

GENERAL SYLLABUS FOR THIRD-CYCLE PROGRAMMES IN THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

This syllabus is for programmes leading to a doctoral degree and for programmes leading to a licentiate degree. The Higher Education Ordinance (HF) and Södertörn University's local regulations, the Regulations for Third-cycle Education at Södertörn University (reg. no. 1417/11/2011), are the governing documents for this general syllabus.

The general syllabus was validated by the Faculty Board on 11 December 2013.

A DOCTORAL DEGREE

A1 Qualitative targets for the programme

The Study of Religions is a critical cultural and social science that is distinguished by the multifaceted study of religion and religiosity.

On completing the programme, the research student can autonomously conduct research in the Study of Religions and make professional contributions in various areas of working life, such as education, administration, mass media and publishing.

A1.1 The Higher Education Ordinance

The qualitative targets for a doctoral degree are stated in the Higher Education Ordinance's System of Qualifications as follows:

Knowledge and understanding

For the Degree of Doctor the third-cycle student shall

- demonstrate broad knowledge and systematic understanding of the research field as well as advanced and up-to-date specialised knowledge in a limited area of this field, and
- demonstrate familiarity with research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.

Competence and skills

For the Degree of Doctor the third-cycle student shall

- demonstrate the capacity for scholarly analysis and synthesis, as well as the ability to review and assess new and complex phenomena, issues and situations, autonomously and critically,
- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively, and to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake research and other qualified tasks within predetermined time frames and to review and evaluate such work,
- demonstrate through a dissertation the ability to make a significant contribution to the formation of knowledge through his or her own research,
- demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to present and discuss research and research findings authoritatively in speech and writing and in dialogue with the academic community and society in general,
- demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge and

- demonstrate the capacity to contribute to social development and support the learning of others both through research and education and in some other qualified professional capacity.

Judgement and approach

For the Degree of Doctor the third-cycle student shall

- demonstrate intellectual autonomy and disciplinary rectitude as well as the ability to make assessments of research ethics, and
- demonstrate specialised insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used.

Research thesis (doctoral thesis)

For the Degree of Doctor the third-cycle student shall have been awarded a pass grade for a research thesis (doctoral thesis) of at least 120 credits.

A1.2 Local expected learning outcomes

For the Degree of Doctor the third-cycle student shall

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate an advanced capacity for autonomous and critical reflection on people, societies, cultures and religions using a comparative perspective and thus also have the tools to relate to contemporary cultural and social conditions,
- demonstrate in-depth knowledge about important issues and current research in the Study of Religions' various fields,
- demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the specialisations in the Study of Religions and its theoretical starting points,
- demonstrate a high level of familiarity with profile areas of the Study of Religions at Södertörn University and the research conducted in these areas,
- demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the theory and knowledge of the Study of Religions, and
- demonstrate in-depth specialist knowledge in a limited field of research in the Study of Religions

Competence and skills

- demonstrate a good level of ability to autonomously formulate a research task,
- demonstrate the ability to autonomously use scholarly theories, concepts, methods and techniques in his/her own research,
- demonstrate an in-depth ability to identify and present a research area that is relevant to the research task,
- demonstrate the ability to autonomously complete the selected research task and thus make a significant contribution to knowledge development in the Study of Religions,
- demonstrate advanced capacity in critically reviewing and discussing other researchers' work, and
- demonstrate the ability to, based on his/her own subject-specific perspective, see and use the multidisciplinary potential offered by a cross-subject research cooperation as regards research results

Judgement and approach

- demonstrate intellectual autonomy in the research community, and
- demonstrate integrity as a researcher in relation to wider society

A2 ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

A person is eligible for third-cycle education if he/she fulfils the general entry requirements and the specific entry requirements. The applicant must also be assessed as possessing the necessary capability to complete the programme.

A2.1 General entry requirements

General entry requirements for third-cycle courses and study programmes are met if the applicant has been awarded a second-cycle qualification; has satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits, of which at least 60 credits were awarded in the second-cycle; or has acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad.

