

Study Plan for PhD in Digitalisation and Society (2026–2029)

Facts about the program

ECTS Credits:

180

Study duration:

3 years

Teaching language:

English

Campus:

Fredrikstad and/or Halden

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Study Model

Autumn 2026

Core courses

Digitalisation and Society	5 stp
PHDDS90223 Philosophy of Science and Research Ethics	5 stp
PHDDS95023 / Part 1 of 6 PhD Thesis in Digitalisation and Society	

Elective courses autumn 2026

PHDDS91923 / Valgbart emne Co-designing Digital Technologies for Cooperation	5 stp
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Spring 2027

Core courses

PHDDS90323 Research Methods: Methodology Matters	5 stp
PHDDS95023 / Part 2 of 6 PhD Thesis in Digitalisation and Society	

Elective courses spring 2027

PHDDS91423 / Valgbart emne Education in the Digital Society	5 stp
PHDDS91623 / Valgbart emne Work in the Digital Age	5 stp
PHDDS91823 / Valgbart emne Artificial Intelligence – Hypes and Hopes	5 stp

Autumn 2027

Core courses

PHDDS95023 / Part 3 of 6

PhD Thesis in Digitalisation and Society

Spring 2028

Core courses

PHDDS95023 / Part 4 of 6

PhD Thesis in Digitalisation and Society

Elective courses spring 2028

PHDDS91523 / Valgbart emne

Digital Health and Psychosocial well-being

5 stp

Autumn 2028

Core courses

PHDDS95023 / Part 5 of 6

PhD Thesis in Digitalisation and Society

Spring 2029

Core courses

PHDDS95023 / Part 6 of 6

PhD Thesis in Digitalisation and Society

150 stp

Information about the programme

The PhD programme has a nominal length of three (3) years of full-time study including the required coursework.

The PhD programme **Digitalisation and Society** provide a solid interdisciplinary research environment where PhD candidates can examine, evaluate and develop in-depth research on the interplay between digitalisation and society.

Digitalisation is complex and has become pivotal to our society. It involves how digital innovations influence societal development, but also how society increasingly demands better and more efficient tools for solving new tasks.

The interplay between society and digital technologies is present in all aspects of society. Continuous and accelerating processes of digitalisation urge critical discussions and analyses of the opportunities, challenges and limitations brought on by digital transformations. It is for example important and necessary to critically analyse and produce further innovations within areas such as education, health, work and computing. Contributions to knowledge made by these disciplinary fields will affect how new technologies are developed and thereby empower technological change.

Digitalisation can be described using different concepts. **Devices and Artefacts** represent concrete digital technologies and materialised digital objects, whereas **activities and practices** represent the interaction with, and the use of these digital technologies. The **organisational and social arrangements** where digital technologies are used can be understood as the overarching contexts of digitalisation. These concepts are interrelated, and PhD projects may therefore aim at incorporating several of these perspectives, preferably within user and practice-centred approaches. Examples of PhD projects where such perspectives may be utilised are studies of the digital tools themselves, the practices and activities in which digital

technologies are applied and /or the overarching organisational or societal arrangements in which digitalisation takes place.

Research on digitalisation and society is crucial for the sustainable development of our society. This programme aims to produce highly qualified candidates that can pursue further careers in knowledge-intensive organisations, both nationally and internationally.

The courses included in this PhD programme along with individual supervision will collectively provide candidates with the theoretical and methodological frameworks required to conduct independent research at the forefront of their academic field in accordance with recognised scientific and ethical standards.

Finally, explorations of digitalisation and society are inherently interdisciplinary as societal processes of digitalisation reach across traditional disciplinary boundaries and contexts. The PhD programme's interdisciplinary approach is ensured by grounding the programme in a broad academic environment representing three different faculties at Østfold University of Applied Sciences, the Faculty of Teacher Education and Languages, the Faculty of Health, Welfare and Organisation and the Faculty of Computer Science, Engineering and Economics. These faculties constitute the overarching research area of priority The Digital Society at Østfold University of Applied Sciences.

What do you learn?

Degree/title obtained

Candidates who complete the programme are awarded a degree of Philosophiae Doctor (PhD).

