UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

IT00022, Theorising the Digital: Exploring Foundational Debates, 15 credits

Teoretisering av det digitala: Utforska grundläggande debatter, 15 högskolepoäng

Third-cycle level / Forskarnivå

Confirmation

This syllabus was confirmed by the Department of Applied Information Technology on 2024-03-27, and is valid from Spring semester 2024.

Responsible Department

Department of Applied Information Technology, IT Faculty

Entry requirements

Applicants should be enrolled as PhD students. All students are required to be fluent English speakers and writers at an academic level.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of the course the student will be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

- account for and discuss foundational topics in theorizing technology;
- describe and reflect on how these foundational topics are related to the contemporary digital technologies;
- demonstrate knowledge to be able to apply this knowledge to the student's research;

Competence and skills

- present, summarise, and debate arguments in academic contexts;
- demonstrate an ability to translate academic knowledge beyond the academic context;
- analyze the way academic articles are written and arguments legitimated;

Judgement and approach

- evaluate current research and how researchers build upon or deviate from their foundational upspring;
- evaluate other academics' work, argue for a given knowledge position, and give constructive feedback.

Course content

This is a PhD-level course articulated around key debates on digital technologies in the fields of Information Systems, Human Computer Interaction (HCI), and Learning, Communication, and IT (LCIT). What affects technological design and use, its organisation, social relations, and imaginaries? For each topic, we discuss original papers' contributions to a debate and how contemporary ones build on and diverge from them.

The objective of the course is twofold. Firstly, students will develop knowledge of foundational topics and theories influential in understanding technologies and the digital. The course covers five topics: (1) institutions, (2) artefacts, data and the digital object, (3) practice, (4) systems and assemblages, and finally, (5) design. Secondly, the course will engage students with a number of generic academic skills such as presenting and summarising papers, critiquing and arguing for theories and their application to digital technologies, and disseminating academic knowledge beyond academia.

Types of instruction

Instruction takes the form of seminars and panels with experts on a given topic.

Most of the instruction is done at the group level, with groups rotating tasks for every topic. The individual assignments consist of a hot take reflection on each of the topics' readings and an end-of-course paper writing and participation in a simulation of a conference review process.

Language of instruction

The course is given in English

Grades

The grade Pass (G) or Fail (U) is given in this course.

Types of assessment

This course is assessed through recurring tasks for every topic.

There are two recurring tasks for every topic, one individual and another to be completed as part of a group. The individual task is a 'hot-take' on a number of readings for the current topic. The other is to complete one group task per topic. Participation in seminars and panels is mandatory for completing the course.

Course evaluation

After the period of instruction, students will be asked to evaluate the course. The results of the evaluation are reported to the director of graduate studies and discussed with the students.