

December 2020

## Course Description

### Master's Thesis

PEA475- Master's thesis in Education with International and Comparative Specialisation

IPM470- Master's thesis in International and Comparative Education

Spring Term, 2021

Course Leader: Professor Meeri Hellstén

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### Department of Education

Stockholm University  
Department of Education  
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## General Introduction

Under the guidance of a supervisor, this whole semester course consists of writing and a public defence of a Master Thesis in Education with International and Comparative Specialisation/Master's Thesis in International and Comparative Education. Students shall formulate a research question of relevance within the field of study, choose a methodology that can be used to find answers to the research question, use concepts, theories and methods to analyse and answer the research question and present a written, scientifically convincing argumentation to justify the results. Each student is given a supervisor who will advise the student in the research task included in the course and in the writing of the thesis.

## Contact Information

**Course Leader: Professor Meeri Hellstén**

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**Course Administrator: Emma West**

[Emma.west@edu.su.se](mailto:Emma.west@edu.su.se)



### Supervisors/examiners:

Professor Shu-Nu Chang Rundgren  
 Associate Professor Ulf Fredriksson  
 Associate Professor Susanne Kreitz-Sandberg  
 Senior Lecturer Ali Reza Majlesi  
 Associate Professor Malgosia Malec Rawinski  
 Associate Professor Marianne Teräs  
 Adjunct Lecturer Rebecca Ye

## Athena

Athena is a web-based learning and collaboration platform for courses at Stockholm University. You must have activated your student account and be registered for the course to have access to the Athena course page. The Athena page for this course will be made available to students registered for the course, no later than one week before the course begins. If you have difficulty accessing the Athena page for this course, please check first that you are registered for the course. Then contact the course administrator.

The link to Athena is <https://athena.su.se/>



## Course Structure and Content

The tasks of the Master's Thesis are conducted individually, with the help of supervision and each student is required to participate in a defence of their thesis as well as offer an opposition of a course peer's master's thesis. Students will also participate as audience to their peer students' defences of theses.

A student is entitled to 25 hours of supervision in total, including reading, email contact, telephone and verbal communication etc. About a third of the 25 hours of supervision are devoted to direct and regular meetings with the supervisor. The supervision may take the form of both individual and group supervision sessions and in some cases may be conducted online. Group sessions should allow for critical peer review of student work. Towards the end of the course work, a final peer reading session can be arranged in which students are given practice in opposition routines. The supervision may be timetabled and the schedule uploaded in the supervisor's group folder on Athena.

Students should take responsibility in making regular contact with their supervisor and expect to email her/his work in good time **before** each meeting to enable for feedback to be prepared. Supervisors are not obliged to offer a compensation session to students who fail to turn up to a scheduled meeting. Meetings should be scheduled during business hours (ca. 9-17 Swedish time) unless other arrangements have been endorsed by the supervisor.

A student is entitled to change supervisors only under special circumstances. A well-motivated request for changing supervisor is addressed to the course leader, Meeri Hellstén who will follow up on the matter. In a change of supervisor, the hours of supervision already expended will be deducted from the maximum entitlement of supervision hours.

A student who is not able to complete a thesis that has been commenced during the current course, is not entitled to additional supervision. However, a student is entitled to have their Master's thesis assessed at a subsequent re-examination opportunity.

In the Master's thesis course curriculum, the required length of the thesis is not specified. Most theses are between 70-120 pages in length. Concerns about the length of your thesis can be further discussed with your supervisor or the course leader. Care should be taken in writing the thesis to avoid excessively lengthy compositions.



## Learning Objectives

(See current course syllabus)

To pass the course the student should be able to:

- show broad knowledge and understanding in international and comparative education as a scientific discipline in relation to an independently chosen research problem presented in the thesis and which is examined in relation to an opposition,
- show a considerable degree of in-depth knowledge and understanding of the selected subject area in relation to an independent research problem,
- show in-depth knowledge in justifying a selected method and relating it to other methods within international and comparative education,
- show ability to critically and systematically integrate knowledge about theories and methods in relation to an independently chosen research problem,
- show ability to analyse, assess and manage the complexity and enquiry related to available information on the independently chosen research problem,
- show ability to critically, independently and creatively identify and formulate enquiries, adequately choose methods and plan and conduct their studies within the given time frames,
- show both verbal and written ability to explicate and discuss own conclusions drawn as well as those of others' and the knowledge and arguments in which they are embedded in dialogue with peers,
- show such ability required to participate in research and development work or for work in other qualified activities through verbal and written presentations,
- show ability to make assessments with respect to scientific, societal, and ethical aspects in relation to one's own research rationale and in relation to another thesis analysed as part of the opposition,
- show insights about the potentials and limitations of their own research and its function in society and about the responsibility for how it is utilised,
- show ability to identify proposals for further research and needs for own development of knowledge in relation to the Master thesis.

## Examination and Grading

### Assignment Deadlines

Normally, a final draft (ca. 95-98%) of the thesis should be submitted in the assignment folder titled "Final Draft + supervisor name group" on the Master Thesis 2021 Athena course page no later than Monday, May 10th, 2021, unless another deadline has been clearly agreed upon between the student and their supervisor. For administrative reasons, any changes should be brought to the attention of the course leader.

Supervisors return the draft to students with feedback commentary by May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Next, students can make adjustments as based on the comments and suggestions their supervisor has



made on their Final Draft. In conjunction with this final reading, the supervisor gives a recommendation on the quality of the thesis work and its suitability for examination.

The student should then submit a Final Manuscript of their thesis into the assignment folder titled “Final Manuscript” on the Master Thesis 2021 Athena course page. Students must submit both a **pdf** and **word copy** of their thesis. Additionally, a **pdf copy** of the thesis must be uploaded in the Athena folder, to enable an opponent to access it.

