FAL3509 Social Practice Theory (STP) for Research on Sustainable Development 4.5 credits

Social praktikteori (STP) för forskning kring hållbar utveckling

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 FAL3509 valid from Spring 2019

Grading scale

P, F

Education cycle

Third cycle

Specific prerequisites

Graduate students from all schools at KTH, as well as from all faculties at other universities are welcome. However, a prerequisite is a social science preconception at least on par with a theory of science course from the second cycle, including social sciences from the second cycle. Also research engineers, and corresponding, employed at KTH or at research institutes, having this level of preconception are welcome.

Language of instruction

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

Intended learning outcomes

The course objective is that students will be able to relate and apply SPT theory and its empirical and analytical perspective to their own research. The achievement of this objective will be shown and examined through the writing of lecture notes and a final paper (preferably based on the notes).

Course contents

The purpose of the course is to provide an overview of Social Practice Theory (SPT). It focuses on design, planning and policy for sustainable development. For the PhD students the course provides an opportunity to connect the SPT framework to their own reserach. The course is structured around five main themes:

- The origins, front figures and basics of Social Practice Theory.

- The application of SPT to sustainability issues e.g. within areas related to energy use, housing, transportation, consumption, food and media.

- How SPT is applied from the different disciplinary perspectives of social science (e.g. environmental sociology), engineering science (design and human-computer-interaction), respectively policy and (urban and regional) planning.

- The characteristics and usefulness of SPT in relation to a handful of other (alternative) approaches, e.g. actor-network-theory, theory of habit and "communities of practice".

- Unresolved conflicts within SPT in terms of e.g. theory versus applicability and the individual versus the social.

Course literature

The course will be in the form of seven seminars (and one final seminar / examination). Each of the seven seminars will basically cover one theme, and the literature list will also be structured according to themes/seminars, so that there will be literature concerning: History of Social Practice Theory; Related/alternative approaches; General features of practice theory and method; Orientation towards design; Orientation towards consumption and environment; Orientation towards policy and planning; Criticism of SPT; and the Applicability of SPT.

Examination

• SEM1 - Seminars, 4.5 credits, grading scale: P, 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

Passing the course requires having fulfilled the mandatory requirements:

- Active participation in all seminars (including handing in brief notes of reflection prior to each seminar, and compensating for absence)

- Final paper

- Oral presentation in final seminar.

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.