

General information about the course

The objective of this course is to enable the students to develop their professional capabilities through field work in real life situations in the field of rural development.

The course also aims to give students the opportunity to engage with future potential employers and to give them an insight in the practicalities of working environments.

After completion of this course the student shall be able to:

- In written and oral form present and critically evaluate the work life situations in rural development.
- In written and oral form reflect on the role of science in the practical work of rural development.
- In written and oral form reflect on sustainability issues in the practical work of rural development.
- In written and oral form reflect on ethical dilemmas of working in the field of rural development.

Content

In this course students have the opportunity to integrate, explore and critically evaluate, previously learned knowledge and skills, in a relevant work life setting. The course is designed as a project course, in which the students are given particular assignments (logbook and final reflective essay).

The course is given in period 3 and given on a full time basis, and it qualifies for student grants (CSN) for Swedish citizens. It comprises of eight weeks of practice, in the form of an internship, keeping a reflective diary, and one week of writing a report, communicating with the supervisor and making an oral presentation.

The course starts on January 17 and ends on March 23, 2022.

Prior knowledge

To be admitted to the course "The Practice of Rural Development " requires that you have knowledge equivalent to 180 credits, including 90 credits within a particular major within humanities, social or natural sciences. Knowledge equivalent to English 6 (Swedish educational system).

What is required to be approved?

The formal requirements to pass the course are:

- Approved written presentation of reflective diary (logbook)
- Approved written and oral presentation of final reflective essay (report)

The following procedures are required:

- You have to find a suitable organization where you will conduct the internship. The work place/organization needs to be approved by the course management.
- You must complete an 8 weeks full-time internship at the approved workplace/organization.
- You have to complete a reflective diary (logbook) during the internship
- You have to complete a written final essay, drawing on your reflective diary and your internship experiences

The workplace/organization

You are responsible for finding a suitable organization where to do your internship. The organization

should be able to give you an insight into tasks that are related to rural development, and which are relevant and sufficiently qualified for a master student to work with. You need a supervisor at the organization.

The work place/organization needs to be approved by the course convener. In order to get approval, write a brief e-mail to the course convener (Margarita.Cuadra@slu.se), and describe the organization and what your work tasks will entail. Reflect on why and how you believe that the internship will be relevant for your future education and career. The e-mail also has to include contact information (name, e-mail address and phone number) to your supervisor at the work place/organization.

This information needs to be submitted to the course management **18 January**, at the latest.

When the organization is approved, an agreement together with an informative letter will be sent by the student to the supervisor at the organization. The two documents will be found on Canvas. The supervisor needs to send back the agreement to the course convener, at the latest **21 January** in Canvas. The reason for the signed agreement is to ensure that the scope and content of the internship offered covers 8 weeks full-time and provides insight into relevant and qualified tasks.

The supervisor will also be informed that:

- you as a student have a non-life insurance from SLU that protects you during the internship, including the transport back and forth to the location of the internship
- there is no financial compensation paid to students, nor to the host institutions for the internship
- the supervisor at the host institution and at the course convener at SLU need to write and sign an agreement certificate that verifies the content and conditions of the internship. The student is responsible for submitting the signed agreement to the course convener. The signed certificate shall include: information about the organization, the student's full name and social security number, and the time period of the internship.

Reflective diary (logbook)

During your internship you should write a reflective diary. A reflective diary mainly consists of an account of your work in progress, your learning experiences and the conditions of the work. It should provide you with a means of engaging critically and analytically with the internship. This logbook or reflective diary will be a basis to complete your final reflective essay. At the end of the course, you will submit a summary of this reflective diary together with the final reflective essay. More details below under Final report.

See the following links for inspiration on how to write your learning diary:

- https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/iatl/activities/modules/ugmodules/humananimalstudies/assessment/reflectivejournal/
- <https://urplay.se/program/197516-orka-plugga-loggbok> (In Swedish)

Final reflective essay - Instructions

Based on your experience and the notes taken in your diary/logbook, you are expected to write a final essay. Although here you will present facts about your internship, e.g. what does the internship organization do and the tasks that you conducted, **the emphasis of the report will be on presenting your observations, experiences and reflections.**

The **format of the final essay** is expected to be an academic paper following an IMRAD (introduction, methods, results and discussion) structure (see Nair and Nair 2014) in literature list below for more info).

You should create a title for your paper and have a reference list as indicated by Nair and Nair (2014). You do not need to include key words, an abstract nor a theory and conclusion section. The limit of

the report is minimum 16,000 characters (including spaces) and maximum 18,000 characters excluding references. Please use the [Harvard referencing system](#).

Please include a description of the organization/ place of work. Briefly describe its history, the organization, number of employees, geographical location, etc. and potential career paths within the institution.

In order to be able to critically assess the work conditions, contents and practices we recommend that you draw on aspects of organization theory, for example Acker, 1990 (see reference below). You may also use other references, which you believe are relevant for the task.

Please use the questions below as a guide when writing the report. Under each main question are complementary guiding questions. These are meant to help you address the main questions from potentially different angles. You don't need to answer all of the complementary questions.

