of the course. The results will be used as a basis when developing and planning future courses.

Additional Information

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