The study programme's learning outcomes

Knowledge

The candidate

- is in the forefront of knowledge within his/her field of study in research on digitalisation and society, and related scientific theories and methods
- can assess the appropriateness and utilisation of different methods and processes in research and innovation relevant to their field of study within education, health, computing

and/or work

- can contribute to the development of new knowledge, theories and methods within digitalisation and society

Skills

The candidate

- can develop and formulate research questions and is able to design and conduct research that explores critical issues relevant to digitalisation and society
- can conduct research at an advanced international level that extends and redefines knowledge about digitalisation and society
- can handle complex academic issues and identify knowledge gaps within their field of study in education, health, computing and/or work
- can challenge established theories and approaches in digitalisation and society

General competence

The candidate

- can identify and discuss relevant ethical issues and conduct research with high academic and professional integrity
- can manage complex interdisciplinary research tasks and projects concerning the interplay between digitalisation and society
- can convey and disseminate research results and innovation activities through national and international fora
- can participate in national and international academic and public discussions and debates within their field of study in education, health, computing and/or work
- can identify, initiate and pursue development processes related to their research

Admission requirements

Admission to the PhD programme normally requires a master's degree of 120 credits with a grade B or better awarded for the master's thesis, based on the Norwegian standard grading scale.

Admission will be based on an overall assessment with emphasis on

- the project proposal's quality and relevance to the scope of the PhD programme
- the quality and relevance of the candidate's previous academic achievements

The predefined application form is downloadable from our webpages and must be submitted with the required, formal documentation stated therein, including a PhD research proposal, a plan for the coursework and proof of funding.

Applications will be considered by the PhD Programme Committee on a continuous basis throughout the year. Admission must be approved by the Institutional PhD Board. A revised project description is submitted to the PhD coordinator three months after admission.

Structure and content

The structure and content of the programme

The normative length of the PhD programme is three years full-time study, with approximately 1500 to 1800 working hours annually.

The programme consists of a coursework component of 30 ECTS credits and an independent research training component of 150 ECTS credits, which culminate in a doctoral thesis for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor (PhD).

Coursework

The coursework component of 30 ECTS credits includes compulsory course attendance and coursework submission and is made up of a combination of compulsory and elective courses. Candidates may apply for the inclusion of ECTS credits from courses offered by other institutions in the coursework component and thereby pursue opportunities to further specialise in topic areas or methods relevant for their specific PhD projects. Other training elements such as conference presentations or scientific courses may provide ECTS credits to the coursework component upon the programme committee's approval and adherence to the programme regulations.

The coursework component must be completed and approved before the thesis can be submitted for assessment.

Compulsory courses

Candidates are required to attend three compulsory courses providing a total of 15 ECTS, which are aimed at giving candidates a solid foundation for further research training within the context of this PhD programme.

The compulsory course *Digitalisation and Society* will provide a common ground for all candidates to understand how digitalisation develops, shapes and is shaped by society in different settings and contexts. Basic knowledge about different enabling technologies is emphasised, and applied examples from different disciplines are given. The candidates will also have the opportunity to focus on the digital technologies relevant for their individual PhD project, which altogether will provide both a broad overview and in-depth understanding of the processes of digitalisation in society.

The compulsory course *Philosophy of Science and Research Ethics* will provide the candidates with skills and knowledge in order to position their research projects within a wider theoretical and ethical context. Discussions of different understandings of what research is and may be, ethical reflections, as well as practical applications of legislation and guidelines in research are included. Emphasis will be placed on discussions related to digital technologies and society in various contexts.

The compulsory course *Research Methods: Methodology Matters* encourages the candidates to reflect upon the choice of methods in their own research project, as well as provide training in critically evaluating the research methods used by others. The shape that a method takes is the result of methodological, theoretical, and ethical considerations. Therefore, the candidates will be exploring the traditional division of methodologies and their associated methods into broad categories of quantitative, qualitative, mixed and multiple methods research.

Elective courses – 15 ECTS credits

Candidates are required to attend elective courses totalling 15 ECTS credits. The candidate may choose from the elective courses offered in this PhD programme, as listed in the table below

and described in further detail in the course descriptions, or choose courses offered from other institutions.

