

Course title: Bildung, Education, and Social Change

Course code: LOS8011

5 ECTS

Course leader and instructor:

Armend Tahirsylaj, associate professor of education, ILU/NTNU

Co-instructor:

Daniel Sundberg, Professor of Education, Linnaeus University, Sweden

Guest lecturers:

Knut Vesterdal, associate professor of social sciences didaktik, ILU/NTNU

Marit Honerød Hoveid, professor of education, IPL/NTNU

Course content

Developing and advancing education systems constitutes a big recurring task for governments and societies around the world. Education is often caught in crossfire of those who attribute the rise of modernity and progress to it and those who blame it for reproducing persistent social inequalities. The course examines the relationship between education and society from comparative educational and sociological perspectives, and explores the ways through which (national) education systems have been evolving in recent history. More specifically, the course dissects and challenges the assumptions that two main Western educational traditions, namely Continental/Nordic Europe Bildung-based Didaktik and Anglo-American curriculum tradition, and critical, reproduction, and neo-institutional sociological theories are built upon and how they shaped and continue to shape schooling in 21st century. The focus will also be on how these theoretical perspectives affect social change at individual and collective level. Central themes are Bildung, key competences, and educational transformation. The goal of the course is to enable students develop advanced understanding and criticality about why we have the education systems we have and what implications that has for present and future of education and societies locally and globally.

Learning outcomes

Knowledge

The student

- has advanced knowledge of Bildung-based Didaktik and curriculum ideologies and can discuss them from a comparative perspective
- can critically reflect on concepts of Bildung and key competences and can discuss implications they have for education theory, policy, research, and practice
- has advanced knowledge through sociological perspectives of the role of education for social change and transformation in national and global arenas.

Skills

The student

- can apply their knowledge on Bildung and key competences for a more comprehensive understanding of education reforms over past two decades, primarily within the European/Nordic context
- can discuss similarities and differences of European/Nordic vs Anglo-American education traditions and implications they have (had) for national and international education policy and practice
- can apply knowledge of sociological perspectives on education's role for social change and transformation to position themselves theoretically and methodologically

General competence

The student

- can apply theoretically-grounded and research-based knowledge to advance theoretical and methodological framing their research projects
- can judge how different assumptions behind education traditions and sociological perspectives shape own understanding and interpretation of education as a social institution
- can identify and critically analyze challenges and opportunities associated with education in democratic and pluralistic societies, locally and globally

Recommended prerequisites

Admitted in an accredited PhD programme in education or a related social science programme in Norway or another international university.

Required previous knowledge

Master's Degree or equivalent. PhD students are prioritized for admission.

Admission restrictions*: The course is limited to a maximum of 25 students. If there are less than 5 applicants, the Department of Teacher Education reserves the right to cancel the course.

* Applicants will be ranked based on the following criteria and deadline for applications can be found on [our web page on PhD courses at the department](#).

Teaching and learning methods and activities

Seminar-based education where learning and teaching activities include lectures, discussions and student presentations, individually and/or in pairs and groups.

The course will be taught in English and delivered fully online via Zoom.

Mandatory assignments

- Attendance 80%
- Individual, pair and group work
- Two reading cards (based on two articles/chapters chosen from a pool of articles/chapters assigned by instructors or self-selected within course themes)
- One draft essay with oral presentation in the last sessions of the course

Evaluation method

- Home essay/paper - One final essay/paper submitted during exam period in December 2025
- Grade: Passed / Not Passed

Further on evaluation

The exam is an individual assignment of 3000 words (+/- 10%, excluding references) on a freely chosen topic within the course themes, and which may (but not necessarily) build a bridge to one's own PhD thesis.

Text submitted for assessment in the required academic coursework may be included in the thesis in *revised form*.

For a retake of a failed exam, the candidate can submit a revised version of a previously submitted text in the course. If the submission is a revised version of a previously submitted text, this must be clarified in the text.

Course material

About 600 pages of reading material/texts.