

The Study Board at Sociology



## MINUTES

01. MARTS 2024

**Forum** Study Board of Sociology

**Meeting held** 16.02.2024

ØSTER FARIMAGSGADE 2A  
KØBENHAVN K

**Location** Room 16.1.62

**Minutes taker** Andrea Ella Andersen Hald

DIR 35 33 18 15

aeah@samf.ku.dk

### Present

Board members: Lasse Suonperä Liebst, Jonas Toubøl, Mengni Chen, Pia Cecilie Enevoldsen, Mira Chatterji Rosen Sørensen, Anemone Frederikke de M Dalsgaard.

Alternates: Asmus Oliver Lewis, Askil Brandt Broegaard Ryan.

### Guests

Merlin Schaeffer, Hanne Kraak, Signe Staun Kelly, Nina Stenvang Holmsgaard.

### Absent

Jens Roesdahl Lange (Vacation).

## Agenda

- 1) Dispensation cases sent by mail
- 2) Approval of agenda /Lasse
- 3) Constitution of the new Study Board /Lasse

- 4) **Approval of course descriptions of the upcoming academic year /Lasse**
- 5) **Plan of the work of the Study Board, Spring 24 /Lasse**
  - a. Draw up an overview of items that the Study Board wants to work on in the spring semester
    - i. Orientation on simplification of the study regulations.
  - b. Plan when to meet during the spring semester.
- 6) **Visions for Sociology BA + KA /Merlin**
  - a. Merlin presents his vision of a potential new MA. Questions are welcome, but the Board will discuss further at the next meeting.
- 7) **Curriculum Change proposal /Merlin**
  - a. Proposal to clarify the use and share of pensum and petitum exams.
- 8) **Briefing from head of studies /Merlin**
- 9) **Briefing from Chair of the Study Board /Lasse**
- 10) **Info from the Student Services**
- 11) **Info from the student representatives**
- 12) **Any other business**

## Minutes

### 1) Dispensation case sent by mail

A dispensation case was sent out by mail (to the members of the last two semesters). **Decision:** *The proposal was approved.*

### 1) Approval of agenda /Lasse

The agenda was approved.

### 2) Constitution of the new Study Board /Lasse

Introduction round of the board members, alternates, study leader and administrative staff.

**Decision:** *Approval of Forretningsorden and Joint Delegation Letter for the Study Boards at the Faculty of Social Sciences.*

**Pia Cecilie Enevoldsen was elected Vice Chairperson amongst the student representatives.**

The student representatives asked whether they could delegate the work in the sub-committee for credit transfer and exemptions to a student outside of the Study Board because of the extra workload. Jonas and Andrea answered that it would be best to keep it inside of the study board (Andrea double checked and it must be a member of the study board).

*Decision: Mira Chatterji Rosen Sørensen was elected for the sub-committee for credit transfer and exemptions amongst the student representatives.*

*Decision: Mengni Chen was elected for the sub-committee for credit transfer and exemptions amongst the VIP.*

### **3) Approval of course descriptions of the upcoming academic year** **/Lasse**

The board was informed that the course descriptions are not fully updated because the department is hiring new colleagues.

Merlin informed the board that the course descriptions are largely a continuation from last year but with some updates. The department needs 1 more master course in the fall and 2 more master courses in the spring, where there is a bigger demand.

The Board discussed how many electives the department should have and Merlin answered 12-13.

The Board discussed the situation that there were 3 electives at the last summer courses, and almost no students from Sociology were enrolled. It correlated with the electives being oral exams. It was discussed whether the students in general try to avoid oral exams and whether this should be addressed. Some of the students recognized such a tendency but also made the point that it would have to do with the matter of the courses as well.

It was pointed out that an updated course description from the course “Sociology of Gender and Sexuality” spring 2025 is missing.

It was pointed out by the VIP representatives that some VIPs who teach general courses would like the opportunity to teach electives as well.

Merlin answered that he is aware of the perspective and that the reasons for how it is now are a bit complex and political. It was mentioned that general courses and electives might be shared more evenly when new people are hired.

Lasse agrees that it would be good to have a diversity of VIP involved in different courses.

It was pointed out that almost all electives are taught in English, and Merlin answered that this is a department politic to make it easier for exchange students.

