

Course Outline for
The Professional Conversation (7.5 ECTS)
Course code: UC108F

Spring 2023

Course Leader:
Daniel Hailemariam

Institutionen för pedagogik och didaktik

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Introduction

You are most welcome to study with us in the Department of Education at Stockholm University. The course is a good complement for those who want to develop their communication skills. The purpose of the course is to help you develop professional attitude and communication skills to be competent in carrying out professional conversations with clients, students, colleagues, business partners, patients, etc. You will also benefit from the skills in your private relationships and everyday life.

The course you have applied for is a process-oriented course which means that it is based on your experiences, needs, and active participation. The course is a free-standing (independent) full-time course on the undergraduate level (first cycle). The course consists of lectures, seminars, group discussions, literature studies, and skill-practicing sessions. The course is a full-time course for the duration of the course (five weeks).

The skill-practicing sessions will require that you as a participant demonstrate conversational skills in a small group where you will be giving feedback to each other. The course literature will be dealt with at lectures, seminars, during the skill-practicing sessions, and through your written assignments. All assignments that are handed in should reflect that you have read the required course literature. Upon successful completion of the course, you will earn 7.5 ECTS.

Course Content

The course deals with the basics of interaction and communication in professional conversations within institutional contexts. Central concepts and perspectives on meaning-making in interpersonal communication and interaction are illuminated. Professional approaches/attitudes and strategies in institutional conversations will be introduced. Furthermore, basic conversation skills are introduced. One of the highlights of the course will be practicing professional conversation in small groups and getting feedback from your peers. In case of absence from obligatory activities or failing to hand in written assignments, the student will be required to do supplementary assignments.

Learning outcomes

To pass the course, the students should be able to:

- explain the basic theories and concepts regarding interaction and communication in institutional contexts,
- analyze and critically examine one's professional conversation using basic methods for professional conversations,
- discuss professional approaches related to conditions that can arise in institutional conversations and relate theoretical concepts of communication to them

Forms of Examination

The course is examined through an individual written assignment, actively practicing professional conversations, and actively participating in group seminars. Practicing professional conversation, and actively participating in group seminars, are assessed with the grades, pass, or fail. The individual written examination is assessed according to a seven-level, criteria-referenced scale. The grade for the whole course is based on the individual written examination, provided that the participant has completed all other assignments.

Student achievement is graded according to a seven-level, criteria-referenced scale:

Passing grades (in descending order)

A = Excellent
B = Very Good
C = Good
D = Satisfactory
E = Sufficient

Failing Grades

Fx = Fail, some more work needs to be done. Hand in your new work within two weeks of receiving the revisions from the examiner

F = Fail, major work needs to be done or requires submitting a new examination task

For a passing grade on the course, a minimum grade of E is required on the individual written assignment examination as well as a pass on the other required assignments. A student who has already received an E for the course, may not re-do assignments to achieve a higher grade. At least two examinations must be offered for each course occasion.

Examination tasks that are not submitted by the deadline stated in the course outline will not be considered for assessment. A student who has received a failing grade after submitting two new examination tasks for a course has the right to be assessed by a new examiner unless there are reasons of the contrary. Such requests should be made to the department board/ head of the department.

Contact details

Course leader and main teacher

Daniel Hailemariam, daniel.hailemariam@edu.su.se

Course administrator

Peter Skoglund, peter.skoglund@edu.su.se

University Account and Athena

For information on how to activate your university student account, please visit:

<https://www.su.se/english/education/a-smooth-start/get-access-to-it-services-your-university-account-and-order-a-university-card>

Athena is a web-based learning and collaboration platform for courses at Stockholm University. You must have activated your student account and registered for the course to access the Athena course page. The Athena page for this course will be made available to students registered for the course, no later than one week before the course begins. If you have difficulty accessing the Athena page for this course, please check first that you are registered for the course. Then contact the course administrator. The link to Athena is <https://athena.su.se/>

Plagiarism

It is permissible to cite other sources, but both direct quotes and indirect references to a text must always be provided with correct and complete referencing to the source. Copying or writing a shorter or longer paragraph and stating yourself as the author of the text is prohibited. This is considered plagiarism. You may also not copy your own texts that have been used in previous examinations, as this is considered self-plagiarism.

