



Civic Courage in Theory and Practice (7,5 ECTS credits)

Level: 1st cycle

Discipline: PHILOSOPHY

Course ID: 0256

Admission requirements

General entry requirements for studies at universities. Students taking part in the course as a part of their Bachelor's degree program must have completed Course A, Introduction in Philosophy and Theology (30 ECTS credits) and Introduction to Ethics (7,5 ECTS credits). Students taking part in the course as a freestanding course are expected to have corresponding prior knowledge.

Educational goals

After completing the course, students are expected to be able to:

- 1) Analyze acts of civic courage with attention to ethical theory and historical, cultural and biographical contexts;
- 2) conduct interviews with individuals about their societal engagement and possible civic courage;
- 3) write, with attention to detail and incongruity, about individuals' actions in a particular historical moment; and
- 4) give a public talk about the same subject to an audience.

Course content

Human history is filled with individuals who were ready to take risks to save strangers or defend a common good. What motivated them? Is civic courage an obligation? Is it always a moral good? What can our bravest contemporaries and fallen heroes teach us about how to live? The course includes site visits and in-class interviews with socially engaged guests in Stockholm and Uppsala.

Teaching and examination

With a particularistic eye for detail, the course examines acts of civic courage in diverse cultural and historical contexts. We explore the motivations, consequences, and possible moral incongruities or contradictions of these acts; and we ponder their significance for our conception of the moral potentialities of human beings.

Philosopher Geoffrey Scarre's book, *On Courage*, will introduce students to debates about courage among ethical theorists, while also providing a precise language and a set of questions to apply to the empirical cases

Present-day examples of risk-taking engagement are included by means of in-class interviews with invited guests as well as site visits in Stockholm and Uppsala. The course also includes lectures by the instructor, short talks by students, web discussions, and student presentations of interview-based group research projects. Class discussions consider the possibilities for broader humanistic or social-scientific theorizing based on the empirical cases.

Students are required to complete each of the following tasks at a satisfactory level:

- 1) Attend and participate in each week's class. Missed classes can be made up for by additional writing assignments.
- 2) Participate in one in-class interview team. The team researches an interview guest and conducts part of the in-class interview.
- 3) Give a short talk to the class related to the course theme, as an exercise in public speaking.
- 4) Post a reflection on the course website after each class.
- 5) Present an interview-based, small-group research project to the class.
- 6) Write a take-home examination.

Bibliography

A portion of the course literature consists of articles distributed weekly as web links. In addition, selections from the following books are used:

Scarre, Geoffrey. *On Courage*. London: Routledge, 2010.

Larsmo, Ola, and Brian Palmer. *101 historiska hjältar*. [101 Historical Heroes.] Lund: Historiska media, 2013. (Certain chapters in English translation.)

Coles, Robert. *Lives We Carry With Us: Profiles of Moral Courage*. Edited by David D. Cooper. New York: The New Press, 2010.

MacFarquhar, Larissa. *Strangers Drowning*. New York: Penguin, 2015.

Narayan, Kirin. *Alive in the Writing: Crafting Ethnography in the Company of Chekhov*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.

Coles, Robert. *Doing Documentary Work*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997

Secondary Sources:

Halberstam, Joshua. *Everyday Ethics: Inspired Solutions to Real-Life Dilemmas*. New York: Penguin, 1993.

Singer, Peter. *The Most Good You Can Do: How Effective Altruism Is*

Changing Ideas About Living Ethically. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015.

Bauman, Zygmunt. Does Ethics Have a Chance in a World of Consumers? Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.

See also "Kursplaner: allmänna bestämmelser" (Course plans: General rules)

Finalised 2016-05-16

Valid as 2015-07-01