UNIVERSITY OF SKÖVDE

TRANSLATION FROM SWEDISH

COURSE SYLLABUS

What is life? G1N

15 credits

Course code: KU139G
Version number: 3.1
Valid from: 1 July 2024
Ratified by: Curriculum Committee for Bioscience
Date of ratification: 25 January 2024

1. General information about the course

The course is provided by the University of Skövde and is named What is life? G1N (Vad är livet? G1N). It comprises 15 credits and is a first-cycle course. The level of progression is G1N.

The course is a part of the main field of study in Cognitive Neuroscience. The disciplinary domain of the course is Natural Sciences.

2. Entry requirements

General entry requirements (or the equivalent).

3. Course content

The course consists of studying a selected set of papers and book chapters, in accordance with the course objectives. All the material will be first introduced in video lectures, which assist the students in interpreting the texts against the general context of the problem of life.

4. Objectives

After completed course the student should be able to:

- describe the three traditional conceptions of life (animism, mechanism, and organicism), and discuss their persisting influence on modern thought,
- describe the general approaches and inherent problems in the project of defining life,
- discuss the question “What is life?” as a transdisciplinary challenge for science and philosophy; as being related to, but distinct from, e.g. the problem concerning the origins of life, and
- discuss more specifically how the problem of life appears at the interface of biology and physics, how different lines of research are aiming to bridge the gap, and how the problem of life is related to the problem of mind.

5. Examination

The course is graded A (Excellent), B (Very good), C (Good), D (Satisfactory), E (Sufficient) or F (Fail).

A final grade of the course is only issued when all the examination parts have been passed and is determined by a weighted average of the grades for the examination parts. The average value is rounded to the nearest integer (half rounded up) and translated into a final grade of the course.

The examinations of the course consist of the following modes of assessment:

- **Written Assignment II**
  4 credits, grades: A/B/C/D/E/F
- **Written Assignment II**
  4 credits, grades: A/B/C/D/E/F
- **Written Assignment III**
  3.5 credits, grades: A/B/C/D/E/F
- **Written Assignment IV**
  3.5 credits, grades: A/B/C/D/E/F

Students with a permanent disability who have been approved for directed educational support may be offered adapted modes of assessment.

6. Types of instruction and language of instruction

The teaching is comprised of lectures and seminars/group discussions.

The teaching is conducted in english.

7. Course literature and other educational materials

Bedau, M. & Cleland, C. (eds.) (2010). *The nature of life: Classical and contemporary perspectives from philosophy and science*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 9780521517751. 9781108722063 (paperback); 9780511730191 (e-book).

Rosen, R. (2000). *Essays on life itself*. Columbia University Press. ISBN 9780231105101. 9780231105118 (paperback); 9780231502689 (e-book).

Scientific articles and other relevant materials according to the teacher's instructions.

8. Student influence

Student influence in the course is ensured by means of course evaluation. The students are informed about the results of the evaluation and potential measures that have been taken or are planned, based on the course evaluation.

9. Additional information

Further information about the course, as well as national and local governing documents for higher education, is available on the website of the University of Skövde.