Area Studies: Theory and Method, 7.5ECTS
Advanced Level, autumn semester 2016

Main teachers:
Isa Blumi (isa.blumi@su.se)
Paul T. Levin (paul.t.levin@su.se)
Fredrik Uggla (fredrik.uggla@lai.su.se)
Andrés Rivarola Puntigliano (andres.rivarola@lai.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
(PRELIMINARY! Note that there might be alterations in the lessons plans)

**Lesson 1**
**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 I: Regions as Context**

**Lesson 2**
**Thematic lecture**
Teacher: Isa Blumi
Reading: Harootunian (2012); Rafael (1999); Nugent (2010); Stoler (2006).

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**
**Cases from Turkey and the Middle East**
Teacher: Isa Blumi & Paul T. Levin
Reading: Amanat (2012); Bank (2015); Göçek (2013); Quataert/Sayari, Aksan (2014), Eissentat, Meral, Shaw

Themes:
- A brief overview of the study of Turkey and the Middle East
- Examples of case studies
Lesson 4  
**Cases that Undermine Area Studies: Global Perspectives** -  
Teacher: Isa Blumi  
Reading: Blumi (2013); Lockman (2016)  

**Themes:**  
- Challenging Areas studies - a historical overview  
- Mobilizing Transregional Imperialism  
- Migration

Seminar 1  
**Regions as Context – The value of deep knowledge**  
Teacher: Isa Blumi  
Reading: Lockman (2016); Blumi (2013); Mitchell (2004).  

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  
**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  
**Cases from the Americas**  
Teacher: Andrés Rivarola Puntigiano  

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

**Lesson 7**
**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**
**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**
**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**
**Conclusion and debate**

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
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.

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 = 25% of the grade
- Seminar assignment 2 = 25% of the grade
- Seminar assignment 3 = 50% of the grade

For the deadlines on submitting the assignments see the schedule.

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)


Hadenius, A. & Teorell, J. “Pathways from Authoritarianism” in *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 18, no. 1. 2007. (Download through www.sub.su.se)


Somer, Murat. "Theory-Consuming or Theory-Producing? Turkey as a Theory-Developing Crucial Case" *Turkish Studies*. Vol. 13. No. 4. 2014. (Download through www.sub.su.se)


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 student 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.