Syllabus
for course at second level
Research Methods and Thesis
Forskningsmetodik och examensarbete

Course code: PSYY12
Valid from: Autumn 2011
Date of approval: 2008-05-20
Department: Department of Psychology
Subject: Psychology

Decision
Ratified by the Board of the Psychology Department, Stockholm University; 20-05-2008. The course plan is valid from the beginning of the autumn term 2011.

Prerequisites and special admittance requirements
Students must be enrolled on the Psychologist Program.

The course will be run over terms 9 and 10. For admission to term 10 or higher the requirements are...
• All courses and modules from the terms before the last two must be wholly completed.
• All compulsory elements of the last two terms must be wholly completed, and at least 75% of credits in the last two terms must have been achieved.

If special reason exists exempt may be given by the Board of the Psychology Department.

Course structure

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Course content
1.1 Research methods 4.5 credits
This module involves the actualization of psychological science knowledge, research, and test procedure skills necessary for completion of the thesis. (Method preparation also includes a separate method course during term 3, course component 1.2, and 30 "embedded" credits for the different method elements over terms 1-8).

12.2 Thesis, 30 credits
This module is designed to provide training to independently formulate and analyse of psychological problems, to implement relevant scientific research and to write a scientific report.

The student will be given training in the independent implementation of their own identified investigative
problem, either individually or in pairs. The investigative area must have relevance to the psychological field.

12.2a Problem definition and investigative planning, 7.5 credits
Thesis work starts in term 9 with the identification of a suitable research problem and investigative plan. This part of the course is compulsory but not graded separately.

12.2b Thesis, 22.5 credits
The thesis is to be written and reported during term 10. An compulsory element of this course is that students act as opponents to other students.

Learning outcomes
On completing the course a student will be able to plan, implement, and report a scientific psychological study:

• On the basis of theory and previous research, identify relevant scientific problems, choose the research design, as well as process, analyse, and interpret subsequently obtained data.
• Present their findings orally and in writing, and evaluate the scientific value of their research.
• Present, critically analyse, and evaluate other student's scientific studies.

Education
In the main, tuition will be in the form of supervision and seminars. The precise form of tuition and course demands (compulsory exercises and assignments) will be specified in more detail in the respective course directives.

Forms of examination
The grade for each module and the final grade for the whole course will be based on a seven point grading scheme, A to F. The grade for the whole course will be based primarily on the grade for the student's thesis, 12.2. To obtain the highest grade, A, it is necessary to obtain at the least a grade C on module 12.1.

In addition to assessment of module 12.1 (Research methods for thesis) and 12.2 the student is required to
• Have completed all assignments and compulsory elements
• Participate in the seminars of other student's thesis.

Assessment of each student's thesis (module 12.2) is based on the following aspects:
• Theoretical understanding and analysis is demonstrated by consistent theoretical reasoning, which is sufficiently focused and relevant to clarify the current study's relationship and contribution to knowledge, as judged by the course coordinator.
• Method knowledge and skill in selecting and applying the test procedures available to answer the research question, including choice of design, sample selection, type of data and relevant analysis. Successful application of advanced investigative methods will render a higher grade, whether the approach is primarily qualitative, quantitative or theoretical, as will the demonstrable ability to critically evaluate the strengths and limitations of the chosen methodology, as assessed by the course coordinator.
• Thesis will be judged by the examiner on the basis of whether the paper is logically constructed and well structured, with consistent and clear focus on the study's aims and objectives. The language should be as readable as the topic allows, and regulations on formulations are applied consistently and correctly, especially in regard to references and citations.
• Independence of the student's ideas, initiatives, responsibilities, preparation, creativity, critical reflection and problem formulation will be judged by the course coordinator in consultation with the student's supervisor.
• Opposition to the other student's thesis will also be judged be the course coordinator on a three point scale: good, acceptable, unacceptable.

Additional information
This course cannot be read as an independent course.

Required reading
The literature used on the course will be decided by the Department Board. For the thesis (module 12.2), students shall choose and review the literature themselves.