UNIVERSITY OF SKÖVDE

COURSE SYLLABUS

Popular Science Communication, third-cycle level

5 credits

Course code: IT0951F
Version number: 1.1
Valid from: 1 January 2025
Ratified by: Curriculum Committee for Third-cycle Studies
Date of ratification: 18 November 2024

1. General information about the course

The course is provided by the University of Skövde and is named Popular Science Communication, third-cycle level (Populärvetenskaplig kommunikation, forskarnivå). It comprises 5 credits.

The course is a part of the third-cycle subject areas of Informatics and Health Science.

2. Entry requirements

The prerequisites for this course are general entry requirements for third-cycle courses and study programmes, i.e. a second-cycle qualification or satisfied requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits of which at least 60 credits were awarded in the second cycle (or the equivalent).

An additional requirement is proof of skills in English equivalent of studies at upper secondary level in Sweden, known as the Swedish course English 6. This is normally demonstrated by means of an internationally recognized language test, e.g. IELTS or TOEFL or the equivalent.

3. Course content

The course aims to enhance the doctoral student's abilities to communicate their research to the public in an engaging and accessible way. The course covers various forms of popular science communication, ensuring that the doctoral student can effectively convey their research to the public. These forms include:

- Understanding the Media: Acquire how the media operates and how to effectively communicate with journalists.
- Popular Science Presentation and Science Slam: Prepare and deliver a 7-minute presentation in a science slam format, using storytelling and visual aids to explain their research to a general audience.
- Writing for the Public: Practice to write press releases, popular science abstracts, and debate articles, translating their research into clear and concise language suitable for public communication. Develop strategies for influencing decision makers and using their research to inform and impact policy discussions.
- Social Media Engagement: Developing posts tailored for various social media platforms to promote their research and engage with the public.
- Elevator Pitches: Practicing short, impactful descriptions of research projects for non-academic settings.
- Podcasting: Planning and recording a brief podcast episode discussing the societal impact of their research.

4. Objectives

After completion of the course, the doctoral student shall be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

- describe the basic principles of popular science communication and its role in society,
- identify the characteristics of effective communication in various formats,
- describe differences between academic and popular science communication,
- identify effective strategies for reach diverse audiences through various media,

Competence and skills

- effectively and with authority communicate research to the public through a variety of formats, such as oral presentations, podcasts, and social media content,
- write different texts, including press releases, popular science abstracts, and debate articles, that accurately and clearly conveys complex research findings,
- develop a cohesive multimedia communication strategy that includes visual, written, and audio components to enhance public interest in research,

Judgement and approach

- assess the effectiveness of different communication strategies for various audiences,
- reflect on ethical considerations when communicating research to the public, avoiding misinformation,
- evaluate personal communication strengths and areas for improvement, and
- develop a personal strategy for ongoing science communication, including goals and target audiences.

5. Examination

The course is graded G (Pass) or U (Fail).

To receive the grade Pass on the course, all examination parts have to be graded Pass.

The examinations of the course consist of the following modes of assessment:

- **Written assignments**
  2.5 credits, grades: G/U
- **Oral and written project presentations**
  2.5 credits, grades: G/U

Doctoral students with a permanent disability who have been approved for directed educational support may be offered adapted or alternative modes of assessment.

6. Types of instruction and language of instruction

The teaching comprises lectures, group assignments, project work, and seminars/group discussions.

The teaching is conducted in English.

7. Course literature and other educational materials

Course literature and other materials will be provided during the course.

8. Doctoral student influence

Doctoral student influence in the course is ensured by means of course evaluation. The students are informed about the results of the evaluation and potential measures that have been taken or are planned, based on the course evaluation.

9. Additional information

Further information about the course, as well as national and local governing documents for higher education, is available on the website of the University of Skövde.