The portfolio of elective courses offered in this PhD programme is designed to provide candidates with in-depth knowledge within their own field of specialisation, as well as the opportunity to gain insight into other relevant topics and contexts related to digitalisation and society. All the elective courses take an interdisciplinary approach and are as such aimed at a broad community of candidates.

The Thesis

The Thesis is the central part of the PhD programme and represents an independent research project carried out under individual academic supervision. The independent research work consists of designing, carrying out and writing up an original research study addressing existing knowledge gaps within digitalisation and society, and should be executed to a high international standard.

The Thesis is usually composed of a summary of the scientific work, as well as the scientific articles published or submitted to peer-reviewed scientific journals. The summary should include an introduction to the research field, the research questions and goals, an explanation of the selection and use of methods, a summary of the results and a discussion that positions the work within the state-of-the-art research field. The scientific work comprising the thesis must be placed into one context in the thesis summary.

Programme courses

The individual course descriptions provide further information.

Teaching and learning methods and forms of assessment

Teaching and learning methods

Different forms of teaching are provided within this programme such as lectures, seminars, group discussions and one-to-one supervision. In the compulsory and elective courses teaching is often based on a combination of lectures, seminars, discussions and practical work in smaller groups. Candidates will normally give oral presentations and/or write essays or papers. Learning outcomes will be achieved by participating in the teaching activities, writing and presenting individual work and self-studies.

The candidates will also attend national and international research workshops and conferences.

PhD candidates admitted to this programme are included in the institutional PhD Forum, which is organised by PhD candidates themselves. This forum will host activities where matters related to the PhD candidates research, training and work environment is discussed and will enable candidates to share their research and experiences, as well as acquire knowledge, through presentations and discussions with their peers.

PhD candidates may also be invited to present their work in the context of faculty seminars and research group discussions.

Workload

Courses that provide 5 ECTS credits have a workload of approximately 130 hours. This includes preparation, self-study, learning activities as well as coursework requirements and exams. The total workload for the study programme is estimated to approximately 1500 to 1800 hours annually.

Supervision

The PhD candidates are entitled to a minimum of 210 hours supervision during the study period. This includes the supervisors' preparation.

Supervision is designed to allow candidates to develop skills in conducting independent research work, academic writing and ensure progression in the research process and the writing of the thesis. Supervision also includes guidance on defining the scope and delimitations of the project, formulating hypotheses and research questions, choosing and developing methods and analysing results.

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that the project is carried out with high scientific integrity in accordance with established ethical norms, and that candidates are given appropriate training and guidance accordingly.

Normally two supervisors are assigned to each PhD candidate, one defined as the main supervisor and the other as the co-supervisor. The main supervisor should preferably be employed at Østfold University of Applied Sciences in a permanent position and have the primary academic responsibility for the candidate. If the main supervisor is not employed at Østfold University of Applied Sciences, the co-supervisor must be employed at Østfold

University of Applied Sciences. Supervisors employed at Østfold University of Applied Sciences are responsible for including the PhD candidate in an active research environment at the institution.

Requirements for supervisors, supervision obligations and rights are regulated by and further described in the PhD Regulations.

Assessment and exams

Assessments related to the coursework component are conducted in accordance with the regulations governing Examinations, Admission to Study and Degrees at Østfold University of Applied Sciences.

Various forms of assessment are used, and these are described in the specific course descriptions. All courses in the programme are graded pass/fail.

Annual progress reports

The PhD candidate and their main supervisor must submit an annual report detailing progress on the coursework and the research project. The annual progress reports will be assessed within a given time frame after submission and follow-up procedures are initiated if needed according to Østfold University of Applied Sciences' Quality Assurance System.

According to the regulations for research degrees at Østfold University of Applied Sciences, failure to submit a report or reporting deemed unsatisfactory may result in the termination of the PhD agreement before the appointment period expires.

Midterm evaluation

Approximately halfway through the PhD programme, a midterm evaluation will take place. The midterm evaluation is compulsory for all candidates.

