

*Course syllabus*

# Riskuppfattningar, kommunikation och mänskligt beteende Risk Perception, Communication and Human Behaviour

**VRSN50, 7,5 credits, A (Second Cycle)**

**Valid for:** 2023/24

**Faculty:** Faculty of Engineering, LTH

**Decided by:** PLED BI/RH

**Date of Decision:** 2023-04-12

## General Information

**Compulsory for:** MKAT1

**Elective for:** RH4, R4

**Language of instruction:** The course will be given in English

## Aim

- to provide students with understanding, skills and approaches to working with risk perceptions and risk communication in theory and practice.
- to provide students with understanding and tools to take the needs of different individuals or groups into account when assessing and/or analysing risks using theories of social structures such as a gender perspective

## Learning outcomes

### *Knowledge and understanding*

For a passing grade the student must

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of what risk perceptions and risk communication can include in practice, and how this relates to the theoretical models of risk perception and communication.
- demonstrate in-depth knowledge of how perception affects behaviour and the relevance this has for theoretical development and practical implications in this field.

### *Competences and skills*

For a passing grade the student must

- demonstrate an ability to critically and systematically integrate knowledge about risk perception and communication, and analyse, evaluate and develop different communication strategies.

### *Judgement and approach*

For a passing grade the student must

- demonstrate the ability to critically reflect on relevant scientific, social and ethical aspects of risk perceptions, risk communication and the link to behaviour in practice.
- demonstrate the ability to critically reflect on their own perspective in relation to risks, behaviour and gender.

## Contents

The course contains both theoretical and practical perspectives, where students mix knowledge with real life applications of theories. Models that explain risk perceptions and theories of risk communication is presented, these are contrasted with different ways of estimating or observing human behavior. A particular focus will be on gender and tools for integrating gender in these contexts. During the course, students will learn how different perceptions of risks are formed in different contexts, and how communication between experts and laymen can occur. The students work in groups where they jointly choose a risk that interests them and analyzes it based on how different groups can perceive it and how it can be communicated between different stakeholders who can have different perceptions of the same risk and how this effects actual behavior. These works are presented to the entire group, where other students can provide feedback and contribute their own perspectives and experiences, with the facilitator of the teacher. The teacher gives individual as well as group feedback in both the theoretical part and the practical part of the course.

A particular focus is on gender perspectives and different tools for integrating gender will be investigated. Students will be able to identify how risks affect groups in society, and in particular how gender differences affect distributions of risk. The course is based on active participation of the students, where learning takes place through interaction between students and teachers. It requires active participation of all students in their own work, in peer review and dialogue, as well as in student-led seminars.

## Examination details

**Grading scale:** TH - (U,3,4,5) - (Fail, Three, Four, Five)

**Assessment:** Written reflective report, active participation in the seminars and contributing with peer-feedback to the other students. The report should contain critical reflection on how risk perceptions affect their communication in practice.

The examiner, in consultation with Disability Support Services, may deviate from the regular form of examination in order to provide a permanently disabled student with a form of examination equivalent to that of a student without a disability.

### **Parts**

**Code:** 0120. **Name:** Report.

**Credits:** 5. **Grading scale:** TH. **Assessment:** Approved individual paper. **Contents:** Individual paper. The aim of this course is to give the students an in-depth understanding of how risks are perceived and communicated in society. By working with their own perspective on risk, presenting and arguing for a this

perspective – informed by the theoretical models, the students increase their knowledge and understanding of how risks are managed and communicated in society.

**Code:** 0220. **Name:** Active Participation.

**Credits:** 2,5. **Grading scale:** UG. **Assessment:** Active participation at mandatory seminars. **Contents:** Seminars. During the course, the students are expected to give and receive feedback on the teachers, fellow students as well as their own presentations, something that requires active engagement.

## Admission

**Assumed prior knowledge:** VRSN01 Societal Resilience

**The number of participants is limited to:** 40

**Selection:** Completed university credits within the program. Within programs where the course is given as a compulsory course students are guaranteed admission. Thereafter priority is given to students enrolled in programs that include the course in the curriculum.

**The course overlaps following course/s:** VRSN35

## Reading list

- Finucane, M. L., Slovic, P., Mertz, C. K., Flynn, J., & Satterfield, T. A.: Gender, race, and perceived risk: The 'white male' effect. *Health, Risk & Society*, 2(2), 159–172., 2000.
- Slovic, P.: Perception of risk. *Science*, 236(4799), 280–285. *Science*, 236(4799), 280–285., 1987. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.3563507>.
- Sjöberg, L.: A Discussion of the Limitations of the Psychometric and Cultural Theory Approaches to Risk Perception. *Radiation Protection Dosimetry*, 68(3–4), 219–225., 1996.
- Fransson, A.-L., Elander, I., & Lidskog, R.: Framing Issues and Forming Opinions: The Baltic Sea Pipeline in the Swedish Media. *European Spatial Research and Policy*, 18(2), 95–110., 2011. <https://doi.org/10.2478/v10105-011-0015-y>.
- Fordham, M., & Ketteridge, A. M.: Men must work and women must weep: Examining gender stereotypes in disasters. *The Gender Terrain of Disasters*, eds. E. Enarson and BH Morrow, 81–94., 1998.
- Enarson, E.: Through Women's Eyes: A Gendered Research Agenda for Disaster Social Science. *Disasters*, 22(2), 157–173., 1998. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7717.00083>.
- Lofstedt, R.: Communicating Food Risks in an Era of Growing Public Distrust: Three Case Studies. *Risk Analysis*, 33(2), 192–202., 2013. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1539-6924.2011.01722.x>.
- Palenchar, M. J., & Heath, R. L.: Strategic risk communication: Adding value to society. *Public Relations Review*, 33(2), 120–129., 2007. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2006.11.014>.

## Contact and other information

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**Further information:** The course is based on active participation where learning takes place through interaction between students and teachers. The course requires active participation of all students in their own work, in peer review and dialogue, and student-led seminars.