The Faculty Board may permit an exemption from the general entry requirements for an individual applicant, if there are special grounds.

A2.2 Specific entry requirements

Specific entry requirements are met if the applicant has a Master's degree (60 or 120 credits) in the Study of Religions or the equivalent. All credits in subjects that provide eligibility must have been awarded by the deadline for applications. If there are special grounds, the Faculty Board may permit an exemption from the specific entry requirements for an individual applicant.

Courses and programmes that are used as a basis for fulfilling general or specific entry requirements for third-cycle education may not have the credits transferred to third-cycle courses or programmes. The specific entry requirements are also fulfilled by someone who has acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad.

Prerequisites for completing the degree programme are the ability to benefit from academic material in Swedish, Danish, Norwegian and English and a command of the language necessary for work on the thesis. These language skills must have been acquired before admission to third-cycle education.

The requirement to benefit from academic material in Swedish, Danish and Norwegian does not apply to doctoral students who are admitted to the Baltic and East European Graduate School (BEEGS).

A3 ADMISSIONS

A3.1 Admission and selection

Only applicants who are employed on doctoral studentships are admitted to third-cycle education in the Study of Religions at Södertörn University. However, the Faculty Board may admit an applicant who has a different form of student funding if the Faculty Board assesses that the financing can be guaranteed for the entire period of study and that the applicant can dedicate enough time to the programme to complete it within eight years.

Applications for admission to a third-cycle programme shall be submitted to the university. Decisions about admissions to third-cycle education are taken by the Faculty Board, following preparation by the steering group for Historical Studies. The normal case is that the Faculty Board decides whether to admit or reject an applicant on the basis of the subject's overall assessment of the application, the results of interviews with the applicant, and consultation with his/her references.

The basis for selection among eligible applicants for third-cycle programmes in the Study of Religions at Södertörn University is the level of ability to benefit from such a degree programme. Admission regulations are stated in the Regulations for Third-Cycle Education at Södertörn University. The application is assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

1. The applicant's merits and expertise
2. The quality of the research project
3. The suitability and feasibility of the research project as a doctoral project
4. The funding plan
5. Whether issues of research ethics have been considered
6. Whether sufficient collected supervisory capacity exists to provide good and professional supervision and the relevant expertise.

In association with admission to BEEGS, the research plan will be assessed according to its basis in the graduate school's specific geographic area: its orientation to the Baltic States or Eastern Europe.

The applicant's merits and expertise (item 1 above) are assessed more specifically as follows:

Previous education is evaluated on the basis of both its depth and breadth.

Degree projects from both the first-cycle and second-cycle and, where relevant, other written academic production are assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- The ability to complete a result-oriented and systematic empirical investigation
- Critical ability
- Analytical stringency
- Theoretical awareness
- Creativity
- Autonomy in both the formulation of problems and their analysis
- Academic progression
- The ability to comply with given timeframes

If two applicants are assessed as equal, the applicant who has written papers/degree projects on different themes at different levels has an advantage over the applicant who has written papers/degree essays on one and the same theme.

Assessment of a research project's quality, suitability and feasibility (items 2-3 above) is based on the thesis plan. In a thesis plan, the applicant describes the proposed research project in brief (no more than five pages). The description shall contain a formulation of the problem and an outline for how the research work will be carried out. The plan shall be written solely by the applicant. The plan is assessed on the basis of its:

- relevance,
- originality, and
- feasibility within the given timeframe

The applicant's cooperation skills and aspects relating to equal opportunities may also be taken into account. The applicant's communication and cooperation skills are assessed on the basis of references, statements or interviews. In the case of equally merited applicants, priority will be given to the underrepresented gender.

A4 PROGRAMME CONTENT AND DESIGN

A4.1 General

The programme is planned in such a way that it requires four years for students who study full-time. This presupposes that the doctoral student is dedicated to his/her studies and makes efficient use of teaching and supervision. For part-time students, the period of study is extended in proportion to the reduction in the pace of studies. The programme includes courses equivalent to 60 credits and the completion of a thesis that covers three years of full-time studies, i.e. 180 credits. During the programme, the doctoral student shall participate in the research seminars in the Study of Religions at Södertörn University (or the equivalent) for at least seven semesters and preferably also attend special seminars.

