SAGR003, Decolonizing Social Sciences, 7.5 credits, third cycle

The course was adopted by the Board of the Lund University Faculty of Social Sciences 8 June 2017 and the syllabus approved by the Research Studies Council 24 May 2017.

The syllabus is valid from the autumn semester 2017.

A. General information
The course is offered as an elective course on Third Cycle level for Doctoral students at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Lund University. The course is relevant to Doctoral students in all social sciences.

The language of instruction is English.

B. Learning outcomes
On completion of the course, the student shall be able to

Knowledge and understanding
- demonstrate good knowledge of the most important post- and decolonial exponents and their critique of social sciences as taught and practiced in the Western intellectual mainstream tradition and its Eurocentric hegemony;
- demonstrate an understanding of how these counter-hegemonic approaches can influence and guide the choice of theories and research methodologies in social sciences that are more in tune with a globalised and deeply interconnected world;
- apply these theories to study both historical and contemporary socio-political issues

Skills and abilities
- critically reflect on the various theories presented in the course and their object(s) of critique;
- analyse how these counter-hegemonic approaches impact (might impact) contemporary social research and the various policies that stem from it;
- independently identify a specific problem in the area of the course relevant to their own research/dissertation and discuss this on the basis of relevant research literature and make critical judgement;
- make informative, critical and supported written and oral presentations;
- demonstrate the capacity to independently and analytically contribute to research in social science, including post- and decolonial theory.
Making judgement

- be able to reason and judge how research contributions (articles, studies, policy documents etc.) can be evaluated from different epistemological and ontological point of views.

C. Course content
Generally, the course aims to build a conceptual framework for decolonizing social sciences and research. Drawing from feminist, postcolonial, decolonial and subaltern critiques of social science knowledge production, the course aims at exploring the postcolonial or decolonial turn in different domains of the social sciences, exploring the global plurality of particular disciplines, in the conceptual understanding of relevant analytical tools such as human/non-human, culture/nature, public/private and gender/sex among many others. More specifically, the course activities are expected to unfold in three thematic modules. Each module will consist of lectures, seminars, and group activities including film screenings and discussions.

The first module, titled ‘Anti-colonial epistemologies’, will explore the work of social scientists that have highlighted the colonial legacy of our received knowledge regimes. However, as the topic has also concerned other fields such as humanities, it will provide an introduction to the topic as approached by several renowned thinkers from the global south (such as Chakrabarty, de Sousa Santos, Fanon, Freire, Mignolo, and wa Thiong'o). The module will further explore the ways in which these scholars have attempted to dismantle the hegemonic structures of scholarship and build anti-colonial and decolonial epistemologies that form the foundation of a more democratic system of knowledge production.

The second module, titled ‘The Pervasive Colonialism in Legal Regimes’, will engage critically with the global rhetoric around legalization and formalization, with a rights based approach towards legitimizing anti-colonial claims. It will focus on deconstructing the underlying philosophy of such rhetoric and thereby attempting to expose its inherent colonial character. The core focus of this module is on how the inscription of postcolonial claims to land and resources within the colonially embedded notions of sovereignty, territory and property ownership, can simultaneously work towards recolonization.

The third module, entitled ‘Anti-colonial struggles in the Global North’, will cover case studies of anti-colonial struggles embedded within the Global North. Examples would be the struggles of Sami people in Scandinavia, Native American peoples’ movements in USA and Canada, and movements of aboriginal people in Australia. The module will also critically discuss the solidarity movements initiated by actors in the Global North and the possible risks of re-appropriating struggles. It will attempt to interrogate the flows of power and questions of identity, community, and belonging that frame and shape these struggles.

D. Pedagogy and Assessment
The course consists of a combination of lectures and seminars. The lectures have an interdisciplinary focus and students are encouraged to participate actively, based on their own research interests and reading and analysis of the course- and other relevant literature.
Students are also expected to give oral and written presentations of the literature and of specific topics related to their own research. Participation in seminars is mandatory.

Specifically, examination will be based on the following:

- Individual oral presentations.
- A course paper dealing with a specific research problem the student is working on, showing the relevant implication of the material discussed in the course.

Re-examination takes place after the end of the course. If necessary, a second re-examination is arranged at a later date.

**E. Grading scale**
Marking scale: Fail, Pass. For the grade of Pass, the student must show acceptable results on the requirements listed above. For the grade of Fail, the student has shown unacceptable results.

At the start of the course students are informed about the learning outcomes stated in the syllabus and about the grading scale and how it is applied in the course.

**F. Admission requirements**
The student must have been admitted to Doctoral Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Lund University. However, other students may be accepted by approval of the Course Director.