An example of plagiarism is copying text verbatim or almost verbatim (this includes parts of a text and/or individual sentences) and not indicating where the text originates from. Plagiarism is also when you use another person's text and make it appear that it is your own. For example, text found in the course literature and /or texts that you have found online, or another student's course paper. Plagiarism is regarded as a crime, not only against the established research ethics code but also against upholding general regard towards one's own and others' texts. Plagiarism is unauthorized cheating and is always subject to disciplinary reporting, which can lead to suspension. At Stockholm University, texts are checked against a database.

Cheating

As a student at Stockholm University, you are responsible for your education. Part of your responsibility includes knowing the rules that exist for study, examination, and being on the university premises, and utilizing resources. According to the rules that apply to the university, disciplinary measures may be taken against students for:

- using unauthorized means, or otherwise attempt to, mislead an exam or when student performance is assessed otherwise;
- interfering with or obstructing teaching, tests, or other activities within the framework of education.

Disciplinary matters are dealt with by the Stockholm University Disciplinary Board. The penalty may be a warning or suspension for a period of 1-6 months. Information on Stockholm University rules for examination and disciplinary cases can be found on Stockholm University's website www.su.se/regulations. Teachers are required to report a suspected suspicion of cheating to the director of studies.

Grading Criteria

See below

Course Evaluation

The course is evaluated through an online survey which will be made available at the end of the course.

Support during your studies

At Stockholm University, it is possible to receive extra support in addition to regular teaching.

Academic Writing Service

The Academic Writing Service provides English-language support for writing and study skills. They give talks and seminars and offer individual guidance. Their services are available free of charge to all students

at Stockholm University. For more information visit: <https://www.su.se/english/education/student-support/academic-writing-service>

Studying with a disability

If you have a documented disability, e.g. dyslexia, you have the opportunity to receive special pedagogical support. Examples of support initiatives may be note-taking, audiobooks, extended exam time, or sign language interpretation. You must apply for special pedagogical support from Student Support Office at Stockholm University <https://www.su.se/english/education/student-support/studying-with-a-disability>

Once the application has been received, a coordinator will contact you to arrange a personal meeting. After speaking to the coordinator, you will receive a certificate describing the types of support to be offered to you.

It is the responsibility of the student to contact the student counselors at the Department of Education before a course begins to arrange for support. Their email address is studievagledare@edu.su.se. The student counselors will then contact the course leaders with regards to the type of support the student will need.

Required Course Litterature

Burton, Graeme & Dimpleby, Richard (2006). *Between Ourselves: An Introduction to Interpersonal Communication*. Hodder Arnold, London. (280 pages).

Egan, Gerard (2014). *The Skilled Helper: A Problem-management and Opportunity-development Approach to Helping*. Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning. (460 pages).

Gordon, Thomas (2001). *Leader Effectiveness Training: L.E.T. (Revised): Proven Skills for Leading Today's Business into Tomorrow*. TarcherPerigee. (300 pages).

Holm, Ulla (2002). Empathy and Professional Attitude in Social Workers and Non-Trained Aides. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 2002 vol. 11, pages 66-75 (10 pages). Pdf copy available on Athena.

Rogers, Carl (1954). Toward a Theory of Creativity. In *ETC: A Review of General Semantics* Vol. 11, No. 4, 249-260 (pdf). (11 pages). Pdf copy available on Athena

Rogers, Carl (1973). 'Some new challenges to the helping professions, *American Psychologist*, 28 (5): pages 379-387 (10 pages).

Reference Reading

Dust, Fred (2020). *Making Conversation: Seven Essential Elements of Meaningful Communication*. Harper Business. (256 pages).

Merry, Tony (2002). *Learning and Being in Person-Centered Counselling*. PCCS Books. (216 pages)

Rogers, Carl (1951). *Client-centered Therapy: Its Current Practice, Implications, and Theory*. London: Constable. (550 pages).

Sanders, Pete & Wilkins, Paul & Frankland, Alan (2009). *Next Steps in Counselling Practice: A students' companion for degrees, HE diplomas, and vocational courses*. PCCS Books. (370 pages).

Course assignments

Here , you will find information about the assignments you must fulfill to complete the course satisfactorily. All assignments are mandatory.

