

COURSE DESCRIPTION

THE GOOD SOCIETY

The Good Society is a 7.5 ECTS credits course (corresponding to five weeks full-time study) for international students, given at the end of the semester. The language of instruction is English.

Aim

The course aims to give international students knowledge of basic themes in Swedish twentieth-century history and an understanding of different types and aspects of welfare states. After completing the course, the student should understand the concepts of the welfare state, civil society, “Folkhemmet” (the People’s Home) and social engineering. The student should also have gained knowledge of how social engineering affected different categories of people.

Content

The course will provide an overview of the history of the Swedish welfare state through two introductory lectures, supported by related readings. After that, students will discuss specific aspects of different welfare states in three seminars. The seminar discussions will be based on general readings on welfare states and specific readings on aspects of the Swedish welfare state. One aim of the course is to situate the Swedish welfare state in an international context. The topics for the discussion seminars will be: Comparing Welfare State Regimes; The Welfare State and Civil Society, and “Folkhemmet” and the Social Engineers.

In addition to attending the lectures and the seminars, students are required to write a final paper. Before submitting the final paper, the students shall upload an outline for their paper. This outline will be peer-reviewed and discussed in seminars.

The final paper should consist of a discussion of the texts in the reading list. The point of the paper is to give students a chance to deepen their knowledge of a theme that they found particularly interesting during the course. The students will be asked to choose one aspect of the Swedish welfare state, or some phenomenon closely connected to it – something that they have found especially important, unexpected or interesting. The task is then to describe this aspect, and argue why it is essential for our understanding of twentieth-century Swedish history. In doing so, students have to make use of the texts from the reading list, both with regard to facts and in order to support their argument. The paper should be about 1 500 words long and include references to the texts cited. Use footnotes for all references and make sure that they include the specific page number. A bibliography/list of references should be provided at the end of the paper, containing the full information of the books/articles used.

Before writing the final paper, students are required to submit an outline for their paper. The outline shall present the main ideas of the students' paper and which texts they intend to use. The outline shall be 250-500 words long. In two examination seminars, students will be asked to peer-review and comment on their fellow students' outlines. The peer-review will be done in pairs, and each pair will be assigned two outlines to comment on. The examination seminars will provide feedback on the students' ideas and will allow students to improve their thesis and arguments. It will also provide students with an additional opportunity to discuss specific welfare state topics.

Learning outcomes

After this course the students should be able to:

- describe basic themes in Swedish twentieth-century history
- describe and compare different welfare states
- explain the concepts of the welfare state, civil society, "Folkhemmet" (The Peoples' Home) and social engineering
- explain how different categories of people were affected by the practical implementations of social engineering
- describe and discuss similarities and differences between twentieth-century Swedish history and other countries' history. Students are in particular encouraged to compare Sweden to other countries with which they are familiar (for example the country where they pursue their degree, their home country, or where they live).

Set-up

The course consists of two lectures, three discussion seminars, and two examination seminars, all of which are mandatory.

The two lectures at the beginning of the course provide practical information about the course and an overview of the history of the Swedish welfare state.

At the ensuing seminars, discussions center on three different themes:

- Comparing Welfare State Regimes
- The Welfare State and Civil Society
- "Folkhemmet" and the Social Engineers

The design of the course requires students to come well prepared for all the seminars. Assigned readings must be done beforehand, and students should come to seminar having prepared discussion questions. Students are required to actively participate in the seminars in order to pass the course.

In the two examination seminars, students will provide comments on their peers' outlines. This assignment will be done in groups, and it is expected that students meet before the seminar to discuss and prepare their review. The students will be expected to have read all the outlines, but extra preparation will be required for the appointed outlines. The peer-review criticism should be fair and constructive; the goal is to provide feedback that will improve the final paper.

Examination

Grades will be based on the seminar participation (discussion seminars and examination seminars), the outline, and on the quality of the final paper.

The grades range from A – excellent, B – very good, C – good, D – satisfactory, E – sufficient, FX – pass with an extra assignment to F – fail.

Grading criteria

1. Seminar participation

Criteria are given for the grades A, C, and E. If contributions are always on at least an E-level, but more than once fulfill the requirements for a C, the student will get a D. If the C-criteria are always met but sometimes also the criteria of an A, the student will get a B.

