Syllabus – Graduate Course

Introduction to Research Methods in Ethnic and Migration Studies (7,5 ECTS)

742A12

Course Calendar

The course is scheduled for 17 August – 18 September, 2009. The lectures and seminars on-campus in Norrköping are scheduled for 31 August to 4 September. The course also includes an online e-seminar on the course platform 7-11 September.

Course Directors

Susanne Urban and Martin Klinthäll

Course Objectives

The aim of this course is to provide an introduction to research methods in social sciences as applied in studies of ethnic relations, ethnic diversity, discrimination, racism, social inclusion/exclusion, and migration.

On completion of the course the student will acquire:

- an overview of research methodology in the social sciences
- an ability to assess and select appropriate methods for studies on migration and ethnic relations
- knowledge of how to access and critically examine official statistics in the field of migration and ethnic studies
- a capacity for critical analysis of methodology in the field of migration and ethnic studies
- an understanding of the application of the most useful methodological tools in the development of their personal research thesis

Course Content

This course addresses dilemmas and difficulties that researchers confront when collecting and interpreting data in studies of ethnic relations, ethnic diversity, discrimination, racism, social inclusion/exclusion, and migration. The students will read and discuss how research on ethnicity, integration and migration is conducted by examining the relevant literature, by course seminars and workshop discussions, and by examination. The course will seek to provide an orientation to the main methodological questions that need to be answered when conducting primary and original research. Different solutions to common problems will be presented and discussed.

Research methods discussed include quantitative studies on integration and migration, qualitative methods such as discourse analyses, long-term field work, participant observation as well as multi-strategy research. The course addresses the cross-disciplinary and trans-national aspects of research that place extra demands on research methods in data collection, sampling, comparative policy framework analysis, usage of terminology, comparisons of discourses and ideological representations in a sometimes contested and controversial field of
inquiry. It will present a number of concrete examples of studies on e.g. migration policy, refugees, ‘illegal’/irregular work(ers).

We will discuss questions regarding accessibility to and reliability of relevant data (ranging from use of statistics as well as access to social fields), how to handle confidential research material, how to develop intersectional analyses, and specific questions related to multi-strategy research design.

We will discuss how power relations (majority/minority) create insider/outsider dilemmas for the researcher, problems of representation and cross-cultural translation, how ‘race’ of interviewer/researcher effects trust in field studies and other ethical considerations.

The course deals with the methodological dilemmas inherent in researching ‘race’, ethnicity and social difference in order to challenge pre-conceived notions of racialised thinking in both private and public spheres, rather than to reproduce conventional socially constructed categories.

**Teaching**

The teaching involves a combination of e-learning and on-campus lectures. Instructions for *It’s learning* (LiUs internet-based platform for e-learning) are posted to participants’ e-mail addresses at least two weeks before course starts.

Examination assignments, obligatory and suggested reading list, and additional information will be posted at the course platform.

The first two weeks includes reading the course-literature, and making a short survey of methodology sections in at least two selected studies of the students’ own choice (but not own work). This procedure will enable active student engagement with the basic issues of how methodology is presented in research, and serves as a starting point to build knowledge on this topic. This first written assignment is submitted on the course platform, prior to the on-campus week, and serves as bases for the methodology e-seminar that takes place on the course web site after the on-campus week.

The third week is the on-campus week, where experienced researchers lecture on the literature and provide examples from their own research. The lectures are followed by workshops where students discuss their own position and standpoints in relation to issues presented at the lectures. The workshops will also deal with specific methodological problems brought to the course by the students themselves. The lectures and workshops will provide opportunity to discuss the literature, to develop the students own methodology-choices, and to build a social network between students that can be used as an important resource in developing research projects further. Critical discussions, peer scrutiny and dialogic learning is considered an important tool in advancing the knowledge in this field.