A4.2 Individual study plan

All third-cycle students in the Study of Religions must have individual study plans. The provisions of the Higher Education Ordinance and the Regulations for Third-Cycle Education at Södertörn University apply when drawing up and managing individual study plans. Individual study plans shall be validated and followed up each year by the steering group for Historical Studies.

An individual study plan for each doctoral student is drawn up in consultation between the student and supervisor at the start of the third-cycle programme. It must include overall planning for the period of study. An approximate time plan for the various elements of the thesis work and for the courses must be included. The plan should be more detailed for the coming year of activities and more general for subsequent years. In subsequent years, studies shall be evaluated once per semester in relation to the individual study plan, which will be revised at the same time. It must establish the commitments of the third-cycle student and the university's obligations in relation to the third-cycle student.

Copies of the individual study plans and the revisions to the plans must, at least once per year, be sent to the director of studies the third-cycle programme.

A4.3 Courses

Third-cycle studies in the Study of Religions include courses equivalent to two semesters of full-time study, i.e. 60 credits. The course-based part of the programme consists of courses that are common to the field of Historical Studies, courses given as part of the Study of Religions and of elective courses. The courses' content and requirements are decided in consultation with the examiner and supervisor and shall be stated in individual syllabi.

The following courses are obligatory:

Course 1. Historical Studies – an introduction, 7.5 credits

The course aims to provide basic knowledge of the area's academic perspectives and general fields of knowledge. Particular emphasis is placed on literature associated with the area's four profiles: Baltic and Eastern European Studies, Gender Studies, Contemporary History, and Cultural Heritage and Cultural Processes. The focus is decided on the basis of the contributions made by Historical Studies' different disciplines – Ethnology, History, Archaeology, the History of Ideas and the Study of Religions. The ambition is also to train the doctoral student in the multidisciplinary approach that is required for area studies.

Course 2. Methods and Theory of Knowledge, 7.5 credits

The course aims to provide basic knowledge of current debates within theory and method, primarily in the subjects covered by the area of Historical Studies. Even if the course includes studies in each subject, the main focus remains on multidisciplinary. The intention is to equip the third-cycle student with area-specific knowledge of theory and method that can have an innovative and creative influence when writing a thesis about a specific subject (in the Study of Religions).

Course 3. Contemporary Research into the Baltic Sea Region and Eastern Europe, 7.5 credits

The course consists of reading scholarly studies that are linked to BEEGS' specific geographic area and have a multidisciplinary design. The aim is to provide the third-cycle student with an insight into both completed and ongoing research into the region that includes factual knowledge and the opportunity for the student to locate his/her thesis work in this wide field of research. This course is only obligatory for third-cycle students at BEEGS.

Course 4. Research within the Study of Religions 7.5 credits

The course will familiarize the third-cycle student with research in the field covered by the thesis work. The third-cycle student must autonomously identify and delimit a relevant field of research, covering both classical works and frontline research. Additionally, the student will practice the systemization of dominant scholarly themes and perspectives in an analysis based on the Study of Religions and in positioning him/herself in relation to these.

In addition to these 3 or 4 courses, there are literature courses totaling 37.5 or 30 credits, in consultation between the third-cycle student and the supervisor.

A4.4 Thesis

The subject of the thesis shall be decided in consultation with the supervisor on admission to the programme and the subject should be thoroughly planned, so that the thesis can be completed over six semesters of full-time work.

The thesis must be either a unified and continuous piece of academic work (monograph thesis) or a compilation of academic works with an introductory summary (compilation thesis).