The purpose of the midterm evaluation is to assess the progress and scientific quality of the work done so far, and to provide feedback and advice which can aid candidates in successfully completing their PhD projects.

The evaluation is conducted by a panel of at least two experts appointed by the Programme Committee. Discussions are to be made with both the candidate and the supervisor(s). The candidate provides a presentation of the research and coursework achieved thus far, as well as a condensed plan and timeline for further work.

Completion of the PhD studies

The coursework component of the PhD programme must be approved by the Programme Committee before the candidate can apply for assessment of the thesis. Assessment is carried out in accordance with the regulations for the PhD programme.

The thesis assessment report should be completed within three months of the submission of the thesis, and the public defence should take place within two months after completion of the thesis assessment report.

The PhD in Digitalisation and Society is awarded based on:

- a successful coursework component
- an approved thesis
- a trial lecture on a specified and given topic
- an approved public defence of the thesis

The diploma will specify the title of the thesis and contain information about the coursework conducted as part of the training components.

Internationalisation

All courses are offered in English and are open to PhD candidates from other countries.

The research environment responsible for this programme has extensive international experience and collaborations within the areas of research represented in the programme. Furthermore, international researchers are invited to Østfold University of Applied Sciences on a regular basis to give lectures and discuss current research in areas that are relevant for the PhD candidates.

In order to attain an international academic level, it is crucial that PhD candidates are exposed to and take part in international research communities. PhD candidates are therefore

encouraged to visit a research environment abroad during their doctoral study. International PhD candidates are also encouraged to visit Østfold University of Applied Sciences.

Programme evaluation

In order to offer relevant PhD teaching of high quality, we are reliant on feedback from candidates who have attended the programme.

Each individual academic environment is responsible for adopting appropriate evaluation methods and procedures at course level, as stated in Østfold University of Applied Sciences' Quality Assurance System.

In addition to course evaluations, Østfold University of Applied Sciences conduct periodic evaluations of the PhD programme, as a whole.

Reading list

See the individual course description.

Student exchange

Prior to undertaking a PhD candidate exchange, an individual agreement must be made between the two institutions to ensure that the candidate will participate in an active research community at the host institution, and that they are provided with the necessary infrastructure to do so.

In order to ensure such opportunities, Østfold University of Applied Sciences have established collaborations with international academic partners, with relevant research initiatives, where PhD candidate exchange is encouraged.

Candidates are expected to present their research at an international scientific meeting, workshop and/or conference at least once during their time as research candidates.

Further education and career opportunities

Upon successful completion of the PhD programme candidates will qualify for employment that requires highly trained personnel with the competence to assess, initiate and develop

projects relevant for digitalisation and society within their field of study. This includes research activities in academia, but also positions in public, private and civil society organisations that require advanced research competence.

Within the public sector candidates can for example pursue career opportunities and leading positions within health and social care, education and administration. Furthermore, the doctoral degree is suited to positions involving applied computer science, in private companies and civil society organisations both nationally and internationally, either as consultants or in relation to development work.

The study plan is approved and revised

The programme description has been approved

Approved by The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) December 12th 2022.

The programme description was last approved by the PhD Programme Committee, May 23 2023.

The programme description has been revised

The PhD Programme Committee, June 12th 2026

The programme description applies to students starting the programme in

The programme description applies to the period autumn 2026 - spring 2029.

Programme Coordinator

Faculty of Computer Sciences, Engineering and Economics.

The PhD Programme Committee

Last updated from FS (Felles studentsystem) Oct. 14, 2026 10:28:01 PM

Emner som ikke er tatt med

Emnesiden finne ikke

- PHDDS95023 2026h
- PHDDS90323 2027v
- PHDDS91423 2027v
- PHDDS91623 2027v
- PHDDS91823 2027v
- PHDDS91523 2028v

PHDDS90123 Digitalisation and Society (Autumn 2026)

Facts about the course

ECTS Credits:

5

Responsible faculty:

**Faculty of Computer Sciences,
Engineering and Economics**

Campus:

Halden and/or Fredrikstad

Course Leaders:

**Harald Holone
Hasan Ogul**

Teaching language:

English

Duration:

½ year

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The course is affiliated to the following study programme

Compulsory course in the PhD programme Digitalisation and Society.

