

## **Course Description**

# **Theory of Science (7,5 ECTS)**

**PEA462**

**Autumn 2024**

**Course Leader: Rebecca Ye**

## **Department of Education**

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Stockholm University  
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## General Introduction

This course on *Theory of Science* will focus on social scientific theories and epistemological perspectives of relevance to the field of international and comparative education (ICE). Through the various learning activities, these perspectives will be worked through and discussed in relation to ongoing developments in the research field. The course also examines the comparative reasoning and motivations that underpins how research questions and aims are established, paving the way for research in various theoretical knowledge fields such as sociology, anthropology and psychology, in relation to ICE. Finally, the course compels us to reflect on how we know what we know by interrogating knowledge production within the field of international and comparative education.

## Contact Information

### Lecturers

Rebecca Ye ([rebecca.ye@edu.su.se](mailto:rebecca.ye@edu.su.se)), course leader

Malgorzata Malec Rawinski ([malgosia.malec-rawinski@edu.su.se](mailto:malgosia.malec-rawinski@edu.su.se))

Klas Roth ([klas.roth@edu.su.se](mailto:klas.roth@edu.su.se))

### Course administrators

Thórunn Jakobsdóttir ([mastersprogramme@edu.su.se](mailto:mastersprogramme@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 be registered for the course to have access to 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.itslearning.com>

## Course Structure and Content

The course combines lectures, seminars and collegial workshops to achieve the learning outcomes. These learning sessions are structured around main readings and students are therefore expected to contribute actively to the discussions based on reflections from reading the assigned literature for each session. Ahead of every seminar session, students will have to submit a reading memo on Athena based on their reflections of the assigned literature, as a basis for preparation and in-class discussion.

Through the course, there will be the possibility to study the use of positivism, constructivism, hermeneutics, critical theory, and pragmatism in educational research. Active participation in the seminars is based on careful reading of the selected research articles on the possibilities and limitations with different theoretical perspectives. The course also offers opportunities for reflections in educational research based on students' own research and theoretical interests with structured occasions for collegial discussions in smaller groups. At the end of the course, participants will deepen their understanding by contrasting theoretical perspectives through a course paper with a specific task assignment.

The course schedule is available on TimeEdit and the Athena course page.

## Learning Objectives

After the course, the student is expected to be able to:

- Explain the use of core theoretical concepts
- Operationalise theoretical perspectives and account for their respective core assumptions
- Analyse the differences and similarities of theoretical perspectives
- Critically study the relevance of different theoretical perspectives to international and comparative education.

## Examination and Grading

Each course participant shall submit a course paper assignment that shows their ability and capacities to reflect and formulate research aims and questions for a chosen topic within the field of international and comparative education, with theoretical perspectives discussed in the course. The course paper assignment will be discussed in the course and also uploaded on Athena.

### **Course paper deadline**

The course paper submission date is 4 December 2024, 1600 hrs. The paper is submitted in the 'Course Assignment' folder on Athena.

#### *Second Examination*

Students who do not submit a course paper during the first examination, who fail to submit their course paper by the due date, or receive an unsatisfactory mark in the first course examination can submit an assignment during the second examination. The second examination will contain a new topic and new task.

The second assignment task will be posted on Athena on 3 February 2025.

The submission date for the second examination is 24 February 2025, 1600 hrs. The paper is submitted in the 'Assignment' folder on Athena under "Second Examination". Please save the document as your Surname, First Name.

#### *Third Examination*

Students who do not submit a course paper in the earlier examinations or receive an unsatisfactory mark in the earlier course examination(s) can submit an assignment during the third examination. The third examination will contain a new topic and new task.

The third assignment task will be posted on Athena on 8 April 2025.

The submission date for the third examination is 29 April 2025, 1600 hrs. The paper is submitted in the 'Assignment' folder on Athena under "Third Examination". Please save the document as your Surname, First Name.

### **Attendance**

In order for a student to be examined, they must have attended at least 80% of all compulsory course sessions, such as lectures and seminars. Student absences of more than 20% of the course sessions must be compensated via additional course assignments. If a student has attended less than 60% of the course sessions they have to re-take the course. Course paper instructions will be provided separately.

### **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 original 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 other 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, or AI-generated 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 own 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](http://www.su.se/regulations). Teachers are required to report a suspicion of cheating to the director of studies.

## Grading Criteria

<i>Grading Scale</i>	
<b>A.</b>	The course paper demonstrates that all the learning outcomes of the course have been fulfilled in an excellent way. The student shows an excellent ability to describe, analyse and discuss the content of the course in an independent and reflective way. The text contains several references to the course literature and to other relevant texts that are well chosen to fit the context. The text is well structured, without any formal mistakes and with a language that signifies clarity and an effort to elaborate the text. The text should not be shorter or longer than the range prescribed in the course assignment. A course paper that is shorter or longer than the prescribed range will be affected in the grading.
<b>B.</b>	The course paper demonstrates that all the learning outcomes of the course have been fulfilled in a very good way. The student shows a very good ability to describe, analyse and discuss the content of the course in an independent and reflective way. The text contains several references to the course literature and to other relevant texts that are well chosen to fit the context. The text is well structured, without formal mistakes and with a language use that signifies clarity and an effort to elaborate the text. A course paper that is shorter or longer than the prescribed range will be affected in the grading.
<b>C.</b>	The course paper demonstrates that all the learning outcomes of the course have been fulfilled in a good way. The student shows good ability to describe, analyse and discuss the content of the course without major shortcomings. The text refers in a relevant way to the course literature and to other appropriate texts. The text is well structured, without any major formal mistakes and with a good language use. A course paper that is shorter or longer than the prescribed range will be affected in the grading.
<b>D.</b>	The course paper demonstrates that all the learning outcomes of the course have been fulfilled in a satisfactory way. The student shows that they have achieved knowledge and understanding of the course content and ability to discuss this in an independent way. The text refers to the course literature. The text is structured in a satisfactory way, without any major formal mistakes and in an acceptable language. A course paper that is shorter or longer than the prescribed range will be affected in the grading.
<b>E.</b>	The course paper demonstrates that the learning outcomes of the course have been fulfilled in a sufficient way. The student shows that they have achieved an acceptable knowledge and understanding of the course content, but with a limited ability to discuss this in an independent way. The text connects to the course literature. The text is structured in an acceptable way, without any serious formal mistakes and in an acceptable language. A course paper that is shorter or longer than the prescribed range will be affected in the grading.

<b>Fx.</b>	The course paper demonstrates that the required learning outcomes have not been fulfilled. Possible shortcomings could be: that the course literature is not covered in a sufficient way, analyses and discussions in the text are not convincing, the text is too close to the course literature, there is no link between own observations and the course literature / the content of the course, the text is difficult to understand due to inadequate language use, the disposition of the text makes it difficult to follow the text, references are incorrect or missing and/or the paper is much shorter or much longer than the prescribed length. A revision of the paper is needed.
<b>F.</b>	The course paper demonstrates that the required learning outcomes have not been fulfilled. Possible shortcomings could be those mentioned under F(x), but are so serious that they cannot be amended in a revision of the text. The course participant has to do a new course assignment that will be given by the course leader.

## Course Evaluation

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

## Course Literature

The course literature will be made available on the course page no later than two months before the course begins.

## 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, audio books, 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 types of support to be offered to you.

It is the responsibility of the student to contact the student counsellors at the Department of Education *before a course begins* in order to arrange for support. Their email address is [studievagledare@edu.su.se](mailto:studievagledare@edu.su.se). The student counsellors will then contact the course leaders with regards to the type of support the student will need.