The dialogic learning and peer scrutiny from the on-campus week is followed up with an e-seminar on methodology and a second written assignment. In the e-seminar general methodology questions are discussed with starting point provided by the students summaries of methodology sections (submitted prior the on-campus week) and enhanced by the on-campus discussions and learning experience. The e-seminar is designed to demonstrate the student consolidation of personal and course-based learning and practice critical assessment of methodology develop in the field of migration and ethnic studies.
The final written assignment comprises an essay that applies knowledge gained from the course and takes advantage of the cumulative experience from workshops during the on-campus week. This paper discusses methodological issues in a project selected by the student and will be submitted as a final examination paper to be assessed by the course tutors. Workshops during the on-campus week will provide the starting point for writing the essay and students will also have access to an on-line forum for discussion (on the course platform) with course-participants through the course.

**Student submissions, course requirements and examination.**

The type-face to be used in the papers should be 12 point Times New Roman. Double spacing should be used throughout and the *Harvard* referencing system rather than sequential footnotes should be employed.

The student is required to provide an initial paper with descriptions of two or more methodology sections in published studies, participate on all lectures and workshops, active participation with a minimum of three comments in the e-seminar and achieve satisfactory grading in the final examination paper.

The expected length of the first written assignment (summarizing theory sections of other studies) is 1000 to 1500 words (2-3 pages).

The second written assignment of 2 - 3 000 words (5-8 pages) is to be handed at the end of the course – 18th September. It should comprise a paper on a research project of student’s own choice, including a full discussion of methodological considerations, utilising course literature and other relevant literature, including a presentation of an individual methodology problem brought to the course and the solution(s) proposed at the workshops.

Detailed instruction for the two papers will be posted on the course platform.

**Schedule**

**Overview:**

WEEK 1. Preparatory study weeks, reading.

WEEK 2. Preparatory study weeks, formulate methodology problem for workshop discussions, post the first written assignment that summaries methodology sections in other studies on the course platform.

WEEK 3. On-campus week, lectures and workshops.

WEEK 4. E-seminar on the course platform, critical assessment of methodology sections in other studies.

WEEK 5. Final examination paper discussing students own methodology is to be handed in.
Detailed schedule:

Week one and two. 17 August – 28 August: Preparatory study weeks

– Structured reading of prescribed course literature in preparation for lecture week. In addition to obligatory readings in relation to seminars, a selection of optional texts will be provided on the course platform.

– Writing a short paper (2-3 pages) for methodology e-seminar. Deadline day five (28th Aug) in week two. The assignment for the paper is to make short summaries of methodology sections selected from two or more studies in the field that use both qualitative and quantitative methods. Detailed instruction for the short paper and e-seminar will be posted at the course platform.

– Prepare an oral presentation of a methodology-problem in your own research for workshops.
**Week three 31 August - 4 sept: On-campus week**

**Monday 31th August: Introduction and overview**

**9-11 Introduction I (Susanne Urban, Tünde Puskas, Martin Klinthäll, REMESO)**
In our first meeting we will present the course outline, the literature, the e-seminar and the final examination assignment. The main topics for this week's lecture are presented. We will also provide a general overview of the main methodological approaches and directions, and discuss how the problem of race and power have been handled and changed over time.

**Basic readings for the whole course:**


**13-15 Introduction II (Peo Hansen, REMESO)**

The lecture sets out by introducing some key components of discourse analysis and then goes on to discuss the usefulness and applicability of discourse analysis for ethnic and migration research. Particular attention is paid to the important insights that discourse analysis offers to statistical, demographic and attitudinal research dealing with migration and ethnic and racial categories.

**Obligatory reading:**


**15.30 – 17 Workshop**

Students present and discuss their own position and standpoints in relation topics of the lectures and literature. Students’ methodology-problems are presented and discussed.
**Tuesday 1\textsuperscript{st} September: Quantitative methods**

**9-11 Quantitative methods I (Alireza Behtoui)**

The lecture deals with the following issues: 1. Are all migration researcher that use statistics ‘positivists’?, 2. How can we avoid spontaneous sociology (common-sense theories) when we use quantitative methods?, 3. The problems associated with the secondary data, and 4. Generating primary data and construction of questionnaires.

