



**Stockholms
universitet**

Psykologiska institutionen

**Course outline and instructions for
PSMT53
Social behavior-
Insights from Evolutionary Psychology**

December 2nd 2021-January 13th 2022

Course leader
Professor Torun Lindholm

Course content

This is a master and postgraduate course in evolutionary psychology with a focus on social behavior. Each week, students will read and discuss empirical and review articles germane to understanding basic human social behavior from an evolutionary psychology viewpoint. Both human and animal literatures will be surveyed, and relevant areas covered will include: Central issues and controversies, Basic concepts, Attractiveness, Prosocial behavior and cooperation, Caregiving, Aggression, The evolution of language and Intergroup prejudice and conflicts.

Expected study results

Upon completing the course students are expected to:

- understand, describe and critically reflect on aspects of evolutionary theory as applied in the context of social psychology.
- describe, analyze and critically reflect on theoretical and empirical issues in evolutionary psychology with a focus on areas that relate to human social behaviour.
- demonstrate skills required to participate in research, such as an ability to clearly present and discuss their conclusions and the knowledge and arguments behind them, orally in dialogue with others and in writing.

Readings

Articles and other information for this course will be made available on the course site on Athena. The textbook below will be used, and this is bought by the student.

Laland K.N. & Brown, G. R. (2011). *Sense and Nonsense: Evolutionary perspectives on human behavior*. Oxford University Press, ISBN 9780199586967.

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Instructors:

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Professor Pehr Granqvist

PhD Tina Sundelin

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Educational activities, course requirements and mandatory components

The course consists of lectures and seminars. It is normally given in English but can be given in Swedish if only Swedish speaking students participate.

Mandatory parts are

- (a) Submission of three to five questions based on the literature for each seminar**
- (b) Active participation in all seminars**
- (c) Leadership of at least one seminar during the course.**
- (d) Review paper**

To reach the course goals, students need to submit discussion questions to, and actively participate in every seminar, lead 1-2 seminars and receive a grade of E or higher on the seminar activities and the review paper. Student tasks related to the seminars and review paper are described below. Students who do not pass (a) above will be offered the possibility to submit a written complementary task. Students who have missed a maximum of two of the mandatory seminars (b), or (c) above will be offered a chance to complete a supplementary assignment during the course period. Students who have missed more than two seminars will be given opportunities to come in with

complementary assignments once during the forthcoming semester (see below). Regarding (d), see below.

Examination

The examination is based on the completion of written seminar questions, active participation in every seminar, leading of 1-2 seminars, and a review paper.

The specific course grade is based to 50% on the seminar activities, and to 50% on the individually written review paper. Letter grades in the course are A (Excellent), B (Very good), C (Good), D (Satisfactory), E (Sufficient), Fx (Fail, some additional work required), F (much additional work required).

a) and b) Submission of questions and active participation in seminar discussions.

Each lecture is followed by a seminar, in which issues related to the lecture topic are discussed. Active participation in seminars means that you take part in the discussion with questions and comments.

Before each seminar, each student must individually generate and submit a minimum of three written questions. You must submit discussion questions to ALL seminars, even the ones you missed.

Students should specify the reading(s) that inspired the question, and give a motivation for why the chosen issue merits discussion. The purpose of these questions is to ensure that you've actually read the papers that have been assigned (it's hard to discuss something you haven't read!), and to help raise issues for discussion.

Contribution to class will be worth 50% of your final grade. This part of your grade will be based on the instructor's assessment of your understanding of central concepts and usage of scientific literature on the target topic, together with the extent of your participation in class discussions. More detailed grading criteria will be presented when the course starts.

Your discussion questions are due by noon the day before the class, and should be turned in whether or not you will be able to attend the class session to which they apply. Submit the questions through Athena by the dates and times specified in the schedule. Please use the text window for this (do not upload a file). Make **sure your own name** and the full reference to current article is stated clearly. There are a total of seven seminars.

If seminar questions are not uploaded on time (late submission or missed out submission), or if the instructions above are not fulfilled a complementary paper is required. This complementary paper is based on the specific topic to be discussed during the seminar (see under Complementary missed seminar below).

Complementary missed seminar

Students who have missed **a maximum of two compulsory seminars** must submit (1) questions (see under *a)* and *b)* above)+ (2) written supplementary information as a substitute for the seminars you missed.