1. How is rural development (formally and informally) understood and practiced in the organization?

- In which way and to what extent does the organization use and practice the concept of rural development (RD)?
- Which RD related issues (with regard to both the rural and development) can you identify in the organization?
- How are these issues (explicitly and implicitly) understood and practiced?
- From a societal perspective, in which way and to what extent does the organization contribute to sociopolitical processes (instrumental and/or constitutive aspects of Rural Development) concerning environmental and sustainability issues?
- Your reflections on the role of science in the practical work of rural development
- Does the organization work explicitly on various aspects of sustainability (social, economic and ecological)? Or does it focus on only one of these aspect?
- How does the organization work and reflect about sustainability?
- include reflections on ethical dilemmas of working in the field of rural development.

2. How do members of the organization reflect and make-sense on RD understandings and practices?

- What social norms have you identified in the organization? How do these norms relate to rural development?
- What gendered (or other structural) norms and values are attached to the different tasks in the organisation?
- Which societal discourses are reproduced or challenged in the organization?
- What learning and meta-learning processes can you identify in the organization? Do these learning processes concern rural development?
- How does the organization plan and carry out RD activities? Your understanding not their description
- How are different/conflicting perspectives on RD understandings and practices handled in the organization?

3. How do you participate, make-sense, question/resist or internalize/reproduce 1 and 2?

- What has been your main task(s)? How has it been to take on those tasks as an employee with a masters degree?
- How you have used your education and training to perform these tasks?
- What educational backgrounds do you believe are most appropriate for the work?

- How have you perceived the communication/social interaction embedded in your task(s)?
- How is it for you to represent the organization and its perspective and ideology concerning rurality and development, etc.
- How have you contributed (reinforced, challenged, changed) to the organization's RD understandings and practices? In which way and to what degree? Where there any challenges in making your contribution?
- What happened with you when you became a member of the organization?

4. Future

- Reflect on the benefits and, possibly, challenges that you have met and how you have handled them
- What has the practice meant for you? What have you learned? Would you like to work at a similar organization in the future? Why?
- How has your attitude towards your future work career path and rural development been influenced by the internship?
- Include your reflections on the role of science in the practical work of rural development

The questions are to be used only as a guide when writing your final essay which should not be written in a question answer format. The narrative and discussion of the essay should cover these questions but the emphasis is on presenting your observations, experiences and reflections.

The questions should help you observe and reflect on the organization and your experience of becoming a member of rural development community of practice. You should go “under the skin of the organization” and find out their local culture, norms, routines. Emphasis should be on self-reflecting on what it is like to become a member of a community of practice and as such a member reproduce (rather than observe) the underlying assumptions on rural development.

It is recommended that you write this final essay after you finish your internship. This in order to take some distance and be able to better reflect on your experiences. It is expected to take 1 to 2 weeks. Please plan accordingly.

This final reflective essay will be submitted in the course page in Canvas at the end of the course.

Oral presentation

Part of the course objectives is that you present orally your report to the group. Attendance is compulsory.

During this final essay presentation, each student is expected to present their final report to the rest of the class. Students are also expected to read and comment on the final report of another student.

Each presentation will take approximately 30 minutes including:

- 15 minutes of presentation by the author of their final report
- 10 minute for the commentator to make questions. Focus should be on expanding the reflection of the presenter by asking for clarifications or development of interesting points. The final report guiding questions can be used for asking the questions.
- 5 minutes for comments or questions from course coordinator and the rest of the class.

The final seminar will occur during the final week of the course (between 15-17 March 2021). Exact time and date will be informed later in the course page in Canvas.

Grading

The grades U/3/4/5 are used in the course. The grading criteria are available on the course homepage from the start of the course.

Contact information

Course conveners are Margarita Cuadra, Margarita.Cuadra@slu.se and Örjan Bartholdsson, Orjan.Bartholdsson@slu.se

Readings

1. Acker, Joan. 1990. Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations. *Gender and Society*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Jun., 1990), pp. 139-158. Published by: Sage Publications, Inc.
2. Nair, P. K. Ramachandran, and Vimala D. Nair. 2014. "Organization of a Research Paper: The IMRAD Format." In *Scientific Writing and Communication in Agriculture and Natural Resources*, edited by P. K. Ramachandran Nair and Vimala D. Nair, 13-25. Cham: Springer International Publishing.
3. Somerville, D., Keeling, J. (2004) A practical approach to promote reflective practice within nursing. *Nursing Times*; 100(12) 42–45
4. Yanow, D. & Tsoukas, H. (2009) What is Reflection-In-Action? A Phenomenological Account. *Journal of management studies* 46 (8):1339 – 1364

Dates and deadlines

Course schedule	Dates
Course start	January 17
*Introductory seminar	January 17, 13.00-14.00 via Zoom
Deadline for sending confirmation of workplace/organisation	January 18, 23:59
Deadline for delivering signed internship contract	January 21, 23:59
Writing of logbook and internship	17 January - 15 March
*Oral presentation of final essay (report)	15-17 March (calendar later in Canvas)
Delivery final essay and logbook (in Canvas)	23 March, 23:59

*compulsory attendance