

SASA007 Theories on the construction of social problems (reading course; third cycle) 7.5 credits

Teorier om konstruktioner av sociala problem (läskurs; doktorandnivå) 7,5 hp

1. Details of approval
This syllabus was approved by the School of Social Work's Department Board on 10 December 2014.
2. General information
The course is an independent study third-cycle course within the social work main field of study. The language of instruction is English or Swedish.
3. Learning outcomes
In order to pass the course, the doctoral student is to:
 - demonstrate specialised knowledge about how different variants of social constructionist perspectives on problems have developed over time, how they differ epistemologically and ontologically and in terms of their relevance to various kinds of research questions.
 - demonstrate an advanced ability to analyse constructions of social problems on both macro and micro levels.
 - demonstrate thorough knowledge of how different approaches to research into a specific social problem are related to different explanations, conclusions and proposed measures.
4. Course content
The course focuses on theories of construction of social problems, both "larger" problems that are widely identified as such and where demands for state intervention are raised, and "individual" problems whereby people are seen as clients in institutional contexts or as individuals in conversations between laymen. The literature includes both classics and newer texts about emergence and claims making in media debates, and about the categorisation of problem individuals and divergent identities in social work. The distinction between strict and contextual, and strong and weak constructivism are addressed, as well as whether and how constructivism relates to, or is incompatible with, different methods and perspectives.
5. Teaching and assessment
The course is conducted through independent study and participation in seminars. The course is examined through papers and oral assessment.
6. Grades
Grading scale of Pass/Fail
7. Entry requirements
Admitted to a third-cycle programme at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Lund University.
8. Reading list
Best, Joel (1995), Typification and Social Problems Construction. In Best, Joel (ed.), Images of Issues. Typifying Contemporary Social Problems, pp. 1–15. New York: Aldine de Gruyter. (16 p.)
Best, Joel (1995), Constructionism in Context. In Best, Joel (ed.), Images of Issues.

Typifying Contemporary Social Problems, pp. 337–354. New York: Aldine de Gruyter. (18 p.)

Holstein, James A. & Gubrium, Jaber F. (2008), Constructionist Impulses in Ethnographic Fieldwork. In Gubrium, Jaber F. & Holstein, James A. (eds), Handbook of Constructionist Research, pp. 373–396. New York, London: The Guilford Press. (23 p.)

Holstein, James A. & Miller, Gale (eds) (2003), Challenges & Choices. Constructionist Perspectives on Social Problems. New York: Aldine de Gruyter. (254 p.)

Jokinen, Arja, Juhila, Kirsi & Pösö, Tarja (eds) (1999), Constructing Social Work Practices. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate. (316 p.)

Juhila, Kirsi & Abrams, Laura S. (2011), Constructing Identities in Social Work Settings. Qualitative Social Work Vol. 10 (3): 277–292 (15 p.)

Kitsuse, John I. (1962), Societal Reaction to Deviant Behavior: Problems of Theory and Method. Social Problems, Vol. 9 (3), pp. 247–256. (10 p.)

Loseke, Donileen R. (2003), Thinking about Social Problems. An introduction to Constructionist Perspectives. USA: Aldine Transaction. (240 p.)

Marshall, Barbara I. (2008), Feminism and Constructionism. In Gubrium, Jaber F. & Holstein, James A. (eds), Handbook of Constructionist Research, pp. 687–700. New York, London: The Guilford Press. (14 p.)

Sarbin, Theodore R. & Kitsuse, John I. (1994), A Prologue to Constructing the Social. In Sarbin, Theodore R. & Kitsuse, John I. (eds.) (1994), Constructing the Social, pp. 1–18 London, Thousand Oaks, New Dehli: SAGE. (18 p.)

Spector, Malcolm & Kitsuse, John I. (1977), Constructing Social Problems. Menlo Park, CA: Cummings Publishing Company. (182 p.)

In addition, there will be around 1,000 pages of literature that are chosen in consultation between the doctoral student and examiner on the subject of a specific social problem.

2,106 pages.