



Stockholm University
Department of Sociology

Course Plan SO7420

Sociological Perspectives on Organization and Leadership (7,5 ECTS)

Course Teacher: Linda Weidenstedt

Autumn term 2024 (4/11 2024 – 19/01 2025)

1. General information

The course is a 7.5 ECTS credits course in sociology at the advanced level. All lectures and seminars will be held in English. The majority of lectures will be held on campus and a few on Zoom.

This master's level course aims to introduce advanced students with a background in personnel, working life, and organization studies to a range of sociological theories, concepts, and empirical studies in the field of organizations, leadership, and labor markets. We review, analyze, and discuss theories relating to the macro level (the labor market), the micro level (individuals, employers/employees, interaction, leadership), and the meso level (organizations), as well as how these different levels are interconnected. Students will also attend seminars in which the literature and its relevance for practice is discussed.

The course is organized as a sequence of lectures, held by experts in the different fields, and seminars in connection with each lecture.

Important:

Course communication will primarily happen via the online learning platform **Athena**.

Please make sure you find your way to the course's Athena page at <https://athena.itslearning.com/>

2. Intended learning outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- describe and analyze the differences between common organizational theories and institutional perspectives;
- define and apply key terms and concepts of institutional-, network-, and organization theory to analyze phenomena and processes related to organizations, leadership and labor market;
- describe and critically analyze different leadership- and management models from a sociological point of view;
- explain how social stratification processes by dimensions such as gender, class, and ethnicity may arise within organizations and the labor market, and to analyze the impact these processes can have on organizations and society at large.

3. Teaching and learning activities

Teaching is conducted through lectures and seminars. Students are expected to do the following:

- Complete assigned reading before each class meeting
- Complete assignment before class meeting
- Participate actively in seminar discussions

The course consists of 10 lectures (á 2 hours). 8 of the lectures are followed by a 1 hour seminar. Students have to submit written seminar assignments (see below). In seminars, students are expected to actively take part in discussions.

Lecturers:

- On matters relating to the course in general, examination etc:

Linda Weidenstedt: linda.weidenstedt@sociology.su.se

- On matters regarding particular lectures:

Andrea Geissinger: angei@stanford.edu

Hernan Mondani: hernan.mondani@sociology.su.se

Linda Weidenstedt: linda.weidenstedt@sociology.su.se

Charlotta Stern: charlotta.stern@sociology.su.se

4. Schedule

#	Time & Place	Lecturer	Title of lecture & activity	Literature
1	4 Nov 15:00 – 17:00 E306	Linda Weidenstedt	· Introduction to the themes of the course · Practical issues	· Elger 2009
2	8 Nov 9:00 – 12:00 Zoom	Andrea Geissinger	· Organizational forms & the expansion of organization · seminar 1	· Ahrne & Brunsson 2011 · Meyer & Bromley 2013 · Rao et al. 2000
3	12 Nov 13:00 – 16:00 A5137	Linda Weidenstedt	· Classical organization theories I · seminar 2	· Tosi & Slocum 1984 · Williamson 1981
4	19 Nov 13:00 – 16:00 Zoom	Linda Weidenstedt Andrea Geissinger	· Classical organization theories II · seminar 3	· DiMaggio & Powell 1983 · Hannan & Freeman 1977 · Kanter 1977 · Friedland & Alford 1991* · Meyer & Rowan 1977*
5	22 Nov 9:00 – 12:00 D9	Hernan Mondani	· Network analysis and organizational dynamics · seminar 4	· Cross et al. 2002 · Borgatti et al. 2003 · Uzzi & Dunlap 2005
6	27 Nov 13:00 – 16:00 D499	Linda Weidenstedt	· Communication, employee voice, and power · seminar 5	· Hyman 2018 · Weidenstedt 2016 · Zhu et al. 2018 · Al-Fedaghi 2012*
7	2 Dec 13:00 – 16:00 F12	Lotta Stern	· Co-determination, unions, and employee voice · seminar 6	· Hedin 2015 · Levinson 2000 · Wheeler 2002
8	6 Dec 10:00 – 13:00 D416	Linda Weidenstedt	· Leading remote work · seminar 7	· Bloom et al. 2022 · Byrd 2022 · McDonald et al. 2022
9	12 Dec 9:00 – 12:00 Zoom	Andrea Geissinger Linda Weidenstedt	· Gig economy · seminar 8	· Healy et al. 2017 · Kellogg et al. 2020 · Kenney & Zysman 2016
10	16 Dec 14:00 – 16:00 E319	Lotta Stern Linda Weidenstedt	· The Swedish labor market model · Summary, questions, and take-home exam	· Bengtsson 2023 · Kjellberg 2017 · Swenson 2004

* optional reading

5. Assessment

To pass the course, students must:

- a) **attend** at least 5 of the 8 seminars;
- b) **submit** written assignment for the course seminars;
- c) achieve at least **grade E** on the compound seminar-assignment-grade;
- d) get **grade E** or higher (A-D) on the main course exam.