The scholarly investigation and the achieved results shall be presented with such quality that the thesis (including the works in a compilation thesis) is assessed as fulfilling appropriate demands for acceptance by an academic series or good quality journal. The following requirements otherwise apply in order for the thesis to achieve a Pass grade:

- that the thesis is the result of autonomous work that will provide new research input,
- that the aim, problem and method are clearly stated and motivated,
- that the methodology is used correctly and with relevant source material,
- that the research situation is presented so that previous research is clearly differentiated from the third-cycle student's own research contribution, which is presented in the thesis,
- that the material is presented and characterised and that the manner in which the material has been delimited is presented and motivated,
- that academic rigour is well observed as regards notes, source and reference lists, tables and diagrams, etc.,
- that the thesis is organised in a logical and consistent manner,
- that the thesis is of a good linguistic standard and a style that is suitable for scholarly presentation, and
- that the results are summarised.

The doctoral thesis may be written in Swedish, Norwegian, Danish or English. If it is not written in English it must include a summary in English. This summary must be so detailed that a reader with no knowledge of the language used in the thesis can obtain a clear idea of the thesis' aim and primary content, the scientific method that was used and the results that were achieved. Reference shall be made to the thesis' different chapters. On examination, assessment of the summary shall be included in the assessment of the entire thesis.

A short abstract in English of no more than 500 words shall be appended to every doctoral thesis. The abstract shall:

- state the title of the thesis, the language in which it is written, author, higher education institution and department,

- present the content of the thesis and thus cover its organisation, problem, methods, theories and results, and
- Provide keywords and other information of significance for literature searches in automatic information systems.

A5 SUPERVISION

Each third-cycle student must have two or more supervisors. The principal supervisor for each student is appointed at the start of third-cycle studies. The principal supervisor's minimum level of expertise must be that of associate professor. The principal supervisor has overall responsibility for the student's third-cycle education and for the quality and progress of work on the thesis. He/she is appointed by the Head of School after being proposed by the steering group for the area of Historical Studies.

The assistant supervisor is appointed by the steering group for the area of Historical Studies when the subject of the thesis is delimited. A person who is very familiar with the subject of the thesis should be sought for this task, initially among the teaching staff at Södertörn University, otherwise independently of his/her workplace.

A third-cycle student is allowed to change supervisor if he/she requests it. Decisions regarding a change of supervisor are taken by the Head of School.

The supervisor provides advice and direction within the scope of the programme and through individual supervision. Supervision shall take place through uninterrupted regular contacts from the start of the programme. The supervisor must support the third-cycle student in organizing work in such a way that studies can be completed within the time available.

When allocating working hours, the supervisor must be given the necessary time to become thoroughly familiar with the third-cycle student's essays, draft thesis and chapters.

The third-cycle student shall conduct his/her studies according to the activities that have been decided in the individual study plan. If there are any problems or changes the third-cycle student must contact the supervisor for a possible revision of the individual study plan.

If the third-cycle student wishes to assume teaching or administrative responsibilities of up to 20% of full-time at the academic school, this must always be done in consultation with the supervisor and noted in the individual study plan.

A supervisor has the right to resign as supervisor. If a third-cycle student substantially neglects his or her undertakings in the individual study plan, the Vice-Chancellor shall decide that the student is no longer entitled to supervision and other study resources. If study resources for third-cycle education have been withdrawn, the third-cycle student may, on application to the Vice-Chancellor, regain his or her entitlement to supervision and other resources. The student must then, by presenting prospective study results of considerable quality and scope or in some other way, demonstrate convincingly that he or she can fulfil his or her remaining undertakings according to the individual study plan.

A6 EXAMINATION

Examination on the courses is designed by the teacher and may take various forms. It normally includes oral examination, individually, in groups or through required participation in discussions, as well as a requirement for some form of written assessment. The courses are graded with either Pass or Fail. All courses must be

passed before the public defense of thesis.

To receive a doctoral degree the student must have received Pass in the courses that are part of the third-cycle programme and on the presented academic thesis. When awarding grades, the depth of the student's knowledge and his/her demonstrated capacity for independent judgement and critical analysis must be taken into account.

The thesis shall be reviewed and defended at a public defense of thesis at Södertörn University, unless there are specific reasons to locate it elsewhere. The public defense must be held in either Swedish or English.

