



Faculty of Social Sciences

The Psychology of Ecological and Dynamic Systems, 7,5 credits

Psykologin i Ekologiska och Dynamiska System, 7,5 högskolepoäng

Third Cycle/Forskarutbildningsnivå

Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by the board of the Department of Psychology on 2023-04-11. The syllabus is valid from Fall 2023.

General information

The course is offered as a third-cycle, optional, theory course with elements of method, analysis, and practical components.

Language of instruction: English

Main field of studies: Psychology, Philosophy of Psychology/Science

Learning outcomes

On completion of the course, the student shall be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

- Demonstrate understanding of the philosophical assumptions and theory of Ecological Psychology and Dynamic Systems Theory and how these compare and contrast with their chosen field/research/construct(s) of interest (or, chosen *topic*).
- Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of different Ecological and Dynamical methods and analyses as applied to their chosen topic and how they could yield novel research-theoretical insights.

Competence and skills

- Demonstrate the ability to criticize and draw out the theoretical consequences of using particular methods and analyses.
- Demonstrate the ability to redefine their chosen topic to fit Ecological-Dynamical assumptions and research processes.
- Demonstrate the ability to create a method and analysis compatible with Ecological-Dynamical principles using their redefined topic.

Judgment and approach

- Demonstrate the ability to independently and critically assess their chosen topic's definitions, methods and analyses by reviewing and critically discussing them in terms of consistency across the research process.
- Demonstrate the ability to assess the methodological, analytical, philosophical, and practical implications of their reconceptualized topic.

Course content

The course offers theoretical, methodological, and analytical alternatives from process-relational psychological approaches like Dynamic Systems Theory and Ecological Psychology. The course is intended to apply the philosophical backgrounding of Ecological-Dynamical assumptions to participants' current research. Participants are encouraged to explore the research literature from process-relational approaches further. This requires independently finding important readings and applying process-relational assumptions to current concepts through critically assessing the latter and identifying ways of reconceptualizing them using the former.

Course design

The course consists of lectures, seminars, and presentations. Most seminars and all presentations are led by course participants.

Assessment

As examination on the course the participant writes a paper where their chosen field/research/construct(s) of interest are redefined using process-relational approaches. Structural particularities in each participants' paper are in part self-determined by choosing one of four alternatives; a quantitative or qualitative experimental approach, or a theoretical-philosophical or theoretical-practical one. Participants also plan and lead at least one seminar, actively takes part in compulsory seminars, and present ongoing progress on their work.

Grades

Participants are graded Pass or Fail. To be awarded a Pass, students must have attained the learning outcomes stated for the course in their individual paper and by completing the seminar attendance and presentation demands.

At the start of the course participants are informed about the learning outcomes stated in the syllabus, about the grading scale, and how it is applied to the assessments in the course.

Entry requirements

To be eligible for the course, the student must currently be enrolled as a doctoral student. If a selection of participants is necessary, doctoral students in Psychology are prioritized, followed by students at the Lund University Faculty of Social Sciences.

A good command of the English language, both spoken and written, equivalent to English 6/B (advanced) proficiency in the Swedish secondary system, is required. Equivalence assessments will be made according to national guidelines.

Literature

Brooks, R. A. (1991). Intelligence without representation. *Artificial intelligence*, 47, 139-159. (10 p.)

Fox, Nick J. 2008. Postpositivism. In Given, Lisa M. (ed.). *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* 2, 659-664. (5 p.)

Gefter, A. (2023, March 7). *What plants are saying about us*. Nautilus. nautilus.us/what-plants-are-saying-about-us-264593/. (14 p.)

Gernigon, C., den Hartigh, R., Vallacher, R. R., & van Geert, P. (preprint). *How the Complexity of Psychological Processes Reframes the Issue of Reproducibility in Psychological Science*. (50 p.)

Lobo, L., Heras-Escribano, M., & Travieso, D. (2018). The history and philosophy of ecological psychology. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 2228. (15 p.)

Park, Y. S., Konge, L., & Artino, A. R. (2020). The positivism paradigm of research. *Academic Medicine*, 95, 690-694. (5 p.)

Richardson, M. J., Dale, R., & Marsh, K. L. (2014). *Complex dynamical systems in social and personality psychology: Theory, modeling and analysis*. In H. Reis & C. Judd (Eds.), *Handbook of research methods in social and personality psychology* (pp. 253–282). Cambridge University Press. (31 p.)

Richardson, M. J., Shockley, K., Fajen, B. R., Riley, M. A., & Turvey, M. T. (2008). *Ecological psychology: Six principles for an embodied–embedded approach to behavior*. In Handbook of cognitive science (pp. 159-187). Elsevier. (28 p.)

Warren, W. H. (2005). Direct perception: The view from here. *Philosophical Topics*, 33, 335-361. (26 p.)

Withagen, R. (2004). The pickup of nonspecifying variables does not entail indirect perception. *Ecological Psychology*, 16, 237-253. (18 p.)

Selected literature is 202 pages and will be made available on the course Canvas page. Also, there will be additional readings selected by the participants (approx. 200 pages) and recommendations by the course leader dependent on relevance to participants' chosen field/research/construct(s) of interest for their paper submission (approx. 200 pages).