5.1 Seminar-assignments

Eight of the course's lectures are followed by a 1 hour seminar. Students are expected to submit the following assignment in advance to those seminars:

- **Read and examine** the obligatory course literature carefully (i.e. the assigned literature for a particular lecture/seminar)
- **Answer the following tasks (ca 150-200 words all in all):**
 - 1) Describe what strikes you as particularly interesting in at least one of the readings and why.
 - 2) Describe any question, problem, or issue you might have with the readings.
 - 3) Explain how the literature relates/compares to (any) of the other course readings, including the ones for this lecture (contradicting, agreeing, deviating, expanding...?)
 - 4) Formulate a short critique of at least one of the readings.
 - 5) Formulate a possible research question that relates to aspects of working life, labor market, organization and/or leadership and some or all of the literature for the lecture/seminar.
- The assignment must be written in a coherent text, not in bullet points!
- The assignment will be graded on the following scale:
Fail (F), Pass (P), Pass with distinction (PD) [equivalent to U, G, VG in Swedish].
F=0 points; P=1 point, PD=2 points. The combined number of points of all submitted assignments will then be transferred into an A-F scale and you will receive one final compound grade for your assignments. Together with the grade for the main course exam, the grade for the assignments will be part of your final course grade (assignment grade x1, main exam grade x2).
More information will be given in the introductory lecture.

Each assignment is due by the time the respective seminar starts and must be submitted on Athena under Resources >> Assignments >> respective assignment for each lecture.

5.2 Main course exam

The course is additionally assessed through a written take-home exam, consisting of 2-3 essay tasks that students will receive together with the exam. Each essay is graded on a scale from A to F (see below for criteria). Component grades are summed up to a final grade. More information will be given in the introductory lecture.

The take-home exam must be uploaded on Athena no later than
January 19, 2025 at 23:59 at the latest.

Release for a make-up exam ("omtenta") is scheduled for
February 24, 2025
Submission deadline:
March 30, 2025 at 23:59

The take-home exam is evaluated according to the following standard reference criteria, based on how well students accomplish the **intended learning outcomes** (outlined above):

A= This grade is earned when the student demonstrates his/her ability to apply a specific theory to a particular problem in a sophisticated, reflective, coherent, consistent, and logical way. The student can analyze both advantages and limitations of the selected theory. The student can accurately compare, contrast, and critically evaluate different theoretical approaches to the problem.

B= This grade is earned when the student demonstrates his/her ability to apply a specific theory to a particular problem in a coherent and consistent way but may lack a sophisticated or reflective understanding of the underlying principles. The student can analyze both advantages and limitations of the selected theory but may place more emphasis on one or the other. The student can accurately compare, contrast, and critically evaluate different theoretical approaches to the problem.

C= This grade is earned when the student demonstrates his/her ability to apply a specific theory to a particular problem in a coherent way but lacks a sophisticated or reflective understanding of the underlying principles. At a basic level, the student can explain the advantages and limitations of the selected theory but may place more emphasis on one or the other. The student can compare and contrast different theoretical approaches to the problem but may show limits in terms of critical evaluation.

D= This grade is earned when the student has some difficulty demonstrating his/her ability to apply a specific theory to a particular problem in a coherent way. The student can explain some of the advantages and limitations of the selected theory but may also include inaccuracies and weak understanding. The student cannot accurately compare and contrast different theoretical approaches to the problem and cannot sufficiently evaluate them critically.

E= This grade is earned when the student has considerable difficulty demonstrating his/her ability to apply a specific theory to a particular problem in a coherent way. The student can explain some of the advantages and limitations of the selected theory but may also include inaccuracies and weak understanding. The student cannot accurately compare and contrast different theoretical approaches to the problem and cannot sufficiently evaluate them critically.

Fx= This grade is earned when the student cannot complete the work assigned for the course. The student cannot apply a specific theory to a particular problem in a coherent way. The student cannot explain the advantages and limitations of the selected theory without inaccuracies. The student cannot accurately compare and contrast different theoretical approaches to the problem and cannot sufficiently evaluate them critically.

F= This grade is earned when the student cannot complete the work assigned for the course. The student cannot apply a specific theory to a particular problem in a coherent way. The student cannot explain the advantages and limitations of the selected theory without inaccuracies. The student cannot accurately compare and contrast different theoretical approaches to the problem and cannot sufficiently evaluate them critically.

Note: Grade E is needed to pass the course. Fx indicates that the student is offered the opportunity to upgrade his/her course work as long as the course is provided in order to achieve at least grade E. A student with grade E is not entitled to redo course work to raise his/her grade. Students who receive Fx or F on course work twice from the same instructor can request to be evaluated by another instructor. Such a request should be sent to the Director of Studies. Students can request to have course work according to this syllabus up to three semesters after it ceases to be valid. Such a request should also be sent to the Director of Studies.

6) Plagiarism

Plagiarism is strictly prohibited and may result in suspension from the University. The Department of Sociology reports all suspected cases of plagiarism to the University's disciplinary committee. Plagiarism means that you copy someone else's text or ideas without referring to the source. In an academic text, it is very important to be able to distinguish the author's own ideas from someone else's. There is nothing wrong in telling what others have written on the subject—quite the contrary—but you must make it clear to the reader whose ideas you are referring to. To avoid plagiarism, it is better that you refer too much than too little.

7) Course literature (required and *optional reading)

Articles can be downloaded with an SU-account. If you encounter problems with downloading articles, please see this instruction:

<https://www.su.se/english/library/tutorials/tutorials/search-for-scholarly-articles-1.315589>

Ahrne G. & N. Brunsson. 2011. "Organization Outside Organizations. The Significance of Partial Organization." *Organization* 18:83-104.

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<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10301763.2017.1377048>
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