

AK1213 Swedish Society, Culture and Industry in Historical Perspective, Course analysis HT2023 / Kursanalys HT23

Kursöversikt / Course Overview

Title: Swedish Society, Culture and Industry in Historical Perspective, 7.5

Kurskod /Course code: AK1213

Poäng / Credits: 7,5 hp

Examination:

One final, online, multiple choice exam (TEN1; 3.5hp)

Compulsory participation in exam training activities (ÖVN1; 4.0hp) P/F

Final exam + Course Essay: graded A, B, C, D, E, FX, F

Number of students: 72 registered students (including 16 life-long learning students)

Activities: 7 lectures, 3 mandatory seminar activities and excursions carried out and discussed during the seminar activities. Mandatory components of the course (ÖVN1; 4 hp) includes:

- o Attending seminars, active participation at online seminars
- o Submitting written assignments
- o Give feedback and comments on assignments for seminars, as instructed

Course responsible: Katarina Larsen, Div. History of Science, Technology and Environment

Teachers/Lärare: Per Högselius, Katarina Larsen, Pernilla Hagbert, Eric Paglia, Nina Wormbs, and Corinna Röver (Linköping University)

Examinator: Per Högselius, Div. History of Science, Technology and Environment

1. Description of course evaluation process

Course evaluation was carried out using LEQ(12) survey with 14% response rate. The survey is anonymous, and students had the chance to express their views and give feedback to the course management and course content.

2. Description of meetings with students

This semester, HT23, started with the course introduction to introduce course responsible and examiner and give key information about the course, including mandatory seminar activities. During the course introduction, students were introduced to the three course modules and given the opportunity to ask questions about any practical concerns or course content and exam. The course has a dedicated course e-mail (swesoc) where students can ask questions during the course and contact details to a mail for course administrators to the course expedition (kursexp) for questions about registration. During seminar activities

students meet with seminar leaders in smaller groups (20-25 persons) to discuss assigned texts and their text reflections submitted before each of the three seminar activities.

3. Course design

AK1213 is aimed at international exchange students and international master's students at KTH, who wish to broaden their knowledge of Swedish society, politics, city planning, culture, and industry. The course is organized in three course modules, including the first course module: Swedish History and Politics, which provide an overview of different aspects of Swedish history, including lectures about Sweden and the Cold War and the Swedish model and welfare state. The second course module, Sweden and the Arctic, aiming to take a critical look at Swedish history in relation to the Arctic and indigenous cultures and identities in the north in a historical perspective. The third course module, Swedish City Planning, Urban transformation and Sustainability is centered around the analysis of infrastructure systems and city planning, and urban transformation, particularly from a perspective of social and environmental sustainability, and with a focus on the Stockholm region. In addition to three intended learning outcomes related to course content, the course also entails an intended learning outcome that aims to provide students with tools to "Demonstrate analytical reading and writing, including reflecting, referencing, reasoning and deconstructing analytical questions central to the course content." Seminar activities are designed to address both course content learning and also provide students with opportunities to critically reflect and discuss central themes in the course.

The seminars take the form of supervised discussion of the literature and of student assignments, and provide further opportunity to engage with the course literature and themes. The seminars are organized in smaller groups moderated by the seminar leader so students can discuss and give peer-feedback to each other's texts and discuss during seminars.

The excursions include a city walk where students self-organize and respond to a set of questions and instructions to visit certain sites of relevance for Swedish history and politics, including highlighting key areas of relevance for engineering education institutions. The course also organize an excursion to the area of Gröndal in south of Stockholm, where the art institution Färgfabriken is located, as well as to the museum of Nordic lifestyle and traditions, Nordiska museet.

The final examination at the end of the course consists of two parts: a multiple-choice test which is obligatory for passing the course, and a final course essay which is voluntary but required for a grade higher than D. The students will also have the opportunity to do a Mock-exam (on Canvas) at the end of the course, in order to become familiar with the format of the online multiple-choice exam.