The students suggested, even though not sure this would be popular in general, more method courses with experimental sociology such as Video Sociology.

Lasse mentioned that the number of mandatory methodology courses have gone up a lot and the electives is a way to compensate for that. He also mentioned that the course "Sociology of Gender and Sexuality" was suggested by students and therefore encouraged the students to speak up if they are missing certain themes/things but said that it would be a good discussion for Fagrådet at first.

The student representatives asked how diversity in the curriculum were taken into consideration.

Lasse and Merlin answered that the department has discussions about diversity and that it has been a topic of attention. They would prefer to develop it organically and not force it from the study board unless it doesn't happen. But they think the department is moving in a sensible direction. They encouraged the students to write it in their evaluation of the courses, and if there are many complaints about the syllabus, we discuss it on the study board.

Lasse explained that the tradition of the Study board at Sociology is not to go into detail with the course descriptions in respect of the teacher's academic freedom.

However, the board in general agreed that several course descriptions included too little content to make decisions on.

**Decision:** *The Board decided to look at the course descriptions again with more thorough descriptions, before they can be approved. It will be on the agenda for the next meeting.*

The VIP representatives made the point that they did not want to prolong the process and had thought this could be a point of attention going forward.

#### 4) Plan of the work of the Study Board, spring 24 /Lasse

It was discussed whether this is the time (waiting for the MA-reform) to wait or be proactive. Merlin mentioned that he will present a proactive suggestion at the next point on the agenda.

The students presented the following items that they would like to be discussed at a Study board meeting this semester.

Group creation for students at the first semester. The students would like a thorough discussion of how to organize groups, because currently it creates insecurity.

It was pointed out that it is a local issue and discussion and therefore does not involve Student Services.

It was mentioned that the topic was up for discussion last semester without a solution being found. It was also mentioned that it must be clear which groups it concerns and what is technically possible.

**Decision:** *The student representatives will have a meeting before the next Study Board meeting and prepare the discussion point.*

Lasse suggested a premeeting with him to work on the concrete formulations together.

**Decision:** *It will be on the agenda for the next study board meeting in March.*

The student representatives would like to discuss the course “Sociology in the Danish Society” and how to present/frame sociology to the new students.

**Decision:** *The board decided that this is not a topic for the study board but should be more direct. Merlin will write to Jesper and Bente and ask to organize a meeting with representatives that represents Fagrådets discussions.*

The student representatives want to facilitate a Fagrådsmøde about the MA reform, where the students can have a general discussion about what is important to them in the new MA reform. They want the students to be part of that conversation.

Merlin is happy to present his idea for a new MA at the meeting. But for discussion of the reform Merlin only agreed to a more condensed meeting with representatives from Fagrådet.

The board agreed that it is a good idea to start the discussion now, even though nobody knows the exact parameters/decisions.

The student representatives mentioned that it is also about giving the students a sense of security.

**Decision:** *Anemone coordinates the Fagrådsmøde and she and Merlin will make a plan for the presentation.*

The VIP representatives mentioned a discussion about place-based exams from last semester. It was decided that Lasse will have a meeting with Fagrådet to discuss it before it is brought to the Study Board.

On another point Lasse mentioned that the recommended style guide for citations in the General Exam Guidance should be simpler. The students agree.

Andrea mentioned that anyone with comments/suggestions for change in the General Exam Guidance should contact her, because she is already working on updating it.

The suggested plan for dates for study board meetings spring 24 did not work out and it was difficult to find dates.

**Decision:** *Andrea sends out a Doodle for the meetings instead.*

### **5) Visions for Sociology BA + KA /Merlin**

Merlin presented his vision for a new MA. He will present it to Fagrådet and the VIP group at the earliest convenience.

He explained that his vision for a new MA will also make it obvious how a potential 1-year MA would end up looking.

The board was generally positive but asked questions and voiced different perspectives to be aware of.

The VIP representatives asked when Merlin's suggestion for a MA reform will be taken to the VIPS. It was mentioned that prior reforms have been experienced as rash.

