



School of Economics and Management

EEH045F, Family and health, 7.5 credits

Familj och hälsa, 7,5 högskolepoäng

Third Cycle / Doktorandnivå

Details of approval

Approved by the Board of the Department of Economic History, Lund University School of Economics and Management 2023-01-17.

General Information

This is an optional course at the PhD programme.

The language of instruction is English.

Learning outcomes

On a general level, the student shall acquire advanced knowledge of theories about social differences in health and mortality in general, and specifically related to long-run developments and differences between families and across social groups. The student will also acquire knowledge about seminal literature in the field as well as from more recent academic publications using state-of-the-art methods and data. More specifically, the students will be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of theories about the social determinants of health and change over time
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the explanations proposed for the observed health outcomes
- Build knowledge about change in health differences across the population, including historical and recent developments

Competence and skills

- Relate to and discuss observed outcomes from a theoretically informed position
- Display a competence in contrasting different theories about the social origins of health differences across time

- Demonstrate the ability to understand, analyze and critically assess central issues in health demography

Judgement and approach

- Perform a comprehensive analysis of a relevant issue related to health, mortality and differences between families and social groups
- Present the results of this analysis in oral and written form
- Discuss, in writing and both individually and in smaller groups, different theories and explanations of the issues studied

Course content

In the past two centuries population health has tremendously improved. There are many perspectives on why these changes occurred, focusing on medical possibilities and improvements in the standard of living. In this course, a deeper look is taken at the state of the art in the literature. One of the topics that will be discussed are social differences between families, as these are the environment in which individuals grow up. There are large differences between families in the resources, lifestyle, and care that they provide children with at the start of life. These differences can have a long-lasting influence on health and life span. In an emerging literature, health differences between individuals are not considered solely from their individual perspective, but also by taking into account the conditions that they grew up in, parental resources, social mobility, and the effects of siblings and relatives in adulthood on health outcomes.

In this course, there is attention for health outcomes between individuals from different social groups, their family networks, and social status in adulthood. The course takes a multifaceted approach to social differences in health and mortality. There is attention not only for factors underlying person's social and health outcomes in adulthood that can be traced back to their social origin, but also the role of the social (family) network in childhood and adulthood. Interdisciplinary theories about social factors in health will be comprehensively discussed.

Due to the breadth of the topic, the content of the course will vary from year to year. Among subtopics to be addressed are health and mortality, early life effects in the family and beyond, social mobility and health, health segregation between relatives (siblings, nephews, grandparents, parents and children), the role of caretaking and involvement in family life and health outcomes, and demographic aspects related to health differences between families.

Teaching and assessment

The course is designed as a series of group meetings. There is an introductory lecture. During each subsequent meeting, theories about different social factors in health and long-term change will be discussed. Students read a set of literature before each meeting. In preparation to each meeting, students will work on independent assignments. They will write a short essay on how the assigned literature expands our understanding of mortality and health differences in the population. At the end of the course, students will write a paper about social differences in health from a family perspective. They select two or more theories discussed in the course and apply these to a case or cases of choice.

Students will present their work to the group and comment on each other's work. The written report is handed in as part of the examination.

Grading is based on individual performance via written assignments, papers, presentations and other compulsory activities. The examination is continuous. In this tutorial, active participation is a requirement. Examination may draw on teaching as well as the course literature.

The University views plagiarism very seriously, and will take disciplinary actions against students for any kind of attempted malpractice in examinations and assessments. The penalty that may be imposed for this, and other unfair practice in examinations or assessments, includes suspension from the University.

Grading scale

Marking scale: Fail or Pass.

Prerequisites

Further information