



FACULTY
OF SOCIAL
SCIENCES

COURSE SYLLABUS

Reg. No.
U 2021/791

2021-12-08

SGR018F Innovation and Society, 7.5 credits, third cycle

The course was established by the board of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Lund University on 2021-11-25 and the course syllabus was approved by the Research Studies Council on 2021-12-08.

The syllabus is valid from spring semester 2022.

General information

The course is offered as a freestanding, third cycle course at the Faculty of Social Sciences.

The language of instruction is English.

Learning outcomes

On completion of the course, the student shall be able to

Knowledge and Understanding

- Demonstrate knowledge about and understanding of innovation as a process and strategy from a variety of theoretical and empirical perspectives
- Demonstrate knowledge about scholarly approaches to the definition and study of innovation processes.

Competence and Skills

- Identify different types of innovation, and have a differentiated perspective on the underlying processes, causes, and effects of different types of innovations

- Able to reason about which changes and novelties qualify as innovation
- Critically examine societal consequences of innovations and innovation processes
- Exhibit the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision
- Critically, autonomously, and creatively undertake a scientifically rigorous analysis in predetermined time frames

Judgment and Approach

- Identify and critically discuss potential conflicts between various goals of innovation strategies
- Evaluate the role and limitations of innovation processes in contributing to societal objectives
- Evaluate the potential unintended societal consequences of innovation processes, and potential measures to address these
- Critically examine strengths and shortcomings of innovation strategies employed by organizations

Course content

This course identifies and goes beyond the rhetoric of innovation as entrepreneurship and the solving of technical problems, to investigate what innovation is beyond the firm and how innovation impacts society – and vice versa. The course provides a critical introduction to innovation as a process and as a strategy used by private as well as public sector organizations to achieve their goals. The course emphasizes the intended and unintended impacts of innovation on societies, by analyzing the social and geographical distribution of innovation's consequences, potential conflicts between goals, and the challenges and opportunities for governance. The course uses a multi-level approach to

innovation, linking macro level processes, institutions and technological advancement to local practices, outcomes and experiences at actor-level. The course invites doctoral students to engage with their own field of research within the course's framework, regardless of their disciplinary background.

Course design

The teaching consists of lectures and seminars. Active participation is required throughout. The course is theory-based but includes empirical examples. The course is divided into 3 blocks:

The first block provides a vocabulary for discussing innovation processes and their societal consequences. The block aims to achieve conceptual clarity, identifying common definitions, models, literatures, and their main contributions up until today. This block draws on different theoretical traditions, including innovation studies, sustainability transitions, economic sociology, sociology of work, economic geography and innovation governance. A panel discussion by the diverse teaching team concludes the block.

The second block begins with an outline for our analytical apparatus, considering the ways in which societal institutions pre-condition and shape innovation, but also examining the ways in which innovations generate intended and unintended societal effects. We then proceed to unpack these processes and effects in a series of case studies, in order to exemplify the application of innovation theories and reveal inherent complexities, contradictions, struggles and nuances. Cases include but are not limited to work and employment, environment, marketing, social innovation, and regional development.

The third and final block consists of panel discussions in which we integrate learnings across cases and critically examine ways of evaluating the societal consequences of innovation, in practice and in policy.

Assessment

The assessment task consists of a project in which the student performs a critical evaluation of innovation and its societal preconditions and consequences, in a field of their choice, using the analytical apparatus discussed in the course.

Grades

The grades awarded are Pass or Fail. To receive a Pass the doctoral student must fulfil the learning outcomes of the course.

At the beginning of the course, the student will be informed about the learning outcomes stated in the syllabus as well as the grading scale and how it is applied at the course.

Entry requirements and selection

Applicants must be admitted to a doctoral programme. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of available places at the course, students from the Faculty of Social Sciences, Lund University, will be given priority.

Applicants must be admitted to a doctoral programme. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of available places at the course, course participant selection will proceed in the following order:

1. Doctoral students from the Faculty of Social Sciences or affiliated with CIRCLE
2. Lund University doctoral students
3. Doctoral students from other universities