

Arts & Visual Methods For Academic Research

Mittuniversitetet Sundsvall
19-23 September 2022



Building on increased academic interest in the incorporation of arts and visual methods for social scientific inquiry, the Department for Humanities and Social Sciences at Mittuniversitetet will host a special course on Arts and Visual Methods for Academic Research.

When?

The course will run for one week, starting on Monday 19th September 2022 until Friday 23rd September 2022.

Where?

The course will be delivered at Mittuniversitetet Campus Sundsvall, SE-851 70 Sundsvall. The specific spaces to be used on campus are yet to be confirmed. All spaces used will be adequate for collective work in adherence to regulations regarding the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Please note that weather permitting, some exercises may be conducted outdoors.

Description

The Arts and Visual Methods for Academic Research course will be a practice-based, hands-on experience, designed to encourage the use and reflection of arts and visual practices in qualitative academic research, and to foster creative and critical engagement with these methods.

The intention of this course is to promote an exploratory impulse into visual research methodologies as well as facilitating trans-disciplinary cross-pollination and engagement amongst participants. Furthermore, another aim of this course is to explore practice-led arts and visual methodologies in the context of individual and participatory research for visual desk or fieldwork, while engaging critically with relevant literature

Course objectives

On completion of this course the participants will be expected to:

- reflect on critical theories of visuality and their implications in constituting hegemonic imaginaries;
- be able to imagine and design projects and research studies using arts and visual methods for individual or participatory research projects.
- have reflected on and considered the ethical dimensions required when implementing arts and visual methods;
- be able to work with visual data and to have both practical and conceptual understandings of the appropriate interpretive frameworks for working with visual artefacts and processes.

Format

The course is designed around three workshops focusing on drawing, photography and collage-making. Each method was selected for their capacity to be exercised individually and collectively. In that spirit, the formation of small collectives or collaborative groups to explore these methodologies will be welcome if and when interest to work in that way arises during the course.

The practice-led approach will be complemented with three lectures. These lectures will frame and unpack the practices explored in the workshops. Furthermore, time permitting, upon request and depending on capacity, some individual or small group tutorials may also be possible.

The course will end with a presentation and a group meeting where participants will finalise the terms and form of the output that they wish to produce as a document for this project. This will be followed by a celebratory group show designed and installed by participants. As it will be open to the academic and wider community of Sundsvall, this show will provide space for more informal discussions and feedback on participants' work-in-progress.

Participants

The course is an invitation for all academics interested in testing or further developing research skills and modalities grounded in arts and visual methods. No prior experience or knowledge of drawing, photography, collage or any other art or visual practice is necessary.

It is also designed for academics interested in testing out, critiquing, and studying the challenges and successes of arts and visual methods as applied in academic work and research. With the idea of deepening an understanding of research design, including the role of reflexivity and representation in the context of the creation, use and interpretation of arts and visual data in academic research, the workshop should provide an opportunity for active reflection and collegial discussion.

To achieve that, participant researchers will be encouraged to explore their own approaches and ideas in a safe and constructive co-learning space that will hopefully enable thoughtful and playful experimentation.

The exploratory work conducted by participants in the course may be done individually or in small groups. This will be done according to participants' desires and needs. Whether you are curious about the methods and approaches explored in the course, whether you are a beginner or an experienced practitioner, the course will aim at providing a space for constructive dialogue and supportive exchanges

Introductory Session

There will be an introductory session on 29th August at 11am. This session will be held via zoom. A link will be shared prior to meeting. The objective of this session is to provide an overview and some background to theories and practices that inform the design and structure of the course.

This session will also be an opportunity to introduce the organising team and facilitators of the course. Furthermore, participants will have a chance to ask questions and clarify any doubts prior to the start of the course.

Entry requirements

Participants meet the entry requirements for the course if they have been admitted to a third-cycle study programme and are given credit for the course in that study programme.

Selection rules and procedures

The selection process is in accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance and the local order of admission.

Grading system

The course has a simple Fail (U) or Pass (G) grading. The grade will be determined by participation, presentation and submission of final work.

Course Facilitation

The course will be facilitated by Dr Nicolás Vass (University of the West of Scotland - School of Business and Creative Industries). Dr Vass is an artist and researcher interested in the use of arts and visual methods in various contexts ranging from higher education to community and solidarity building efforts in social movements. Dr Vass has designed this course informed by their 20 years of work experience in the creative and cultural industries, and 10 years of experience as an educator in higher education in the United Kingdom.

Registration and Contact:

To register for this course and for any other inquiries, please contact the course convenor **Prof. Sara Nyhlen**. Email: sara.nyhlen@miun.se

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