**Obligatory reading:**


**Complementary reading:**


**13-15 Quantitative methods II (Martin Klinthäll)**

The focus of this lecture is on quantitative data on international migration: how to deal with problems regarding data sources, measurement, availability, reliability and comparability.

**Obligatory reading:**


**Complementary reading:**


**Additional texts will be made available on the course platform.**

**15.30 – 17 Workshop**

Students present and discuss their own work in relation to topics presented. How do we use statistics in our research? Continued discussion of students methodology-problems.
Wednesday 2\textsuperscript{nd} September: Qualitative methods

9-11 Qualitative methods I (Steve French, Keele University)
The possibilities and limitations of qualitative research. Researching ethnic minorities and migration: similarities and differences to consider.

13-15 Qualitative methods II (Steve French, Keele University)
The practicalities of qualitative fieldwork: access and need for context, language and interpretation, confidentiality and ethics. The researchers as the advocate.
How to select a method and interpret the data. Interviews, ethnography/participant – non-participant observation.

15.30 – 17 Workshop
Students present and discuss their own work in relation to topics presented. How do we describe qualitative methods in our research? Continued discussion of students methodology-problems.

Obligatory reading:


Hsiao-Hung, Pai. 2004. “an ethnography of global labour migration”, feminist review 77, pp. 129-135. (will be made available at the course platform)

Complementary reading:


Additional texts will be made available on the course platform.
Thursday 3rd September: Intersectionality, multi-cited research and two-case comparison

9-11 Intersectionality and multi-sited research (Anna Bredström, REMESO)
While intersectionality has emerged as a buzz-word for conceptualizing the interrelation between different analytical categories, multi-sited research is also concerned with connections and complexity as it sets out to trace patterns of connections and trajectories between different sites. In this seminar we discuss the benefits of these concepts for studying race and ethnicity.

Obligatory reading:


Complementary reading:


12-15 “Learning by Doing” Combining Two-Case Comparison with Narrative Analysis within the Field of Ethnic Studies (Tunde Puskas, REMESO)
This lecture-seminar is based on a case-study, while the "case" is a recently published PhD dissertation. Apart from the methodological issues raised in the dissertation the lecturer will touch upon some related practical issues such as how to organise research time, plan research, deal with your supervisor, prepare for the oral examination and get your PhD.

Obligatory reading:

Puskás, Tünde 2009 “We Belong to Them” Narratives of Belonging, Homeland and nationhood in territorial and Non-territorial Minority Settings, P.I.E. Peter Lang, pp. 61-77. (will be made available on the course platform)

Evening: Social event
Friday 4th September: Multistrategy, crossdisciplinarity and final discussions

9-11 Multistrategy and cross-disciplinary research (Susanne Urban)
In this last lecture we will discuss possibilities and problems associated with “triangulating” and cross-disciplinary research.

Reading:
Bommes, Michael and Ewa Morowska. (2005). *International Migration Research. Constructions, Omissions and the Promises of Interdisciplinarity*. Aldershot: Ashgate (Selected pages will be made available on the course platform)

Your own selection of basic methodology book that deals with multistrategy and triangulating (suggestions will be posted on the course platform).

12-13 Final discussions (Susanne Urban, Martin Klinthäll)
Summarising the lectures and final discussions open space for questions, instructions for e-seminar, evaluation of course etc.

Week four and five. 7th September – 18th September: examination weeks

Week four: E-seminar with critical discussion of the methodology sections that is described by course participants. Do the methodology sections include important topics that we have discussed in this course? What should they include to be improved? What is taken for granted? Is the methodology appropriate for the aim of the study? Students will be required to critically discuss both qualitative and quantitative methods. Detailed instructions will be posted on the course platform.

Week five: Day five - 18th September
Deadline for final examination assignment. The final paper is a presentation and discussion of methodology of students own projects. Reference to course literature must be included in the paper. This paper should also include a presentation of the problem brought to the course, and what solutions were considered. Detailed instructions will be posted on the course platform.