PhD candidates from other institutions are welcome to apply, but candidates from this PhD programme will be prioritised.

Teaching semester

1st, 3rd or 5th semester (autumn)

Content

This course provides an introduction to the key digital technologies and the interplay between technology and society. The course first introduces how digital technologies operate, are developed, and adapted to address societal problems. It then explores how technology influences political structures, progress towards sustainable development goals, and social dynamics, while also considering how societal factors shape technology through development, implementation, everyday practices and formal regulation.

Candidates will learn about enabling technologies like digital electronics, which encompass integrated devices, network infrastructures and high-performance computing units such as CPUs and GPUs, and then explore topics such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, modern robotics, information management systems and industry 4.0 through case studies spanning various sectors including healthcare, education, business and politics. These cases highlight both the potential benefits and limitations of new technologies.

As the candidates develop an understanding of the nature and capacity of digital technologies, various ethical challenges related to each case is highlighted through theories about individuals, groups, society, and the environment. The sustainable development goals and human rights constitute the core framework for categorizing the potential positive and negative impacts of digital technologies. Moreover, candidates will gain insights into the challenges surrounding data privacy, storage, and security, along with governance strategies, particularly concerning issues pertaining to GDPR compliance.

Simultaneously, the candidate will learn about the potential for social and political shaping of technology, including practical concerns related to the involvement of various stakeholders in the co-creation and co-development of technological solutions.

Finally, presentations of ongoing research projects at Østfold University of Applied Sciences will be used to scrutinize how technology raises and relates to questions of ethics, politics and policy, both at the individual, organisational, national and international level.

As the candidates finish this course, they will have the required breadth of knowledge to understand both what the *digitalisation* in the digital society really entails, and not least how the digital impacts society at all levels and how society shapes these digitalisation processes.

The student's learning outcomes on passing the course

Knowledge

The candidate has

- advanced knowledge of key social theories used to describe the interplay between technology and society
- broad knowledge of enabling technologies and in-depth insight into how these are applied within different application domains such as health, education and work
- an advanced understanding of how and why information technology is at the core of the digital society
- advanced knowledge of the key ethical dilemmas raised by new technologies
- in-depth knowledge of digital technology applied in his/her own field of study
- knowledge regarding influential legislation, regulation and informal frameworks related to the social control of technology

Skills

The candidate can

- analyze and discuss technological change from a broad range of perspectives
- reflect on the use of information technology within their own domain of expertise

- communicate and discuss their knowledge of the interplay between technology and society

General competence

The candidate

- can identify and critically evaluate key technologies of the digital society from different perspectives
- use knowledge of technology and social theory in order to contribute to innovation and development processes
- will have a foundation for doing scientific research on applications of state-of-the-art technology within their own research area

Teaching and learning methods

Lectures, seminars and individual presentations, and discussions.

The duration of the course is six days, distributed over two or more sessions.

Workload

The workload is estimated to 130 hours.

Coursework requirements - conditions for taking the exam

- A minimum of 80% coursework attendance is required.

Exam

The individual assessment of each candidate is based on two parts:

1. An individual essay/article of approximately 3000 words on digital technologies and their applications, related to the core content of the course and the candidate's own PhD

project.

2. An individual oral presentation where the candidate presents their essay/article from (1) to the group. The presentation should last approximately 30 minutes, including time for discussion.

Grading scale: Pass/Fail

Examiners

Two internal examiners.

Conditions for resit/rescheduled exams

Same requirements as the main exam.

Course evaluation

Feedback from our candidates is vital in order to develop and offer high quality courses. The course is evaluated using an oral evaluation conducted at the end of the course.

Reading list

The [current reading list for 2026 Autumn](#) can be found in Leganto

Last updated from FS (Felles studentsystem) Oct. 14, 2026 10:20:26 PM

PHDDS90223 Philosophy of Science and Research Ethics (Autumn 2026)

Facts about the course

ECTS Credits:

5

Responsible faculty:

**Faculty of Computer Sciences,
Engineering and Economics**

Campus:

Halden and/or Fredrikstad

Course Leaders:

**Fredrik Andersen
Sondre Lindahl**

Teaching language:

English

Duration:

½ year

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The course is affiliated to the following study programme

Compulsory course in the PhD programme *Digitalisation and Society*.

