

Department of Business Administration

EHFE004, Critical Perspectives on Leadership,
7.5 credits
Kritiska perspektiv på ledarskap,
7,5 hp
Third Cycle/Forskarutbildningsnivå

General information

The course EHFE004 is a course in Business Administration at the third cycle level.

Language of instruction: English

Main field of studies: Business Administration

We live in a culture that is increasingly preoccupied with leadership: managers are forced to follow leadership courses, more and more jobs require ‘leadership skills’, and we are frequently presented with alternative forms of leadership and better ways to achieve leadership success. Leadership is often presented as a solution to all sorts of social problems, and some even argue that leadership is on the brink of substituting management in contemporary organizations. In sum, we are experiencing a leadership moment in contemporary culture, which arguably leads to a need to question and problematize the leadership phenomenon.

In contrast to mainstream courses on leadership, the central question in this course is not ‘how to lead’, but how leadership ideas play out in our cultural context, at the organizational and societal level. The course lecturers and participants ask and discuss what is interesting and problematic about these ideas, for example by discussing the ideological and religious aspects of contemporary infatuations with leadership.

The premise of the course is that an adequate understanding of what we might call today’s ‘culture of business leadership’ requires the combination of three different studies: a study of organizational practice of leadership phenomena, a study of the construction of leadership concepts in both scholarly work and popular literature, and a study of the cultural and historical contexts in which leadership is variously

understood. The purpose of this course is to bring these empirical, conceptual and cultural perspectives on leadership together. Much space will be given for participants to present and get feedback on their ideas and projects.

Learning outcomes

A passing grade on the course will be awarded to students who:

Knowledge and understanding

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the perspectives, theories, and concepts of leadership treated throughout the course.
- Can develop critical approaches on leadership, especially when it comes to its socially constructed character.
- Can reflect on personal experiences in leadership or followership roles in the light of theories treated in the course.

Competence and skills

- Apply literature on leadership to their own research project
- Have an ability to form arguments for both research and public debate, orally as well as in writing.

Judgement and approach

- Can select and evaluate different theories in the study and analysis of leadership phenomena.

Course content

- Leadership and ideology
- Followership
- Leadership and gender
- The leadership industry
- Critical leadership studies
- Reflexive leadership
- Leadership, authority and religion
- Leadership and identity
- Leaderless forms of 'leadership'
- Studying leadership

Course design

The course entails one week of lectures and seminars as well as self-study.

Assessment

A final course paper critically discussing and applying relevant parts of the course literature (max 4.000 words).

Credits

Grades are Pass or Fail.

Plagiarism is considered to be a very serious academic offence. The University will take disciplinary actions against any kind of attempted malpractice in examinations and assessments. The penalty that may be imposed for this, and other improper practices in examinations or assessments, includes suspension from the University for a specific period of time.

Entry requirements

PhD students accepted to the PhD programme in Business Administration or an adjacent subject are eligible for the course.

Course literature

See separate literature list.



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EHFE004 Critical Perspectives on Leadership

1

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A selection of articles.