JÖNKÖPING UNIVERSITY
School of Education and Communication

PROGRAMME SYLLABUS

Global Studies: Sustainable Societies and Social Change (One Year), 60 credits

Global Studies: Sustainable Societies and Social Change (One Year), 60 högskolepoäng

Programme Code:	LAGS2	Programmestart:	Autumn 2026
Confirmed:	Feb 27, 2026	Education Cycle:	Second-cycle level

Title of qualification

Degree of Master of Science (60 credits) with a major in Global Studies specialisation in Sustainability Studies

Filosofie magisterexamen med huvudområdet globala studier inriktning hållbarhetsstudier

Programme overview

The master's programme in Global Studies: Sustainable Societies and Social Change has a special focus on global perspectives and strategies for sustainability and social change and how current research can be applied in local settings. It is not enough to study strategies for sustainability; they need to be tested and implemented. To create sustainable societies and social change, the programme uses applied research and is based on close cooperation between the academic world and society. The programme is interdisciplinary and focuses on cross-cultural, comparative research, and long-term social change.

The programme curriculum is based on social science perspectives on sustainable development and social change. The goal of the programme is for students to learn about various theoretical perspectives of sustainability, to get experience in data collection and analysis, and to develop practical skills and experiences in planning and working for sustainable societies and social change.

For the thesis work, the student works independently but, optionally, together with a host organisation (within the nonprofit, public, or corporate sector) and with the support of a supervisor with developing and formulating a plan for the thesis. The student carries out optionally the assignment in close cooperation with a host organisation, but the thesis also fulfills the academic standard for a master's thesis on an advanced level.

The programme provides a set of social science methods and tools for designing and applying solutions in real life situations within the framework of sustainable development goals by looking into recent changes and trends in different regions of the world. Throughout the programme, academics, practitioners, and other resource persons use lectures, case studies, group work and exercises to strike a balance between theory and practice and to stimulate interaction with the resource persons and among participants.

The emphasis is on issues of sustainable development and social change that cut across different countries and world regions, and how these issues are applied in local settings. Examples are globalization, social justice, equality, diversity, human rights, environmental challenges, climate change, and urban and rural development.

Courses on general aspects of the development of sustainable societies, social change, and global environmental challenges including interdisciplinary ways of working, expand the interdisciplinary perspective. Human rights, diversity and gender, and social and cultural diversity are treated as cross-sectional fields. Students learn to recognise, analyse, and reflect on global issues in local settings and to deal with problems on an interdisciplinary level. In addition, students acquire key competences and soft skills for the professional world, such as self-responsibility, problem-solving skills, and intercultural competence, in addition to skills in project planning and practical experience with sustainability work.

The programme consists of two semesters for the one-year master's degree. 1) The first semester introduces sustainability in relation to social, political, and environmental aspects and focuses on theories, strategies and planning for sustainability and social change and how these can be applied in different settings. 2) The second semester introduces research methodology, followed by the writing of the 15-credit master's thesis.

One academic year consists of 40 study weeks, divided in two semesters. This is equivalent to 60 credits (60 hp). Each study week consists of 1.5 credits (1,5 hp) that correspond to 40 hours of study.

All courses are taught in English.

This programme is designed to develop leaders with a deep understanding of sustainable development ideas and strategies and their application in different settings - and the necessary critical thinking skills to inform policy and create social change and long-term impact. Upon completion of the programme, you will have enhanced your existing knowledge of sustainable development and social change and will have the relevant theoretical and practical knowledge to take on high-level roles in government agencies, non-government organisations and private firms. The programme also prepares students for the possibilities to apply for further education on third cycle, i.e., doctoral programs. The student graduating from the programme is thus prepared for both post-graduate studies in various sustainability-related research areas, and for qualified positions at various levels of society.

Objectives

General aims
Second cycle education shall essentially build on the knowledge students acquire in first cycle education or corresponding knowledge. Second cycle education shall involve a deepening of knowledge, skills, and abilities relative to first cycle education and, in addition to what applies to first cycle education, shall:

- further develop the student's ability to independently integrate and use knowledge

- develop the student's ability to deal with complex phenomena, issues, and situations

- develop the student's potential for professional activities that demand considerable independence or for research and development work

Programme specific learning goals
For a Degree of Master (60 credits) the student shall:

Knowledge and understanding
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the main field of study, including both an overview of the field and specialized knowledge in certain areas of the field as well as insight into current sustainability research and development work, and
- demonstrate specialised methodological knowledge in the main field of study.