2) The assignment consists of choosing (at least) two of the articles to be discussed at the seminar you missed and discuss their content (about 2 pages per article = 4 pages total/ seminar). The idea is not that you should write only a review of the articles, but try to debate and discuss the content. Eg: What is most interesting in the articles? What implications the results can have on our understanding of human behavior (theoretical, methodological, or applied)? What is innovative? What is problematic? For example, you can start out from your discussion questions and “deepen” them. Submit your seminar questions and additional information to the responsible seminar teacher **before the end of the course**.

Note that only complements of a maximum of two missed seminar will be examined within the course period. Students who have missed **more than two compulsory seminars** will be given an opportunity to come in with complementary assignments according to 1) and 2) above once during the spring semester. Deadline for submission of these complementary assignments will be **Friday February 25, 2022 at 16.00**. The complements will then be examined within two weeks.

c) Leading the discussion. Students will each take responsibility for leading the discussion with partners in their respective group (2-3 students) for 1-2 seminars (number depending on enrollment) during the course period. Leading the discussion will entail the following: 1) Summarizing key points to be gleaned from the articles we’ve read for that seminar, 2) Discuss the questions from the members of the group (note that everyone is responsible for keeping the conversation going but having someone throw new balls in the air once the old ones have fallen to the ground is very helpful, and this is the Discussion Leader’s job.) The discussion leaders do not need to submit discussion questions on Athena for that seminar.

d) Individual review paper

The aim of this paper is to allow students to focus and elaborate on one of the topics included in the course, or clearly related to the course content. The topic should be chosen according to the student’s interests, and the paper should include an extended empirical and theoretical review of the target topic. Grading of the paper will be based on the student’s understanding and usage of scientific literature, analysis of scientific evidence on the target topic, conclusions based on the review, and general ability of written presentation (structure and coherence of the text, grammar, etc.). More detailed grading criteria will be presented when the course starts. The paper should not include findings from the student’s own ongoing projects. As the paper should be a review of the literature on a given topic, no data should be collected for the paper.

The paper is to be saved in word format (*not* pdf or any other format for instance pages), and shall comprise between no less than 3000 and no more than 5000 words (excluding title leaf and reference list), 12p and single spacing (1.0). At least six peer-reviewed scientific papers should be included in the paper. At the end of the text there shall be a reference list. References (both in the body of text and in the reference list) shall be in APA-format. Remember that the main criteria for grading of this paper is the quality of your text, rather than the number of words or references. The deadline for submission of the review paper is **Friday January 14th 2021 at 16.00**. To check for plagiarism the paper is to be uploaded on Athena before this deadline. The uploaded version of the paper is then graded after the closing of the deadline. No changes can then be made to

the text. Any deviation from instructions will render a reduction in grade. Note however that the task will not be graded if it has been submitted after the deadline and/or if it does not meet requirements regarding the references and/or regarding word limitation (see above).

In cases where a paper is not submitted in time, or was given the grade Fx, there are later deadlines for a first submission or of a revised version of the paper. Papers that are revised or submitted after the deadline can receive a maximum of a grade E. Submission after the deadline on January 15th, or revised papers should be sent to the course leader before **Friday February 25, 2022 at 16.00**. The paper will then be graded within two weeks.

Plagiarism, cheating and unallowed cooperation

It is your responsibility as a student to be aware of the examination rules at Stockholm University. Detailed information is available both at the web pages of the Department of Psychology and Stockholm University (see links at Athena). Teachers are obliged to report suspicion about cheating and plagiarism to the principle and the disciplinary board. Plagiarism and cheating are always disciplinary matters and can lead to shutting off from studies. One example of plagiarism is to verbatim (word-by-word) or almost verbatim – regardless if a source has been given – copy a text (also concerns occasional sentences) and not refer to the source of the text. This also concerns texts that you have yourself authored previously (self-plagiarism). To be involved in study groups is developing and time efficient, but when it comes to examination tasks you will need make sure that you are working on your own (if nothing else is instructed) in order not to risk that any collaboration will be considered unallowed.

Rules and regulations at SU regarding plagiarism, cheating and unallowed cooperation can be found here:

<https://www.su.se/english/staff/organisation-governance/governing-documents-rules-and-regulations/education/guidelines-for-disciplinary-matters-at-stockholm-university-1.181>