



Course Syllabus

Course Title: Times of crisis: Politics and Psychology

Course Title in Swedish: Politik och psykologi i krisskeenden

Course Code: 2PK039 (eligible course), 2SS029 (independent course)
Valid From: Spring term 2018
Confirmed by: The Swedish Defence University Board of Research and Education 2017-05-22.

Department: Department of Security, Strategy and Leadership (ISSL)
Subject: Political science with a focus on crisis management and security
Level: Advanced level
Higher education credits: 15 credits

Entry requirements and specific admission requirements:

Admission to the Master's programme in politics and war. Independent course requirements: Bachelor's degree 180 credits including 90 credits political science with a focus on crisis management and security or the equivalence.

Main field of study:

Political science with a focus on crisis management and security

Progressive specialisation:

A1N

Level of specialisation:

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Course Content and Structure:

The basic assumption of the course is that we need insights into psychological and institutional perspectives to understand decisions, standpoints and attitudes in crisis management contexts. Crises are characterized by rapid changes and unwanted and hazardous events with extensive consequences for many individuals, groups or societies. Such events bring forth difficult and value-laden needs to allocate resources. Individual skills and abilities of decision makers affect how such value conflicts are managed, as do interaction between groups and networks in the institutional environment. During the course, students are presented with a number of academic debates that have influenced contemporary

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research in decision theory, policymaking and crisis management. The course begins with an overview of the scholarly field of political psychology, focusing on the role of decision-making and policy-making in institutional and political contexts. The course proceeds to provide students with a deeper knowledge of the conceptual and theoretical tools needed to understand the interaction between psychological and institutional factors as manifested in crisis management processes. The core areas of knowledge that are delved into are leadership and operational code, collaboration and coordination (including decision-making and group dynamics), cognition and emotion, problem-framing and agenda setting, policy change and policy-oriented learning.

Teaching is conducted through lectures and seminars. Students are expected to review cases of policy processes and thus identify factors that contribute to policy outcomes, with particular focus on the relationship between crises and political change.

Learning Objectives:

Having finished the course the student will be able to:

- critically discuss, account for and analyze scientific literature on political psychology and policy analysis with a focus on crisis management
- assess these perspectives in regard to the methodologies they employ and their usefulness for the analysis of particular problems within the fields of political psychology, policy analysis and crisis management
- identify and evaluate theoretical as well as practical problems and potential solutions from a crisis management, political psychology and policy analysis perspective
- independently apply theories of political psychology and policy analysis with a bearing on crisis management.

Assessment and Examination:

Assessment takes place through the following elements:

Mandatory attendance and active participation. Submission of brief literature reviews prior to seminars. Responsibility for one literature presentation and group discussion. One individually written final paper.

The examining teacher may decide on supplementary tasks in order for the student to achieve a passing grade (G).

The examining teacher may decide that absence from some of the mandatory seminars may be compensated through the submission of written supplementary tasks.

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Number of examination sessions:

There is no limit of the number of examination sessions.

Grading:

Grading is done according to a three-tiered scale: Pass with distinction (VG), Pass (G), and Fail (U).

In order to achieve a Pass with distinction (VG) on the course, the student has to have participated actively in the mandatory seminars, receive Pass on all reading reports and receive a Pass with distinction on the individually written final paper. In order to achieve a Pass (G) on the course, the student has to have participated actively in the mandatory seminars, receive Pass on all reading reports and receive a Pass on the individually written paper.

Reading list and study resources:

See appendix

Interim Regulations:

When the course is no longer offered or when the contents of the course have been changed in their essence a student has the right to be examined twice during the same academic year according to this course syllabus within a two-year period.

Miscellaneous:

The course is given as a part of the Master's programme in politics and war.

The course is given in English.

An evaluation of the course will be made after the conclusion of the course, conducted by the course convener. The evaluation is the basis of eventual changes to the course.