The final date of submission of the ‘Final Manuscript’ is at noon on Monday May 24<sup>th</sup>, unless a contrary agreement has been made between the examiner, student and supervisor. Any modifications of these dates *must be* conveyed to the course leader by the student and supervisor prior to the due date.

Final decisions on the exact dates and times of individual student examinations will be scheduled when the deadline has passed. Currently, the MA Thesis examination is set to week 22 (May 31 - June 2), the individual examination defence dates will be uploaded on Athena *after* the final manuscript due date (May 24 at noon). The last possible day on which an examination session can take place during the Spring term is Friday June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Students must make themselves available for examination during May 31 – June 4).

All students are given two days to make any required editorial changes to their submitted thesis. The revised manuscript is due TWO days after the date of the defence. The editorial changes must respond to the examiner’s comments provided at the defence session.

The Second and Third examination dates are offered in the autumn term. These dates are posted on Athena *after* the MA Thesis due date (during week 21). There will be a re-examination during October and another during January 2022.

Returning students, who have already made use of their supervision hours during previous course offerings, must contact the course leader by following the re-examination instructions on Athena. The course leader will then provide information about the procedure of the Second and Third Exams. Further information regarding the procedure of the examinations will be given during the spring term.

The examination sessions are open to the public. The author, examiner and student opponent are all present during the session. The student opponent presents the summary of the thesis and prepares critical and constructive questions for discussion with the author during the examination session. The procedure and instructions about the Thesis defence exam are provided during the Spring 2021 term.



## Grading

The assessment criteria and grading information adheres to the Department of Education policy guidelines. The MA Thesis is graded according to a seven grade, criterion-referenced scale: A, B, C, D, E, Fx to F in which A to E denote passing grades. An E grade is required in order to pass the course. The grading criteria and guidelines are available on Athena.

The Grade Fx and F denote that the assessment criteria have not be adequately met for a passing grade. In both cases the examiner will provide written commentary detailing the justification of the grade which also has been communicated with the supervisor. The written commentary will be given on or as closely aligned to the examination date as feasible.

In the case of an Fx, the examiner will give clear written comments and instructions of the details needing improvement and a return date by which the revised thesis is to be returned to the examiner via email. The turnaround time in the case of an Fx grade is five (5) days. Students must return the revised text to the examiner within 5 days. Further information will be provided during spring term 2021.

Those students who have defended their thesis and served as an opponent on a peer student's thesis by June 4th, will have their grade reported in LADOK by the end of June 2021.

## Plagiarism

It is permissible to cite other sources, but both direct quotes and indirect references to a text must always be provided with correct and complete referencing to the original source. Copying or writing a shorter or longer paragraph and stating yourself as the author of the text is prohibited. This is considered plagiarism. You may also not copy your own texts that have been used in other examinations, as this is considered self-plagiarism.

An example of plagiarism is copying text verbatim or almost verbatim (this includes parts of a text and/or individual sentences) and not indicating where the text originates from. Plagiarism is also when you use another person's text and make it appear that it is your own. For example, text found in the course literature and /or texts that you have found online, or another student's course paper.

Plagiarism is regarded as a crime, not only against the established research ethics code, but also against upholding general regard towards one's own and others' texts. Plagiarism is unauthorized cheating and is always subject to disciplinary reporting, which can lead to suspension. At Stockholm University, texts are checked against a database.



## Cheating

As a student at Stockholm University, you are responsible for your own education. Part of your responsibility includes knowing the rules that exist for study, examination and being on the university premises, and utilizing resources. According to the rules that apply to the university, disciplinary measures may be taken against students for:

- using unauthorized means, or otherwise attempt to, mislead an exam or when student performance is assessed otherwise;
- interfering with or obstruction teaching, tests or other activities within the framework of education.

Disciplinary matters are dealt with by the Stockholm University Disciplinary Board. The penalty may be a warning or suspension for a period of 1-6 months. Information on Stockholm University rules for examination and disciplinary cases can be found on Stockholm University's website [www.su.se/regulations](http://www.su.se/regulations). Teachers are required to report a suspected suspicion of cheating to the Director of Studies.

## Grading Criteria

The examinations grading criteria are published in the Department of Education policy. These are located on Athena/Resources. The details of the grading criteria will be explained in the Introduction lecture.

## Course Evaluation

The course is evaluated through an online survey which will be made available at the end of the course.



## Support during your studies

At Stockholm University, it is possible to receive extra support in addition to regular teaching.

### Academic Writing Service

The Academic Writing Service provides English-language support for writing and study skills. They give talks and seminars and offer individual guidance. Their services are available free of charge to all students at Stockholm University. For more information visit: <https://www.su.se/english/education/student-support/academic-writing-service>

### Studying with a disability

If you have a documented disability, e.g. dyslexia, you have the opportunity to receive special pedagogical support. Examples of support initiatives may be note-taking, audio books, extended exam time or sign language interpretation. You must apply for special pedagogical support from Student Support Office at Stockholm University

<https://www.su.se/english/education/student-support/studying-with-a-disability>

Once the application has been received, a coordinator will contact you to arrange a personal meeting. After speaking to the coordinator, you will receive a certificate describing types of support to be offered to you.

It is the responsibility of the student to contact the student counselors at the Department of Education before a course begins in order to arrange for support. Their email address is [studievagledare@edu.su.se](mailto:studievagledare@edu.su.se). The student counselors will then contact the course leaders with regards to the type of support the student will need.

*Best of luck with your Master's Thesis 2021!*