Assignment number 1

Formulate your aim with this course

The purpose of this assignment is to help you formulate goals to strive for with the help of this course. The following questions might help you formulate some goals:

- Why did you apply for this course?
- What do you want to learn and/or develop with the help of this course?
- What steps have you already taken in that direction?
- What are the strengths/experiences you bring with you to the course (in regards to the professional conversation)?
- What can you contribute to the course?
- What do you need from the course and/or from the participants to reach your goals with this course?

This assignment will be handed in through Athena and used for discussion in small groups. Take your notes with you to the beginning of the course. Grade: E (pass) or F (not done)

Assignment number 2

Empathy and empowerment

Concepts like *empathy* and *empowerment* are invaluable, and recurrent in the field of professional conversation. The course will give participants the chance to study these concepts more closely. This assignment will be to study these concepts in your small groups.

Do as follows:

1. Read about *empathy* and *empowerment* and be acquainted with the concepts (individually), and formulate a couple of questions or perspectives you would like to discuss with the other members of the group. Send your reflections to one another at a date of the groups choosing (before you do step 2).
2. The small group (study group) meets to discuss the questions and perspectives raised by each group member (step 1). Assign a secretary to document your discussions, questions raised and conclusions reached.
3. The written document should then be sent to Daniel Hailemariam no later than the last day of the course. The document has to include: the questions raised by each participant, a summary of your discussion, conclusions reached and the names of the participants who *actively* participated in all steps (first and last names). Grade: E (pass) or F (not done).

Assignment number 3

Practicing sessions

This assignment is about practicing your communication skills in a small group (one session with a teacher and another one without). The skill practicing sessions will require several things:

- participants need to demonstrate conversational skills
- participants will actively give and receive feedback
- participants will need to abide by guidelines and norms the group outlines together

- participants will need to think of an authentic dilemma/problem they are willing to talk about in such a setting
- more instructions will be given at the beginning of the course

Grade: E (pass) or F (not done)

Assignment number 4

Analysis of authentic conversation

The purpose of this assignment is to fortify and deepen your awareness of the theories and methods of professional conversation. The assignment will also help you integrate theory with practice and reflect upon and observe yourself as a professional conversation leader.

Your assignment will be to carry out one authentic conversation with anyone of your choice and make a written analysis of your contribution and role in the conversation with the help of the instructions below. The conversation has to be audio recorded mainly for your benefit, but your teacher can also ask you to hand in the recorded conversation (so keep the recording until you get your final grades). The individual you have the conversation with decides what he/she wants to talk about. Avoid as much as possible having this conversation with someone you know very well. If you, however, choose to have this conversation with someone you know very well, this has to be motivated and the various implications should be discussed in your assignment.

Use the following subtitles in your analysis:

A) Description

Give a brief description of the conversation and write briefly what the purpose of the conversation was. What needs did you and your client identify? How did you arrive at these needs? How did you work with them? This section should not be more than one A4 page

B) Analyse

Then you analyze your role as conversation leader based on the following headlines: note that reference should be made to the literature and lectures.

Professional approach/attitude: write about your approach/attitude – what did you use? How was it received? What conclusions do you draw?

Skills used: which skills were used? Why did you choose to use them? Were there other skills you could have used in hindsight? Which phases did you cover during your conversation? What conclusions do you draw?

Empathy, Empowerment: what is your understanding of these concepts? In what way were they relevant in your conversation?

Broadening perspectives: Did you succeed in broadening your client's horizons? If yes, how? If no, why not? What are the possible methods and/or means to continue with this conversation? In hindsight what could you have done? What conclusions do you draw?

Client's perspective: How did the client respond to the skills you used? In what way did your client benefit (or not benefit) from your professional approach and communication skills? How do you know?

Personal reflections: Examine yourself as a professional conversation leader, what are your main reflections and what advice do you give to yourself? What are your strengths and areas you need to develop? How can you use your strengths and work with your potential for improvement? What conclusions do you draw?