Merlin explained his idea for a 2-staged process where a working group of 2 students, Merlin, Lasse and head of each researcher group will work on this intensely and decide the details. This group then presents their work to everyone, Fagråd and the VIP group, discusses and take final comments. The group goes back and revises.

The student representatives asked if Merlin would send his presentation of a new MA reform. Merlin shares it on the Fagrådsmøde because he wants to present it to the VIP group first.

The board agreed that it is a good thing, that they are proactive and starting early; more people will have the opportunity to share their views.

### **6) Curriculum Change proposal /Merlin**

*Proposal to clarify the use and share of pensum and petitum exams.*

**Decision:** *the board must decide on the proposal.*

*Currently the term petitum is defined:*

*”Med petitum menes litteratur, som den studerende selv frit, om end med skyldig hensyntagen til litteratur læst på kurset, har sammensat inden for rammerne af fagbeskrivelsen for det pågældende fag”. (Petitum describes the literature, that the students independently, but with consideration of the literature read on the course, composes within the guidelines of the course description of the subject in question).*

*Proposed clarification of the use and share of pensum and petitum exams:*

*The students must engage with and cite at least 25% of the teacher-defined pensum. These references from the teacher-defined pensum, must make at most 70% of the overall references of their exam. The rest must be petitum (i.e., independently found sources that are not part of the teacher-defined pensum, but which are thematically related to the course topic).*

The proposal is a way to solve two issues; that it is currently unclear how much pensum students must cite and how petitum is defined. Moreover, Merlin mentioned that he believes it is important that students learn how to do research and seek out knowledge to become an independent knowledge worker.

Lasse agrees from observations of grading that the current definition of petitum is unclear. The new definition gives a clearer and more common understanding of it.

The student representatives were positive about the proposal but had several questions that led to the following discussion points.

Merlin's proposal is a general rule for all written exams.

It was discussed whether this might be a problem for some courses. The VIP representatives mentioned possible challenges for the methodology courses for instance.

Merlin's proposal is an exam requirement which means that the students will fail if they do not meet the requirement.

It was discussed whether it should be an exam requirement or more of a recommendation for getting a good grade and if that is even possible, if it is part of the learning goals and grading.

The VIP representatives made the point that it is a challenge that literature search is a bit unevenly taught. The teachers would have to incorporate literature search more seriously and prepare the students better if this becomes a criteria and exam requirement.

The student representatives agreed.

The board was in general positive towards the change from counting pages to counting the number of citations.

The student representatives agreed that students are currently often doubting how much to cite.

Hanne Kraak mentioned that we might run it by our educational lawyer Ayram Shine, if we are allowed to change from counting pages to counting the number of citations.

There was some confusion on how to implement the proposal in praxis and the board discussed examples from specific courses.

Concerning the citations from pensum, the student representatives argued that it should not be up to the students themselves to count the citations. Especially not for the students on the first semesters. It should be specified by the VIP/teacher.

They also mentioned that it should be clear what counts as a reference and what does not (supplementary readings).

The VIP representatives agreed that it should be specified by the teacher.



Merlin mentioned that he is unsure whether all teachers will do it. He said that it could be specified in the proposal that only pensum counts.

The board agreed that there should be a clear example of this rule in the General Exam Guidelines.

*Decision: The board agreed that the proposal needs to be revised and looked at again at the next study board meeting. It should be a bit more clear and it should say that it only relates to the required readings and that for integrated courses it relates to the combined syllabus.*

Mengni mentioned that it should be said explicitly that the students will fail if they do not meet this requirement. Merlin argued that it will be implied from where it is in the study regulations.

**7) Briefing from head of studies /Merlin (11.35-11.40)**

Nothing.

**8) Briefing from Chair of the Study Board /Lasse (11.40-11.45)**

Nothing.

**9) Info from the Study Services /Nina (11.45-11.50)**

Nina informed that there is "Open house" the 1<sup>st</sup> of March for new potential high school students.

**10) Info from the students (11.50-12.00)**

The students asked whether it would be possible for the minutes to be sent out earlier than with the appendices for the next meeting, because they use it to inform Fagrådet about the meetings.

*Decision: Andrea agreed to try to send the minutes to the board for written approval a week after the meetings at the latest – exceptions can occur.*

**11) Any Other Business (11.55-12.00)**

Nothing.