A	Outstanding contributions. Seminar contributions are regular, reflect rigorous preparation, and they engage and challenge fellow students. Ideas offered are substantive, provide significant insights, and spur discussion in interesting directions. The contributions improve the quality of the seminar discussions markedly.
C	Good contributions. Seminar contributions are regular and reflect thorough preparation. Ideas offered are often substantive, insights are interesting. Without these contributions, the quality of the discussion would be diminished.
E	Adequate contributions. Seminar contributions are infrequent but reflect satisfactory preparation. Without these contributions, the quality of discussion would be diminished somewhat.
FX	Presence at the seminars but no contributions, or so little contribution that it does not influence the quality of discussion at all and that it is impossible to assess preparation OR Satisfactory participation when present, but occasional absence. In both these cases, students can still receive a passing grade by doing make-up assignments.
F	Absence from more seminars or damaging contributions (disruptive, disrespectful behavior, damaging the quality of the seminar).

2. Peer-review

Note: if you have trouble collaborating for any reason, contact the teacher immediately.

Separate grades may be assigned to the presenters.

A	Outstanding contributions that reflect rigorous preparation, and constructive collaboration in the group. The comments are knowledgeable, insightful, and provide students with specific and clear ideas on how to improve arguments. The presentation is well prepared, and both students contribute.
C	Good contributions that reflect thorough preparation. Presenters offer some insightful ideas and demonstrate that they have collaborated. The presentation is respectful and constructive.
E	Adequate contributions that reflect satisfactory preparation. Presenters have collaborated somewhat and demonstrated basic knowledge.
FX	Contributions are limited, and presenters have not collaborated. It is impossible to assess whether students have prepared properly.
F	Absence or damaging contributions (disruptive, disrespectful behavior, damaging the quality of the seminar).

3. The outline will be marked with pass or fail. In order to pass you need to present the main ideas and the sources you intend to discuss. The outline should contain enough information so your peers will understand what you intend to argue in your final paper.

4. Final assignment

Grades	Requirements
A-Excellent	Independent and creative choice of topic. Creative use of texts and a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. Shows a very clear understanding of the chosen aspect and demonstrates an ability to problematize the topic beyond the framework given by the literature. Critically, analytically and convincingly argues how it is important for our understanding of twentieth-century Swedish history. Ability to synthesize and express the above in writing.
B-Very good	Independent and creative choice of topic. Creative use of texts, showing a good understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. Shows a clear understanding of the chosen aspect and argues critically and analytically how it is important for our understanding of twentieth-century Swedish history. Ability to synthesize and express the above in writing according to instructions given.
C-Good	Independent choice of topic. Good use of texts, showing an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. Shows a clear understanding of the chosen aspect and argues analytically how it is important for our understanding of twentieth-century Swedish history. Ability to express the above in writing according to instructions given.

D-Satisfactory	Good choice of topic. Good use of texts with attention to their differences. Shows a good understanding the chosen aspect and argues coherently how it is important for our understanding of twentieth-century Swedish history. Ability to express the above in writing according to instructions given.
E-sufficient	Relevant choice of topic. Use of at least two different texts. Shows an understanding of the chosen aspect and argues transparently how it highlights twentieth-century Swedish history. Ability to express the above in writing according to instructions given.

Literature

Literature marked with an * is available online through the university library.

Lectures 1 & 2 - Course introduction and A History of the Swedish Welfare State

- * - Lundberg, Urban & Åmark, Klas, "Social Rights and Social Security: The Swedish Welfare State, 1900-2000", in *Scandinavian Journal of History*, Vol. 26, Issue 3 (2001); 20 pp.
- Sejerstad, Francis, *The Age of Social Democracy: Norway and Sweden in the Twentieth Century*, 211-266 pp.

Seminar 1: Comparing Welfare State Regimes

- Esping-Andersen, Gøsta, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Princeton (1990), introduction + c. 1 & 2; 54 pp.

Seminar 2: The Welfare State and Civil Society

- * - Lundström, Tommy, "The State and Voluntary Social Work in Sweden," *Voluntas* vol. 7, Issue 2 (1996).
- Trädgårdh, Lars (ed), *State and Civil Society in Northern Europe: The Swedish Model Reconsidered*, New York (2007), c. 1 & 7; 43 pp.

Seminar 3: "Folkhemmet" and the Social Engineers

- * - Hirdman, Yvonne, "The Population Commission and the Transformation of Everyday Life," in *International Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 22, Issue 2 (1992), 20pp.
- * - Scott, James, *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, London (1998), Introduction & c. 3 & 4; 66pp.