Area Studies: Theory and Method, 7.5ECTS
Advanced Level, autumn semester 2015

Main teachers:
Paul T. Levin (paul.t.levin@suits.su.se)
Fredrik Uggla (fredrik.uggla@lai.su.se)
Andrés Rivarola Puntigliano (andres.rivarola@lai.su.se)
Martin Säfström (martin.safstrom@orient.su.se)

Course description
This course gives an introduction to area studies as scientific practice and gives the student an insight into what the study of regions entails and the theoretical and methodological discussions around the study of regions, as well as comparative regional studies. A special focus will be placed on how the social sciences can be enriched through regional and humanistic perspectives and how knowledge of language, history and culture constitutes the basis of regional studies.

Within the course the methodological knowledge will be firmly established through examples of regional studies. The focus will be on empirical studies that deal with Latin America, Turkey and the Middle East and North Africa.

The course is structured around three themes; regions as context, regions in context and comparative area studies. Through these themes we will go from a discussion on descriptive one-case studies to variable orientated and comparative cross-regional case studies.

Learning outcomes
After completing the course, the student is expected to:

- Demonstrate deeper knowledge about regional studies as scientific practice.
- Demonstrate an ability to, independently and critically, relate to scientific and methodological standpoints relevant for the study of regions and comparative regional studies.
- Demonstrate knowledge of how the most common social scientific methods are applied to area studies, as well as the challenges this can entail.
- Demonstrate knowledge about the current discussion around the value of knowledge of language, history and culture as the basis of regional studies.
- Demonstrate an ability to, independently and critically, analyse relevant examples of regional studies and theoretical and methodological standpoints in relation to these, with a special focus on empirical studies that deal with societal developments in Latin America, Turkey and the Middle East and North Africa.
Lessons plan

Lesson 1 - November 6, 10-12am
Introduction to the course and to Area studies:
Grand theories vs. Regional specific knowledge
Teacher: Fredrik Uggla
Reading: Bates, Centano/López-Alves, Basedau/Köllner, Ragin, King/Keohane/Verba, and to be read more as an overview: Drake/Hilbink, Mitchell, Szanton

Themes:
• Do we need Area studies?
• Case-oriented or variable oriented research?
• The debate on area studies and the disciplines
• Grand theories vs Area studies
• What does area studies mean in practice?

Theme 1: Regions as Context

Lesson 2 – November 11, 1-3pm
Thematic lecture
Teacher: Martin Säfström
Reading: Geertz, Said, Della Porta/Keating Chapter 5, 6, 7, 15.

Themes:
• Humanities and the social sciences
• Language, culture and history
• The importance of deep knowledge: How deep can we go?
• Universalism vs relativism and the problem of exceptionalism
• The study of “the other”, post-colonialism and the debate on orientalism
• Single case studies

Lesson 3 – November 16, 10-12am
Cases from Turkey and the Middle East
Teacher: Martin Säfström & Paul T. Levin
Reading: Amanat, Bank, Eickelman, Mitchell, Quataert/Sayan, Aksan, Eissentat, Meral, Shaw

Themes:
• A brief overview of the study of Turkey and the Middle East
• Examples of case studies
Lesson 4 - November 18, 2-4pm
Guest lecture
Bert Hoffman on Area studies - Then and now
Teacher: Bert Hoffman, GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies
Reading: Hoffman/Mehler, Basedau/Köllner, Ahram, Sil

Themes:
• Areas studies - a historical overview
• The GIGA Comparative Area Studies Approach

Seminar 1 - November 23, 10-12am
Regions as Context – The value of deep knowledge
Teacher: Martin Säfsström

Seminar instructions: Before the seminar the student shall submit a written assignment. The assignment will be handed out on lesson 2. Deadline for submission is on November 19.

Theme II: Regions in Global Context

Lesson 5 – November 27, 10-12am
Thematic lecture: Regions in Global Context
Teacher: Paul Levin
Reading: Mainwaring/Perez-Lunan, Farrell/Hettne/Van Langenhove Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9

Themes:
• Regions in International Relations
• Politics and War: States-systems, their origins and spread (regions as sub-systems, clusters of states).
• Cooperation: Regional integration theories.
• Money: Regions and International Political Economy (dependencia & world systems theories)

Lesson 6 – December 3, 10-12am
Cases from the Americas
Teacher: Andrés Rivarola Puntigliano

Themes:
• Regional integration in North America and Latin America
• Identity, security and trade in Western Hemisphere regionalism
Theme III: Comparative Area Studies

Lesson 7 – December 7, 10-12
Thematic Lecture: Comparative Area Studies
Teacher: Paul Levin
Reading: George/Bennett (selection), Ciddi/Levin, Somer, Sil, Della Porta/Keating Chapters 4, 11, 12, Tarrow.

Themes:
• Why compare?
• How (& how not) to compare?
• Some comparative approaches
• Comparing across regions

Lesson 8 – December 10, 10-12
Theme III – Comparative Area Studies
Cases on democratization
Teacher: Fredrik Uggla
Reading: Rueschemeyer/ Stephens/ Stephens, Valenzuela, Hadenius/Teorell, Mainwaring/ Pérez-Liñán, Luna/Murillo/Schrank, Pripstein Posusney, Stephan/Linz, Ross.