Competence and skills
- demonstrate the ability to integrate knowledge and analyse, assess and deal with complex phenomena, issues and situations even with limited information

- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues autonomously as well as to plan and, use appropriate methods, undertake advanced tasks within predetermined time frames
- demonstrate the ability in speech and writing to report clearly and discuss his or her conclusions and the knowledge and arguments on which they are based in dialogue with different audiences, and

- demonstrate the skills required for participation in sustainability research and development work or employment in some other qulified capacity.

Judgement and approach

- demonstrate the ability to make assessments in the main field of study informed by relevant disciplinary, social and ethical issues and also to demonstrate awareness of ethical aspects of research and development

work
- demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used, and
- demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for his or her ongoing learning.

Independent project (degree project)
A requirement for the award of a Degree of Master (60 credits) is completion by the student of an independent degree project (master's thesis).

Contents

The programme consists of the following courses. For details about each course, please consult the courses curricula. The courses that are included in the specialisation are marked below.

Please note that the program table is not a set program structure but an overview of the approximate time a course is given.

Courses

Course changes can occur, as long as they do not substantially affect the programme's content and learning goals.

Mandatory courses

Semester	Course Name	Credits	Main field of study	Specialised in	Course Code
1	Critical Issues in Sustainability 2: Social Justice, Equality, and Human Rights	7.5	Global Studies	A1N	LC2R22
1	Critical Issues in Sustainability 1: Social Perspectives on Climate Change and the Environment	7.5	Global Studies	A1N	LCSR22
1	Introduction to Global Studies: Sustainable Societies and Social Change	2.5	Global Studies	A1N	LIGR22
1	Project Planning and Sustainability Strategies	7.5	Global Studies	A1N	LPMR22
1	Social Sciences of Sustainability	5	Global Studies	A1N	LSYR22
2	Research Methods 1 in Global Studies	7.5	Global Studies	A1F	LR1S23
2	Research Methods 2 in Global Studies	7.5	Global Studies	A1F	LR2S24
2	Master's Thesis in Global Studies	15	Global Studies	A1E	LTGT24

Teaching and examination

To pass a course, the student needs to fulfil all the course requirements. Examination takes place in the form of written exams, oral exams, or term papers. Different methods of examination can be used within a single course.

The student will be offered at least three examination
opportunities in each examination period. The university is not obligated to offer re-exams in courses that a student already has passed. Mandatory workshops and assignments can exist within a course. The courses within the programme are graded A-F or Pass (G)/Fail (U). Grades A-E all constitute passing grades and grades FX and F are equal to Fail.

For most workshops andmandatory group assignments, only Pass (G) or Fail (U) is given.

Entry requirements

The applicant must hold the minimum of a bachelor's degree (i.e. the equivalent of 180 ECTS credits at an accredited university) with at least 90 credits in global studies or social science including independent work, i.e., a thesis or the equivalent. English proficiency is required. - Social sciences include areas such as social and behavioural sciences, psychology, sociology, ethnology and human geography, political science, economics and economic history, journalism and information, media and communication studies, library and documentation science, business, commerce and administration, purchasing, sales and distribution, marketing, banking, insurance and finance, accounting and taxation, management and administration, clerical and secretarial services, law and jurisprudence, criminology, anthropology, peace and development studies, human rights, disability science, gender science, etc.

Continuation Requirements

Specific entry requirements within the programme are set out in the courses curricula.

Quality Development

The program is evaluated at the end of the second semester. This evaluation work is carried out in collaboration between students and the programme director. Each course is also evaluated according to the regulations and guidelines for first, second and third cycle education at Jönköping University.

Other Information

The programme targets both Swedish and international students from all over the world to obtain the best student environment as possible. The programme collaborates with the undergraduate programme in bachelor's programme in Global Studies, as well as the established research environments at the School of Education and Communication, Jönköping University. The programme also has an ambition to collaborate with strategic partner universities as well as other organisations and institutions engaged in sustainability to broaden the perspectives and opportunities for the students.

Regulations regarding accreditation of completed and passed university education at another Swedish or foreign higher education institution are found in "Regulations and guidelines for first-, second- and third-cycle education at Jönköping University", BRJU.