Course Description

Organizational Psychology and Workplace Safety

(7.5 hp)

Master’s Program

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Organizational Psychology and Workplace Safety

Course Content
The course presents a preventative perspective on the management, administration, and putting into practice of safety-related activities that are grounded in individual, social, organizational, and cognitive psychology. The behavioral science perspective is of increasing importance as technical/organizational systems expand, interact, and become more complex. New systems are being introduced in existing organizational structures as institutionalized types of organization are giving way to temporary and less fixed constellations. This carries with it a new operational framework with risks for error at the individual level and in connection with organizational decision-making. Focusing on preventative safety is therefore all the more important. The course takes into account the interplay of humans, technology, and organizations (HTO), but the course also gives an introduction and orientation of basic risk philosophy, causality theory, risk and incident analysis, and accident investigations.

Instruction
The course is comprised of a series of lectures and each lecture focuses on a key safety-related area in accordance with the readings and topics on the schedule. The readings are in the form of book chapters and scientific articles. The course also contains obligatory seminars with exercises in which the students apply what they have read. The seminars will also include discussions based on the lectures and assigned readings. Students are expected to have a good understanding of the assigned readings in order to contribute to the class discussion. The course concludes with an obligatory examination seminar in which individually written papers will be presented and discussed.

Expected Learning Outcomes
After completing the course, participants are expected to be able to:

- To be able to critically and systematically integrate the knowledge as well as analyze, judge, and utilize complex phenomena and issues that are relevant to safety considerations in organizations.
- To be able to critically, independently, and creatively identify and formulate lines of inquiry as well as design and carry out advanced assignments using appropriate methods within given timeframes.
- To be able to orally and in writing clearly present and discuss scientific work in relation to psychological aspects on risk, safety and accident in working life.

Knowledge Assessment and Examination
A seven-point, grading system is used in this course (see below). Course assessment is based on (1) preparation, oral presentation and active participation in the discussion seminars and (2) an individually written essay.

1. Discussion seminars
The following requirements must be met to receive a final grade in the course:

- Active participation in the seminars (absence from more than one seminar meeting must be compensated for by an extra assignment)

For this requirement the grades of “pass” and “fail” (with the possibility of supplementary examination) are used. Assessment is based on the following criteria:
• Ability to facilitate a topic-related discussion
• Inclusion of reflection and original reasoning

2. Individually written essay
The final examination in the course is in the form of an individually written essay that utilizes one or more of the main topics or concepts presented in the course. The essay (5-7 pages, single-spaced type, including references) is to be assessed and graded according to the seven-point ECTS scale (A, B, C, D, E, Fx, F). The assessment of the essay is based on the following criteria:
• Relevant connection to the issues in question
• Connection to the course literature and other literature relevant to the assignment
• Clarity and structure of the description
• Inclusion of reflection and original reasoning about the problem
The grading will be based on the quality of the individual essay (according to the above) and also take into account the oral presentation at the examination seminar.

Grading Criteria
The grading is based on the following criteria:
A. The expected study outcomes have been reached to an exceptionally high degree.
   The student is able to combine concepts, theories, and models to explain actual examples and is also able to point out the explicatory limitations of the concepts/theories/models through reference to the nature of the actual examples or to alternative theoretical views. The student engages in argumentation and discussion independent of the literature and in a manner that creates new syntheses and lines of reasoning that go beyond the course literature.

B. The expected study outcomes have been reached to a very high degree.
   The student is able to combine and compare concepts, theories, and models to explain actual examples. The student engages in independent argumentation and discussion in a manner that goes beyond the course literature and that, to some degree, creates new syntheses.

C. The expected study outcomes have been reached to a high degree.
   The student is able to apply the concepts, theories, and models from the literature to explain actual examples. The student is able, to some degree, to draw independent connections between the various theories and lines of reasoning presented in the literature.

D. The expected study outcomes have been satisfactorily reached.
   The student is able to describe the concepts, theories, and models in his/her own words. The student is able to refer to the concepts, theories, and models when discussing actual examples.

E. The expected study outcomes have been reached despite some deficiencies.
   The student is able to define the concepts and describe what the theories and models are meant to explain. The student is able to utilize such lines of reasoning to some extent to describe the processes occurring in actual examples.

Fx. Insufficient.
   The learning outcomes have not been reached. In one or more areas the level of performance is judged to reflect “certain deficiencies that must be resolved,” but
“unsatisfactory” was not judged to apply to any single area. Compensatory work is required.

F. Completely insufficient.

The learning outcomes have not been reached and reaching them is not judged to be possible. The level of performance in one or more areas is judged to be “unsatisfactory.”

Plagiarism, cheating and unauthorized cooperation

It is included in 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 (www.su.se/regelboken).

Teachers are obliged to report suspicion about cheating and plagiarism to the principal 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, copy a text (this also concerns occasional sentences) without quoting the source of the text. This also concerns texts that you have yourself authored previously (self-plagiarism). To be involved in study groups (i.e., the smaller units within seminar groups) is developing and time efficient, but when it comes to examination tasks you will need to 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 unauthorized.

Course Literature

Academic articles: (download via SU account)


