



# AG2120 Social and Cultural Issues in Planning 7.5 credits

## Social and Cultural Issues in Planning

This is a translation of the Swedish, legally binding, course syllabus.

If the course is discontinued, students may request to be examined during the following two academic years

## Establishment

Course syllabus for AG2120 valid from Autumn 2009

## Grading scale

A, B, C, D, E, FX, F

## Education cycle

Second cycle

## Main field of study

Built Environment

## Specific prerequisites

AG2109 Planning theory, AG2107 Planning the sustainable city

## Language of instruction

The language of instruction is specified in the course offering information in the course catalogue.

## Intended learning outcomes

The aim of the course is to provide a deeper understanding of the social and cultural issues in societies and their relevance to planning. The main assumption, on which this course is based, is that socio-cultural factors concerning culture and social conditions play a vital role in the planning process. Yet socio-cultural issues such as race, ethnicity, gender, class and migration (among others), have not traditionally been addressed as central topics in the field of planning. The importance of planning and building physical structures as well as places that consider the social implications of planning and design decisions are a challenging task for planners and architects.

Three objectives are identified to reach the aim:

- present theoretical and empirical studies focused on cultural and social dimensions related to the field
- to analyse and discuss how cultural and social issues are included or excluded in urban development strategies
- to encourage engagement and reflection on the issues presented in the course in relation to own experiences as students, professionals, and citizens

This means that after completing the course the student should be able to:

- have knowledge of the main lines in contemporary social and cultural theory
- analyse socio-cultural aspects in the urban planning-process and the built environment
- critically assess if and how the consideration of the social and cultural issues that are historically rooted play a role in forming the present context
- describe and validate how social and cultural issues can be understood differently by various actors engaged in the planning process
- communicate complex social-cultural issues within the planning field by using a broad range of communication techniques.

## Course contents

The course takes its starting point in recent structural changes in the global economy and the increasing multicultural citizenships. Increased mobility and competitiveness form the base for analyses of factors which contribute to attractiveness and urban development as well as deprivation and urban declination. Two issues are focused in the course; culture and social perspectives. The purpose of this course is to examine socio-cultural issues and their significance to planning practice and education.

Culture in the wide definition generally refers to patterns of human activity and the symbolic structures that give such activities significance and importance. It is a system of symbols and meanings without fixed boundaries, constantly in flux. Expressions of culture are defined according to this definition within a wide range; for instance sports and shopping are cultural things as well as fine arts.

Social issues are studied from different perspectives. First, a focus is placed on issues concerning power, justice, social cohesion, integration and exclusion. Second, issues on the urban agglomeration as an arena for social interaction, e.g. as a space for socializing, social and creative meetings, will be highlighted.

## Disposition

The course will consist of a combination of lectures, seminars, group project work and individual essay-writing.

## Course literature

Books and chapters to be read will be presented before the course starts

## Examination

- PRO1 - Project Work, 3.0 credits, grading scale: A, B, C, D, E, FX, F
- SEM1 - Seminars, 4.5 credits, grading scale: A, B, C, D, E, FX, F

Based on recommendation from KTH's coordinator for disabilities, the examiner will decide how to adapt an examination for students with documented disability.

The examiner may apply another examination format when re-examining individual students.

## Other requirements for final grade

To pass the course, the students shall

- take an active part in literature seminars, lectures and exercises (attendance at least 75%) - Literature seminars and lectures (SEM1; 4.5 cr).
- group project work (included presence in supervision) with project presentation – Project Work (PRO1; 3,0 cr)

## Ethical approach

- All members of a group are responsible for the group's work.
- In any assessment, every student shall honestly disclose any help received and sources used.
- In an oral assessment, every student shall be able to present and answer questions about the entire assignment and solution.