

Department of Informatics

EIN004F, Theory and Philosophy of Social Media (7.5 credits)

Third Cycle/Forskarutbildningsnivå

Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by The Board of the Department of Informatics on 2022-02-08. The syllabus applies from spring semester 2022.

General information

The course EIN004F is a course in Informatics at the third-cycle level.

Language of instruction: English

Main field of studies: Informatics

Learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

For a pass on the course, the student shall demonstrate knowledge and understanding of

- the characteristics of sociality and social behavior in social media
- philosophical accounts of human communication and dialogue in social media
- the conditions for social relations and facts in social media platforms

Competence and skills

For a pass on the course, the student shall demonstrate competence and skills in

- conceptualizing social behavior and communication in social media
- the critical analysis of social interaction and communication, dialogue and participation, and individual and community behavior on social media

- problematizing issues of power, truth, politics, communication and the role of technology

Judgement and approach

For a pass on the course, the student shall demonstrate the ability to

- independently and critically assess the use of different philosophical approaches in understanding social media
- independently and critically assess the relationship between social media technologies and social behavior

Course background

The course focuses on critical readings of social media. It emphasizes on developing knowledge of social media that is rooted in classical philosophical traditions. This knowledge is aimed at understanding the 'social' or sociality in social media, communication and dialogue, subjective and objective reality, truth, power and politics, democracy and participation, and ideology and culture. The aim from the course is to conceptualize and discuss a critical social theory of social media.

Course content

The course will be structured around main themes in the literature. These include the following:

- Social media technologies and their role in social life
- Human sociality in social media
- Philosophical accounts of the social
- Philosophical accounts of digital technology
- Structures of power, community, and human sociality.
- The public sphere, social behavior, social facts, and social relations.
- Critical theory of social media

Course design

The course is designed to include extensive discussions of literature on classic philosophy (Weber, Marx, Durkheim, Tönnies, and others) in relation to the following themes:

- What is social in social media.
- Social relations and structures of power in social media
- Individual and community behavior in social media
- Critical theory and philosophy of social media; on power, truth, democracy, and capitalism

Assessment

The assessment is based on seminar discussions (group reading circles) as well as final course paper as follows:

- Reading the literature on one of the main course themes and leading a lecture and discussion during reading circles (*3.5 credits*)
- Writing and presenting an individual publishable paper on a selected theme based on the work of a classic philosopher (*4 credits*)

Credits

Grades are Pass or Fail.

Academic integrity

Plagiarism is considered to be a very serious academic offence. The University will take disciplinary actions against any kind of attempted malpractice in examinations and assessments. The penalty that may be imposed for this, and other improper practices in examinations or assessments, includes suspension from the University for a specific period of time.

Entry requirements

PhD students accepted to the PhD programme in Informatics or an adjacent subject are eligible for the course.

Course literature

See separate literature list.