The defense shall be led by a chairperson. A faculty examiner shall be appointed for the public defense. The chairperson and faculty examiner are specifically appointed by the Faculty Board for each public defense. Proposals for faculty examiners and members of the examining committee are provided by the Study of Religions in the area of Historical Studies at Södertörn University.

The grade for the doctoral thesis shall be decided by a grading committee that is appointed by the Faculty Board after being proposed by the steering group for Historical Studies. The faculty examiner may be present at the meeting of the examining committee and participate in the discussion but not in making the decisions. The third-cycle student's supervisor(s) may not be part of the examining committee, but can be present during its deliberations. In exceptional circumstances, the supervisors may be consulted by the examining committee.

The thesis can be given one of the following grades: Pass or Fail. For grading the thesis, consideration must be paid to both the content of the thesis and its public defense. The decision to pass a thesis may not be motivated. However, the examining committee must motivate its decision to fail a thesis.

The third-cycle student's supervisor decides whether the student will be recommended to present his/her thesis at a public defense. The supervisor's recommendation may not be understood as a guarantee that the thesis will receive a Pass after the public defense, nor may the supervisor prevent the student from presenting his/her thesis. The recommended scope of a monograph thesis is 160 pages. A compilation thesis should have the same number of pages, including at least four articles and a summary.

B LICENTIATE DEGREE

A Licentiate degree is a possible intermediate stage on a third-cycle programme, or an achievement in itself. Where appropriate, the statements above about doctoral degrees also apply to licentiate degrees.

B1 Qualitative targets

B1.1 The Higher Education Ordinance

For the Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student shall

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding in research in the Study of Religions, including current specialist knowledge in his or her field, as well as specialised knowledge of research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.

Competence and skills

- demonstrate the ability to critically, autonomously and creatively identify and formulate issues in the field of the Study of Religions with scholarly precision, and to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake a limited research project and

other qualified tasks within predetermined time frames in order to contribute to the formation of knowledge as well as to evaluate this work,

- demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to present and discuss research and research findings in speech and writing and in dialogue with the academic community and society in general, and
- demonstrate the skills required to participate autonomously in research and development work and to work autonomously in some other qualified capacity.

Judgement and approach

- demonstrate the ability to make assessments of research ethics,
- demonstrate insight into the potential and limitations of science, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used, and
- demonstrate the ability to identify his/her need for further knowledge and take responsibility for his/her academic development.

Academic paper (licentiate thesis)

For the Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student shall have been awarded a pass grade for an academic paper of at least 60 credits.

B1.2 Local expected learning outcomes

For the Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student shall

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate the ability to autonomously and critically reflect on people, societies and cultures from the perspective of the Study of Religions and thus also gain tools for relating to contemporary cultural and social conditions,
- demonstrate knowledge of important issues and current research in the different fields of the Study of Religions,
- demonstrate knowledge of the specialisations in the Study of Religions and its theoretical starting points,
- demonstrate good familiarity with the profile areas of Historical Studies and the research that takes place within them,
- demonstrate in-depth knowledge of methodology in the Study of Religions, and
- demonstrate in-depth specialist knowledge within a limited research field in the Study of Religions.

Competence and skills

- demonstrate the ability to autonomously formulate a research task,
- demonstrate the ability to autonomously use scholarly theories, concepts, methods and techniques in his/her own research,
- demonstrate skills in identifying and presenting a research field that is relevant to the research task,
- demonstrate the ability to autonomously complete the chosen research task and thus make a significant contribution to the development of knowledge in the Study of Religions,
- demonstrate skills in the critical review and discussion of the work of other researchers, and
- demonstrate the ability to, based on his/her own specific disciplinary perspective, see and use the multidisciplinary opportunities offered by an interdisciplinary research cooperation as regards scholarly results.

Judgement and approach

- demonstrate intellectual autonomy in the research community, and
- demonstrate integrity as a researcher in relation to wider society.

