Course Specifications
Valid as from the academic year 2016-2017

Seminar Political Sociology (K001025)

Course

Lecturers in academic year 2019-2020
Hustinx, Lesley
PS04 lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2019-2020
crds	offering
Master of Science in Teaching in Social Sciences (main subject Sociology) 5 A
Master of Science in Sociology 5 A

Teaching languages
Dutch

Keywords
Political sociology, citizenship, participation, community service learning

Position of the course

The seminar is part of the major Political sociology and focuses on a civic fieldwork related to the political-sociological theme ‘citizenship’. This fieldwork serves as an experience based method of education in which students confront theoretical learning content with practical experiences, characterized by a civic engagement. Three components are central: (1) an academic component, with a frame of reference within political sociology, (2) a practical component, with the civic engagement by the students in a specific social organization, (3) a reflection component, which connects the academic and the practical component and encourages personal and social skills, values and attitudes.

Contents

During the lectures the students are prepared for the fieldwork. At the one hand, a theoretical framework concerning political sociology and citizenship is provided which provides a critical background for reflecting on the fieldwork. At the other hand, a practical training will prepare the students for the challenges of the fieldwork in the organization.

These theoretical content is then applied in real contexts. The fieldwork will take place in civil society and/or at non-profit organizations, focusing their operation on specific social goals and problems. The teacher will initiate the collaboration with specific organizations and determine the focus of the fieldwork in correspondence with the needs of the organization. The students engage with the specific social problem by means of the literature (academic, policy documents, etc.) and the fieldwork. During this fieldwork the students work within the daily operation in a function, appointed to them by the organization. The students get in touch with social workers, persons in a vulnerable social position and their living environment.

The central aim of the course is to involve students actively in a political-sociological problem of citizenship and participation and to challenge them in the use of their sociological imagination in real contexts. Through concrete interactions with persons who can not or may not perform their citizenship fully, it is possible to reflect on concepts of citizenship and participation. Critical thinking and problem solving skills are stimulated, as well as the development of personal, professional and social relevant skills.

(Approved)
The students can add a value to the involved organization by providing a theoretical framework for reflection concerning the indicated needs and complex social problems in a continuously changing society. The organization can get help to achieve goals and create new energy and perspectives and raise the consciousness about social problems in the broad society. Sharing knowledge and reciprocity are central. Throughout and after the fieldwork the students will reflect critically during discussion sessions. This will happen under the supervision of a tutor and master students who are following the teacher education program of the faculteit (SLO). During this session following topics will be addressed: the functioning of the students within the organization, the theoretical insights, the insights concerning the concrete problem statement, the needs of the involved organization and the place of sociologists in the field of work.

Initial competences
- To attend or successfully have completed the courses ‘Political sociology: Political structures’ and ‘Political sociology: Citizenship and participation’
- The student is expected to show a strong motivation when it comes to the social commitment, to take an open, tolerant, professional attitude, and to be open for critical self-reflection.

Final competences
1. To develop advanced insight in social problems in the specific organizational context in which the civic engagement will take place (nature, causes, dynamics, policy context, effect on the target group)
2. To develop advanced insight in relevant political-sociological approaches and the way in which they can be applied to specific social problems the civic engagement deals with.
3. To develop, based on theoretical insight and concrete experience, a well-founded and critical political-sociological vision on contemporary challenges regarding citizenship as a status, practice and policy
4. To develop, execute and execute a concrete social project as a sociological professional, in collaboration with other students, the organization in which the civic engagement takes place, as well as the involved target group
5. To develop, as a sociological professional, the necessary skills and attitudes to deal with a diversity of individuals with different backgrounds and opinions in working on common societal objectives (e.g. communication skills, the ability to recognize different forms of knowledge and expertise, to deal with other opinions in a respectful manner, to formulate common standpoints out of a variety of opinions)
6. To be able, as a sociological professional, to describe one's professional functioning, to evaluate it critically, and to improve it, and this based on self-reflection and feedback of peers, tutors, and (sociological) professionals working in the organization in which the civic engagement takes place
7. To gain insight in one's personal values, convictions, and attitudes and how these exert an influence on one's professional functioning, in particular in a context of working with socially vulnerable groups.
8. To reflect critically, based on one's experiences with the fieldwork, about the value and effectiveness of one's civic engagement, as well as about the role of the sociologist in society.

Conditions for credit contract
Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract
This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods
Lecture, PDE tutorial, fieldwork

Extra information on the teaching methods
There will be 5 lectures to discuss the following topics:
- Recent framework of theories on citizenship and participation.
- Training on professional attitudes, group dynamics, organization structure and disadvantaged groups.
- Training on reflection as a tool for critical evaluation.
The fieldwork will consist of students participating in the specific organization for a period of 10 weeks, with a weekly participation of 4 hours.
There will be 5 PBL-tutorials during which students will reflect on the processes of the fieldwork within a specific organization, guided by a tutor and master students of the SLO study program.

Learning materials and price
- Will be handed out during class or will be placed on Minerva.
- Students search for additional literature themselves. (estimated price: 5-10 euros)

References

Course content-related study coaching
- Training on operation and target groups of the specific organization, before the start of the fieldwork.
- Sessions of reflection and discussion with a tutor and peers.
- (Group) feedback on portfolio.
- Individual feedback when necessary: on request.

Evaluation methods
continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the first examination period

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the second examination period

Examination methods in case of permanent evaluation
Portfolio, participation, job performance assessment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent evaluation

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

Extra information on the examination methods
- Performance assessment in the workplace: analytical and problem-solving skills, professional attitudes, conversational techniques and/or knowledge of procedures that are important for the professional behavior. Evaluation will be done by the tutor in consultation with the professional working in the host organization.
- Participation: active engagement in the organization and critical reflection in the discussion sessions with the tutor.
- Portfolio: an overview of documents in which the individual learning process of the student is expressed. It consists of: a summary report of every period of participation in the organization, an interim and final evaluation of the own professional performances, a reflective essay in which the nature and limits of citizenship are being systematically questioned, based on theoretical frameworks and insights from the fieldwork, final report to the organization (on the research question) and to the department of sociology (on CSL and the place of a sociologist in the field of work).

Calculation of the examination mark
Permanent (100%)