

Syllabus

Post graduate level

Course Approval

The syllabus was approved by the Faculty Board for Economic Sciences, Communication and IT on 2011-01-27 and is valid from the spring semester of 2011 at Karlstad University.

Doctoral study subject

Media and Communication Studies

Course name

Contemporary Debates in Media and Communications Theory
Samtida debatter inom medie- och kommunikationsteori

Credit points

7,5 ECTS credits

Degree Level

Doctor

Language of Instruction

English

Target group and prerequisites

The course participants must be enrolled in a PhD programme in Media and Communication Studies, or similar subject area.

Aims

After completing the course the doctoral student should be able to

- describe the current landscape of theoretical debates within media and communications theory (related to fields such as journalism studies, PR research, globalization theory, surveillance studies, new audience studies, media geography and collaborative/practice based media research) and their connections to and implications for societal development;
- explain the emergence of those debates in terms of overarching paradigmatic and ideological processes and battles;
- identify the historical roots of the theoretical perspectives and debates that are covered during the course;
- define the main ontological and epistemological issues that are at stake within the contemporary field of media and communications theory;
- evaluate the usefulness of the theories discussed in relevant empirical contexts;
- formulate and present, in the form of a paper as well as orally, an independent scholarly critique of a chosen area of theoretical debate.

Course Content

The main goal of the course is to make participants familiar with the theoretical forefronts of contemporary media and communications studies, and the ontological and epistemological debates through which these are articulated. The course also traces the historical roots of contemporary theoretical positions within a number of research areas:

- Journalism and News Production
- PR and Strategic Communication
- Media, Surveillance and Transnational Mobilities
- Cultural Industries – New Audience Studies
- Media Spaces
- Collaborative and Practice Based Media Research

The course is given as two intense two-day seminars, involving a variety of teachers (specialists within their fields) from different universities. Participants will take part of introductory lectures describing the central debates within a number of significant research areas, as well as literature seminars where the various approaches are discussed and evaluated in relation to both contemporary media society and the theoretical legacies of the discipline. The reading list is mainly comprised by journal articles published during the last decade. The course assessment is a written essay that will be distributed and discussed among participants at a third, concluding meeting.

Reading List

See separate document.

Examination

The course is examined through two components:

- active participation at the seminar sessions;
- writing and discussion of an independent research paper.

Quality Assurance

Follow-up relating to learning conditions and goal-fulfilment takes place both during and upon completion of the course. The results will be used as a basis when developing and planning future courses.

Additional Information