

# **AK1213 Swedish Society, Culture and Industry in Historical Perspective, Course analysis VT2024 / Kursanalys VT24**

## **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:** 54 registered 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, 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 7% 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, VT24, 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, Urban transformation, City Planning 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 spend 2-6 hours per week. Workload seems to be appropriate for the course. Some efforts are made to include audio-visual material in the reading list and accommodate that the levels of command in English varies between students (in writing and spoken in class). The course introduction gave contact details to KTH-unit for students that are entitled to additional resources (Funka). The course has previous experience from this (setting up exam with longer time available to complete) etc. in the course.

## **5. Students' results on the course**

In VT24, the course had 54 registered students and 53 (98%) of the students completed the course and had grades reported in LADOK. Of these, 19 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 only about one third 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 reducing the amount of pages to read. Other students suggested more excursions and guided tours of museum visits.

Examples of best aspects of this course, included, for example that students appreciated the variety of topics that they were able to discuss during the progress of the course and learning more about the background of the course. The excursions with learning journeys to museums and cultural sites in Stockholm were also highlighted as one of the best aspects of the course.

## **7. Summary of students' opinions**

The students' reflections give the overall impression that course content and variety of topics covered is appreciated. Challenges includes providing a varied course content and consistency of lectures. Advice to future students referred to having an open mind and learning from Sweden as a society but also to start the reading before the first lectures, since they take a significant amount of time.

## **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**

One strength of this course is that it provides to opportunity to discuss key course topics and critically reflect upon city development, industrial history and characteristics of the society, both historically and today, based on traditions from social sciences and humanities. The reading for one of the course modules was restructured with new readings. The reading added to the course could be reflected in that some students experienced the number of pages demanding so the continued development of the course will address this in upcoming course offerings. 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. Since the hosting division has a strong capacity for teaching, the revised structure with course module responsible teachers (implemented HT23) works well to manage key themes in the course. The format of smaller seminar groups (about 20 students) allows for discussion provides a chance for peer-feedback between students. Increasing the level of peer-feedback between students is a priority for upcoming course offerings.