

**Course Title:** Social Science and social work – reflecting on reflection

**Course Credits:** 2,5 (ECTS) or 5 (ECTS) with paper

**Dates:** October 13-14 2009 in Trondheim, NTNU

**Lecturers:** Professor David Thorpe, Associate Professor Inger Marii Tronvoll.

The course is formally a part of the PhD-programme in Social Work at NTNU, Trondheim. We wish to welcome PhD-students from **Nordic-Baltic Doctoral Network in Social Work**. The language will be English, but there will be the opportunity to present papers in Scandinavian languages.

The course is open for 20 PhD students. The network supports 8 PhD (outside from Norway) students with a travel grant of approximately 450 euros. Dead-line for applications is **21 September 2009**. An application should be sent to the coordinator of the network. (Noora.Tuohino [at] ulapland.fi). Applications should include a short CV and a brief presentation of the PhD-project (max half page) in addition to standard information such as name, age, university affiliation, when the PhD studies started and are expected to be finished. Send other questions concerning the course to Riina Kiik, NTNU ([Riina.Kiik.@svt.ntnu.no](mailto:Riina.Kiik.@svt.ntnu.no)). The selection of participants will be completed by 25 September. Researchers not formally PhD-students may apply, but priority is given to PhD-students.

### **Aims:**

The basic assumption behind the course is that it is no longer sufficient for human service practitioners to simply be well-intentioned, empathetic and technically competent. It asserts that expert practitioners should also be good social scientists who are capable of analysing the consequences of different intervention repertoires and adapting ways of organising and acting (“the work” of social work) to match unique local contexts .

The aim is therefore to situate professional practices within those social science perspectives which focus on the routine practical activities of occupational actors in specific social contexts. For example it treats social workers as an *occupational group*. Rather than attempting to specify what social workers should do, it describes and analyses what it is that they *actually* do. Most practices are determined not by the abstractions of social policy or texts on methods and skills, but by local interpretations of organisational requirements (...“it’s this kind of case, this is how we usually deal with it in this office...”). Most importantly these requirements include the provision of the social categories into which the life-world is “fitted” as exemplified by procedure manuals, electronic and paper forms and the narratives of case file text which detail the practical moral reasoning underlying categorisation practices.

This is *social work practice*, it is the “work” performed with “the social” insofar as the moral categories in use are social artefacts which are organisationally, culturally and linguistically constructed. It is intended that the course will equip students with the analytical skills to question the language, definitions and consequences of these taken-for-granted categories and the practices associated with them which always result in inclusion and exclusion – they have a consequence. This dimension concerns the activity of deciding *what fits where*, what is included and excluded from specific categories. Thus in that sense categorisation *is an intervention*. The “work” of “social” work consists in reflecting on categories-in-use, how the boundaries operate in practice to include and exclude and how boundaries can either be

reconfigured in beneficial ways or new categories brought into being which potentially bring benefits to those who most need help. Indeed the very act of deciding who is most in need of help in the context of particular programmes is a primary consideration since it determines the focus of inclusion and exclusion

### **Course content**

- Natural Science and Social Science
- Rules, causation and morality
- The laws on nature are based on replicability, standardization and methods of enquiry about physical/scientific objects. Social laws however are subject to constant change and negotiation around what is viewed as “normal”
- Social Work as the application of Social Science
- The links between knowledge, language, fractional reality and social/moral categories.
- Intervention as reflection on the boundaries of these categories in specific contexts.

**The pedagogical forms** of the course include prereadings, writing a research paper, lectures, discussions and group working.

**Articles to be pre read** by the participants (look at the [www.sosnet.fi](http://www.sosnet.fi)):

Jordan, Bill. (2000). *Social Work as the Third Way. Tough Love as Social Policy*. Kap 3, s 62-82: “Reasons, motives and evidence: The theoretical basis for the third way and social work”. London: SAGE Publications.

Webb, Steven A. (2006). *Social Work in a Risk Society – social and political perspectives*. Kap 1, s 23-48: “Social work, risk society and modernity”. London: Palgrave macmillan.

White, Sue; Fook, Jan & Gardner, Fiona. (2006). *Critical Reflection in Health and Social Care*, kap 1, s 3-20: “Critical reflection: a review of contemporary literature and understandings”. Open University Press.

### **Additional reading list**

Schatzki, T. (2002) *The Site of the Social*. Pennsylvania: Penn State Press.

Midgley, G. (2000) *Systemic Intervention: philosophy, methodology, practice*. New York: Kluwer

Luhman, N. (1990) *Essays in Self Reference*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Du Gay, P.(2000) *In Praise of Bureaucracy: Weber - Organisation - Ethics*. New York: Sage.

Høilund, Peter og Søren Juul. 2005. *Anerkendelse og dømmekraft i socialt arbejde*. Kap 5, s 95-119: ”Den sociale dømmekraft i mødet”. København: Hans Reitzels forlag.

### **Course requirements**

Before the course, participants who like to have 5 credit, will be asked to submit a research paper or a journal article they are currently working on or are planning to write, outlining a key question and its significance. These papers/articles (12-15 pages) will be taken into

account in the preparation of the course. Research paper should be sent to the course organiser by **September the 21<sup>st</sup>**, and will be distributed to participants before the course. During the course, papers will be presented and discussed. There will be one student opponent and one teacher opponent. The research papers are presented by using Power Point, if possible, and developed via discussion in thematically preorganized small groups. **Send research paper** to Riina Kiik (E-mail: Riina.Kiik@svt.ntnu.no).

After the course, participants are expected to finalise their paper/article and submit it to the course organisers (NTNU) before **14 of December 2009** for acceptance. Participation will give 5 credit points, provided the organisers accept the final paper. Participation the whole course, prereading and active discussion will give 2,5 credit.

## **Preliminary Programme**

### **Monday 12 October**

Informal meeting of participants (at participants own expense)

### **Tuesday 13 October**

|               |                                      |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| 10:00 – 13:00 | Lectures                             |
| 13:00 – 14:00 | Lunch                                |
| 14:00 – 17:00 | Paper Sessions                       |
| 19:00         | Dinner (at participants own expense) |

### **Wednesday 14 October**

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 09:00 – 12:00 | Paper Session                             |
| 12:00 – 13:00 | Lunch                                     |
| 13:00 – 15:00 | Lectures                                  |
| 15:00 – 16:00 | Concluding discussion, end of the course. |

**Final program will be announced 1 of October 2009.**