Formalities

The content of the analysis needs to correspond to the course and the description of the assignment. The analysis needs to be based on the course literature with concrete references to the literature. You will need to include a bibliography. The analysis shall include a cover page (with your full name, the name of the course, and your e-mail address), and your main text (around 7 pages). You will need to use subtitles but make sure that the subtitle corresponds with the content. The language of the analysis should be clear, concise, and comprehensible. The analysis shall be written by computer (Times New Roman 12 and 1.5 spaced) correctly spelled with numbered pages.

Your analysis shall be uploaded on Athena no later than the last day of the course at 18.00. Three to four weeks after the end of the course you will get your grades with some comments from your teacher. The grade you get on this assignment will be the grade for the whole course provided that you have completed all other assignments.

Course schedule

Subject to change in content

Date	Time	Venue	Content	Teacher
16 January			From this date you will find all necessary information about the course on the Athena site	
17 January	09.00 – 12.00	2511	Introduction to the course and subject area (communication, professionalism, human view, attitude, empathy, power, empowerment)	Daniel Hailemariam
	13.00 – 16.00	2419	Continue from the above	Daniel Hailemariam
18 January	09.00 – 12.00	2427	Continuation from 17 January and conversation skills	Daniel Hailemariam
	13.00 – 16.00	2427	Continuation of conversation skills	Daniel Hailemariam
26 January	09.00 – 11.00	Zoom (Zoom link will be posted on Athena on the 25 th of January)	Continuation of Communication Skills (if we need extra time)	Daniel Hailemariam
30 January	09.00 – 10.00	2503	Introduction to the skill training session	Daniel Hailemariam
	10.00 – 16.00	2431, 2445, 2451, 2531, 2553,	Training sessions in small groups	External teachers
1 February	09.00 – 11.00	2519	Broadening of perspectives	Annika Davén
	12.00 – 15.00	2427, 2431, 2445, 2527, 2531	Training sessions in small groups (no external teacher)	Annika Davén
	15.00 – 16.00	2519	A joint conclusion of the day	Annika Davén
8 February	09.00 – 10.00	Zoom (Zoom link will be posted on Athena on the 7 th of February)	Tutorial for those who have questions	Daniel Hailemariam
16 February	10.00 – 12.00	2411	End of the course	Daniel Hailemariam

All the rooms are located in: Department of Education, Frescativägen 54
Rooms 24... fourth floor & Rooms 25... fifth floor

Grading criterion for assignment nr 4

(Written analysis of authentic conversation)

GRADE CRITERION A

The student shall: critically review the recorded conversation in relation to relevant concepts and theories relating to the professional conversation. Examine the conversation and suggest alternative approaches based on the course literature and experience acquired during the course. reason about his/her role as a conversation leader and draw independent conclusions about their behavior and demonstrate an ability to identify, explain and critically process the literature about his/her role as a conversation leader and suggests areas for development. Demonstrate an understanding of course concepts, and the understanding must be presented in a clear, concise, and logical manner. This understanding must be consistent and well-grounded in course literature, lectures, and seminars.

GRADE CRITERION B

The student shall: critically review the recorded conversation about relevant concepts for the professional conversation. Discuss proposals for alternative approaches based on course literature and experience acquired during the course. Demonstrate an ability to critically discern and explain his/her role as a conversation leader. Present a paper that is clear and logical and consistently well-grounded in the course literature, lectures, and seminars.

GRADE CRITERION C

The student shall be able to: discuss the recorded conversation about him/herself based on relevant concepts for the professional conversation. Discuss proposals for alternative approaches based on the course content and be able to justify these approaches make sufficient reference to the course literature, lectures, and seminars, and demonstrate an understanding of them. Present a paper that is logical and structured.

GRADE CRITERION D

The student shall be able to: relate the recorded conversation to him/herself and the key concepts related to the professional conversation make connections and references to the course literature, lectures, and seminars. Present a paper that is logically presented

GRADE CRITERION E

The student shall be able to: relate the recorded conversation to key concepts related to the professional conversation that refers to the course literature, lectures, and seminars to a satisfactory extent. Present a paper that complies with the formalities as spelled out in the course outline present a paper that is by and large logical

Fx

The analysis demonstrates deficiencies in language, structure, and/or formalities shows a lack of reference to the course literature. The deficiencies need to be corrected and handed in for a second evaluation

F

The analysis has not been submitted or cannot be evaluated due to significant deficiencies in areas mentioned in Fx