PhD candidates from other institution are welcome to apply, but candidates from this PhD programme will be prioritised.

Recommended previous knowledge

Candidates with limited knowledge of the philosophy of science and research ethics are recommended to get acquainted with the field before the course.

Recommended reading:

Cartwright, N. and E. Montuschi (eds) (2015). *Philosophy of social science: A new introduction*. Oxford: Oxford UP.

Coeckelbergh, M. (2020). *Introduction to philosophy of technology*. Oxford: Oxford UP

Teaching semester

1st, 3rd or 5th semester (autumn)

Content

The purpose of the course is to discuss key concepts and issues in the philosophy of science and in research ethics, to present and discuss different understandings of what research is and may be, and to enable the candidates to be reflective in their own research practice.

The course will give insight in different historical and contemporary traditions and paradigms in the understanding and practice of science and prepare the candidates for taking part in critical discussions of their own research and the research of others. The course will also enable the candidates to reflect ethically on research, by discussing theories of research ethics, legislation and guidelines and ethics in everyday research practice. In addition to these general

issues, the course focuses on different understandings of digital technology and society, and the philosophical debates of the relationship between nature and society, and materiality and the human.

Key issues that will be discussed in the course are: conceptions of research and science, understanding scientific knowledge and truth, understanding agency and society, and accounts of rationality, explanation, interpretation, relativism and values. Classic debates between rationalism and empiricism, between atomism and holism, between explanation and understanding and between social and natural science are presented and discussed. Different positions in the broad realism-constructivism debate will be debated. The course also discusses the different contributions from a rationally oriented philosophy of science and from an empirically oriented science study. The different conceptions of digital technology and of society are of particular interest. A variety of positions from technology determinism to material semiotics and post-humanism will be critically discussed.

The issue of digital technology raises several questions of value and ethics, for instance in the intersection of the human and technology, in how digital technology changes society to the good or to the worse and in responsibilities connected to development and use of digital technology. The issue of values also relates to research ethics. Research ethics is discussed in a broad sense, for instance the value impact of different kinds of research on society, and more specifically, related to the projects of the candidates. Among the issues are the relationship between individual rights and common utility, the responsibility to the research informants and field and the distinctions between legal regulations and ethical responsibility.

The student's learning outcomes on passing the course

Knowledge

The candidate has

- in-depth knowledge about the criteria for scientific knowledge and its origin
- in-depth knowledge of historical and current issues relating to various epistemological traditions and the knowledge base in different scientific theories

- profound knowledge about a variety of conceptualisations of digital technology and society and the relationship between them
- profound understanding of the importance of possessing knowledge about general research ethics and the possibilities and limitations of different theories of science

Skills

The candidate is able to

- reflect critically, both on a methodological and scientific theoretical level and employ theoretical scientific strategies in their own research work from an epistemological perspective
- compile and problematize research work in the field and undertake in-depth analysis of the various types of academic texts
- reflect on issues in the philosophy of science that are relevant to the research on digital technology and society

General competence

The candidate can

- systematically discuss values and ethics raised concerning digitalisation and society
- perform their research with a high degree of ethical awareness and critically reflect upon research challenges in their own and others research work

Teaching and learning methods

Lectures, seminars and individual presentations, peer review of fellow candidate's paper, and discussions.

The duration of the course is six days, distributed over two or more sessions.

Workload

The workload is estimated to 130 hours.

Coursework requirements - conditions for taking the exam

- Individual oral presentation of a text-draft focusing on epistemological and research ethical challenges related to the candidate's own research project.
- A minimum of 80% attendance is required.

Exam

Individual paper

Assignment in the form of an individual paper focusing on epistemological and research ethical challenges related to the candidate's own research project. The paper should contain a maximum 6000 words. Literature list not included.

Grading scale: pass/fail.

Examiners

Two internal examiners.

Conditions for resit/rescheduled exams

Same requirements as the main exam.