Themes:
• How do we explain democracy’s emergence and appearance?
• Can general explanations be found for democracy?
• Causal heterogeneity; meaning and implications.
• Is democracy a relevant focus for cross-regional studies?

Seminar 2 - December 15, 12-14
Seminar 2: Comparative Area studies
Teacher: Andrés Rivarola Puntigliano

Seminar instructions: Before the seminar the student shall submit a written assignment. The assignment will be handed out on lesson 7. Deadline for submission is on December 13.

Lesson 9 – January 11, 12-14
Conclusion and debate
Arranged in cooperation with the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI)

Themes:
• How do different area studies/centres view their tasks?
• What can area studies contribute to society and to academia?
• Challenges to area studies in the Swedish context?
• What future for area studies in Sweden?
Seminar 3 – January 13, 10-12
Concluding seminar, and paper presentations
Teacher: Fredrik Uggla

Seminar instructions: Before the seminar the student shall submit a written assignment. The assignment will be handed out on lesson 8. Deadline for submission is on January 11.

Examination
The course is examined by submission of three seminar assignments. The grading on the course will be based on the aggregated result of the three assignments. The assignments will be weighted as follows:

- Seminar assignment 1 (submission November 19) = 25% of the grade
- Seminar assignment 2 (submission December 13) = 25% of the grade
- Seminar assignment 3 (submission January 11) = 50% of the grade

Course literature


Bank, Andre. Comparative Area Studies and Middle East Politics after the Arab Uprisings. Middle East - Topics and Arguments. No. 4. 2015. (Download at: www.meta-journal.net)


Grading Criteria

This course uses a seven-point, goal-related grading scale: A-F. The grading will be based on the following grading criteria.

A: The student has shown a very good ability to, independently and in a critical way, analyse relevant examples of regional studies and theoretical and methodological standpoints in relation to these, with a special focus on empirical studies that deal with societal developments in Latin America, Turkey and the Middle East and North Africa.

The student has shown a very good knowledge on regional studies as scientific practice and has demonstrated a very good ability to, independently and critically, relate to scientific and methodological standpoints relevant for the study of regions and comparative regional studies.

The student has demonstrated a very good knowledge of how the most common social scientific methods are applied in area studies, as well as the challenges this can entail and about the current discussions around the value of knowledge of language, history and culture as a basis of regional studies.

B: The student has shown a good ability to, independently and in a critical way, analyse relevant examples of regional studies and theoretical and methodological standpoints in relation to these, with a special focus on empirical studies that deal with societal developments in Latin America, Turkey and the Middle East and North Africa.
The student has shown a good knowledge on regional studies as scientific practice and has demonstrated a good ability to, independently and critically, relate to scientific and methodological standpoints relevant for the study of regions and comparative regional studies.

The student has demonstrated a good knowledge of how the most common social scientific methods are applied in area studies, as well as the challenges this can entail and about the current discussions around the value of knowledge of language, history and culture as a basis of regional studies.

**C:** The student has shown an ability to, independently and in a critical way, analyse relevant examples of regional studies and theoretical and methodological standpoints in relation to these, with a special focus on empirical studies that deal with societal developments in Latin America, Turkey and the Middle East and North Africa.

The student has shown knowledge on regional studies as scientific practice and has demonstrated an ability to, independently and critically, relate to scientific and methodological standpoints relevant for the study of regions and comparative regional studies.

The student has demonstrated knowledge of how the most common social scientific methods are applied in area studies, as well as the challenges this can entail and about the current discussions around the value of knowledge of language, history and culture as a basis of regional studies.

**D:** The student has shown an ability to, independently and in a critical way, analyse relevant examples of regional studies and theoretical and methodological standpoints in relation to these, with a special focus on empirical studies that deal with societal developments in Latin America, Turkey and the Middle East and North Africa.

The student has shown knowledge on regional studies as scientific practice and has demonstrated an ability to, independently and critically, relate to scientific and methodological standpoints relevant for the study of regions and comparative regional studies.

The student has demonstrated knowledge of how the most common social scientific methods are applied in area studies, as well as the challenges this can entail and about the current discussions around the value of knowledge of language, history and culture as a basis of regional studies.

The students fulfils the criteria above, but in a somewhat superficial way and/or with some minor flaws as to his or her ability to work independently and/or in a critical way.

**E:** The student has shown an ability to, independently and in a critical way, analyse relevant examples of regional studies and theoretical and methodological standpoints in relation to these, with a special focus on empirical studies that deal with societal developments in Latin America, Turkey and the Middle East and North Africa.
The student has shown knowledge on regional studies as scientific practice and has demonstrated an ability to, independently and critically, relate to scientific and methodological standpoints relevant for the study of regions and comparative regional studies.

The student has demonstrated knowledge of how the most common social scientific methods are applied in area studies, as well as the challenges this can entail and about the current discussions around the value of knowledge of language, history and culture as a basis of regional studies.

The student has fulfilled the criteria above, but in a somewhat superficial way and/or with some minor flaws as to his or her ability to work independently and/or in a critical way. The student has fulfilled the criteria with some smaller misconceptions.

Fx: The student has not fulfilled some of the criteria for a passed grade.

F: The student has not fulfilled the criteria for a passed grade.