4. Students' workload

The survey answers show that students most students replies that they study between of 3-8 hours/week. Workload seems to be appropriate for a course of 7,5 hp. A few replies from students were reporting 0-2 hours/week while other report 12-14 hours/week. This indicates a wide range of hours students devote to the course. While some students have a string command in English, others may require more time for writing and reading. For students that are entitled to additional resources the course introduction provided contact details to the

KTH-unit Funka. The course has previous experience from setting up exam allowing students with extra time to complete the final exam.

5. Students' results on the course

In HT23, the course had 71 registered students and 66 (93%) of the students completed the course and had grades reported in LADOK. Of these, 25 students submitted the (non-mandatory) course essay. This corresponds to about 35% of students completed the essay. The students were encouraged to write the essay, and develop the texts they worked with during the course seminars. Assessment criteria for grades of the course were provided on Canvas so students could make a self-assessment of their texts, also in relation to intended learning outcomes. The assessment of course essays, indicated that some students showed a good command developing arguments and critical reflection in the course essay. But a concern is that less than half of students taking the course wrote the (optional) essay to have the opportunity to improve their grade to level A-C for the course.

6. Students' answers to open questions

The students expressed that the structure of the course was good and viewed the course content interesting and that they had sufficient background knowledge to follow the course. Some suggestions for improvements included students suggesting that a wider range of topics could be included and adding some activities to keep students engaged during the last couple weeks (before final exam) and to reduce number of pages to make course content less dense. Students stated that they liked that the course offered the practical and theoretical approach to the material (in an impeccable way) and appreciated the course excursions (including trips to museums) and seminars

Some of the best aspects of the course, as expressed by students, were:

- learning about the history of Sweden in generally, and particularly the approach in technology, research and development,
- to be able to learn from experts about the indigenous people and polar politics in Sweden,
- that you had the chance to discuss with a lot of people from different countries, backgrounds and ages.

7. Summary of students' opinions

The students' reflections give the overall impression that course content and variety of topics covered is appreciated and including several lecturers to ensure variety in lectures as well. Some students suggested even more topics (beyond the three course modules). Advice to future students included to enjoy the course, take note during the lectures and read the material continuously through the course.

8. Overall impression

The overall impression is that students appreciated the format and content of the course and that the workload was suitable for a 7,5 credit course. The question of providing more feedback in the course is recurring and reflects how time allocated to the course needs to be managed in practice. Balancing between allocating time for individual feedback on assignments and on course essay. Current solution is to give collective feedback and provide pedagogical material with writing advice, referencing, how to structure your essay etc. The seminars and excursions were appreciated by the students and also the variety of lecture

topics and access to insights about Swedish industrial history, technology and contemporary context of Sweden with particular attention to Stockholm context with experiences from excursions. For example, combining excursion with seminar on-site an area of Stockholm to discuss history and evolution of city planning, enabled the course to incorporate elements of on-site learning. This was combined with discussion in pairs or smaller groups to enable peer-feedback on their seminar assignment.

9. Analysis

The course was reorganized to link ongoing research with teaching activities for HT23. Thereby, enhancing the opportunity to discuss key course topics and critically reflect upon course themes, both historically and today, based on traditions from social sciences and humanities. The reading for one of the course modules was reorganized with two new lectures. Students get feedback on course essays in the learning platform Canvas to enable learning and self-assessment in relation to intended learning objectives. Information about grading criteria is shared with students during the course. The course also provides some material on Canvas with instructions students should keep in mind in preparation for the for the essay writing, to enable self-assessment and progress throughout the course.

10. Prioritized course development

Continued development with updating of course literature to reflect contemporary development and feedback received. This semester HT23, the course was reorganized to delegate responsibilities between course responsible, and the course module responsible teachers. This enables further in-depth for each course module, and preparation of seminar activities to strengthen students' understanding of the required readings for respective themes in the course. The format of smaller seminar groups (about 20 students) allows for discussion provides a chance for peer-feedback between students. Further development of readings to continue adjusting course content to students capabilities to reading longer texts (and their command in English) should be priority for upcoming course offerings.