Course evaluation

Feedback from our candidates is vital in order to develop and offer high quality courses. The course is evaluated using an oral evaluation conducted at the end of the course.

Reading list

The [current reading list for 2026 Autumn](#) can be found in Leganto

Last updated from FS (Felles studentsystem) Oct. 14, 2026 10:20:27 PM

PHDDS91923 Co-designing Digital Technologies for Cooperation (Autumn 2026)

Facts about the course

ECTS Credits:

5

Responsible faculty:

**Faculty of Computer Sciences,
Engineering and Economics**

Campus:

Fredrikstad/Halden

Course Leaders:

**Joakim Karlsen
Susanne Koch Stigberg**

Teaching language:

English

Duration:

½ year

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The course is affiliated to the following study programme

Elective course in the PhD programme Digitalisation and Society.

PhD-candidates from other institutions are welcome to apply, but candidates from this PhD programme will be prioritised. To apply for participation, please contact Liv Simensen (liv.simensen@hiof.no).

Teaching semester

3th or 4th semester (autumn)

Content

The course introduces the candidates to Computer-Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW), an interdisciplinary research field concerned with understanding how to support cooperative work practices by technology design. The course gives the candidate an overview of central theories and concepts for understanding how people cooperate in organisations and workplaces, and how to design IT solutions to support this cooperation.

CSCW as a field of research was established in the 80s, to solve problems with early online transaction processing systems, which often hid the presence of other users and broke down in view of the 'situated' nature of cooperative work ie. did not support users in what they needed to do together. To be able to improve such systems, systematic studies of actual cooperative work practices in real-world settings were conducted to design better tools for coordination. In this, researchers from the social sciences and HCI fields collaborated tightly and established CSCW as an interdisciplinary field from the start.

CSCW implies an active and forward-looking approach to technology design in which ethnographic and other forms of in-depth workplace studies play an essential and proactive role, with a keen attention to the moment-by-moment flow of cooperative work, how people coordinate and manage tasks together – the situated and cooperative integration of tools, documents, actions, and interactions.

A broad selection of methods, tools and techniques have been applied in CSCW research, but the course have a special focus on techniques to secure and configure participation in Co-designing IT for cooperation. The candidate will be introduced to the principles of participatory design (PD), emphasizing democratic processes, user empowerment and mutual learning. The candidates will get practical experience with how these principles matter for designing IT in support of cooperative work. In this they will work with tools and techniques to prototype IT solutions with users without the need for advanced programming skills.

The lectures and plenary discussions will focus on:

- classical case studies in CSCW
- central theories and concepts in CSCW
- methods, tools and techniques for designing support for cooperative practices as developed in CSCW
- the principles of PD and how they matter in designing IT solutions

The student's learning outcomes on passing the course

Knowledge

The candidate has

- advanced knowledge of theories and concepts for understanding how people cooperate in workplaces or in everyday life
- state of the art knowledge of methods, tools and techniques for designing IT solutions in support of cooperative work practices
- advanced knowledge of the principles of how to secure accountability and participation in designing IT solutions

Skills

The candidate can

- demonstrate and critically discuss methods, tools, and techniques for designing IT solutions in support of cooperative practices

General competence

The candidate can

- conduct methodologically and ethically sound research according to high scientific standards in the research fields of CSCW and PD

Teaching and learning methods

Lectures, seminars and individual presentations, peer review of fellow candidate's paper, and discussions.

The duration of the course is six days, distributed over two or more sessions.

Workload

The workload is estimated to 130 hours.

Coursework requirements - conditions for taking the exam

- Project work in groups.

Exam

Individual oral exam. Approximately 30 minutes duration.

Some supporting material will be allowed, specified by the lecturer.

Grading scale: pass/fail.

Examiners

One external and one internal examiner, or two internal examiners.

Conditions for resit/rescheduled exams

Same requirements as the main exam.

Course evaluation

Feedback from our students is vital in order to develop and offer high quality courses. The course is evaluated using an oral evaluation conducted at the end of the course.

Reading list

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Last updated from FS (Felles studentsystem) Oct. 14, 2026 10:20:27 PM