Academic paper

For the Degree of Licentiate the third-cycle student shall have been awarded a pass grade for an academic paper of at least 60 credits.

B3 ADMISSIONS - See section A3.1

B4 PROGRAMME CONTENT AND DESIGN

B4.1 General

The licentiate programme is planned in such a way that it requires two years for students who study full-time. This presupposes that the third-cycle student is dedicated to his/her studies and makes efficient use of teaching and supervision. For part-time students, the period of study is extended in proportion to the reduction in the pace of studies.

The programme includes courses equivalent to 60 credits and the completion of a thesis that covers one year of full-time studies, i.e. 60 credits. During the programme, the third-cycle student shall participate in the research seminars in the Study of Religions at Södertörn University (or the equivalent) for at least three semesters and preferably also attend special seminars.

B4.2 Individual study plans – see section A4.2

B4.3 Courses – see section A4.3

B4.4 Academic paper (licentiate thesis)

The subject of the licentiate thesis shall be decided in consultation with the supervisor on admission to the programme and the subject should be thoroughly planned, so that the thesis can be completed over two semesters of full-time work.

The licentiate thesis should either be a unified, coherent academic work (monograph) or a compilation of articles that have been published or accepted for publication as well as a short summary of these (compilation thesis).

The scholarly investigation and the achieved results shall be presented with such quality that the thesis (including the works in a compilation thesis) is assessed as fulfilling appropriate demands for acceptance by an academic series or good quality journal. The following requirements otherwise apply in order for the thesis to achieve a Pass grade:

- that the thesis is the result of autonomous work that will provide new research input,
- that the aim, problem and method are clearly stated and motivated,
- that the methodology is used correctly and with relevant source material,
- that the research situation is presented in such a manner that previous research is clearly differentiated from the doctoral student's own research contribution as presented in the thesis,
- that the material is presented and characterised and that the manner in which the material may have been delimited is described and motivated,
- that academic rigour is well observed as regards notes, source and reference lists, any tables and diagrams, etc.,
- that the thesis is organised in a logical and consistent manner,
- that the thesis is of a good linguistic standard and a style that is suitable for academic presentation, and
- that the results are summarised.

The licentiate thesis may be written in Swedish, Norwegian, Danish or English. If it is not written in English it must include a summary in English. This summary must be so detailed that a reader with no knowledge of the language used in the thesis can obtain a clear idea of the thesis' aim and primary content, the scientific method that was used

and the results that were achieved. Reference shall be made to the thesis' different chapters. On examination, assessment of the summary shall be included in the assessment of the entire licentiate thesis.

A short abstract in English of no more than 500 words shall be appended to every licentiate thesis. The abstract shall:

- state the title of the thesis, the language in which it is written, author, higher education institution and school,
- present the content of the thesis and thus cover its organisation, problem, methods, theories and results, and
- provide keywords and other information of significance for literature searches in automatic information systems.

B5 SUPERVISION – see section A5

B6 EXAMINATION

Examination on the courses is designed by the teacher and may take various forms. It normally includes oral examination, individually, in groups or through required participation in discussions, as well as a requirement for some form of written assessment. The courses are graded with either Pass or Fail. All courses must be examined before the defense of the licentiate thesis.

The licentiate thesis must be defended orally at a public research seminar; it must have been available prior to this for at least three weeks at the school where the seminar will be held. Information about the presentation of the thesis must be made public at the department for the equivalent time. The examiner must be appointed by the steering group for Historical Studies based on a proposal from the Study of Religions.

The licentiate thesis can be given one of the following grades: Pass or Fail. The grade is set by a committee, appointed by the steering group for Historical Studies as proposed by the Study of Religions. The committee consists of three teachers with PhDs. The chairman of the examining committee must have expertise equivalent to at least that of associate professor.

No later than two semester weeks before the examination, a popular summary in Swedish of no more than one A4 page shall be emailed to nyhetsgruppen@sh.se, as basis for an item on the University's website.

The licentiate thesis shall be archived and available at the school. Two copies of the thesis shall be submitted to Södertörn University Library.