

Course content

The individual reading list consists in the preparation of a self-selected syllabus of 700 pages approved by the supervisor and a take-home exam. The reading list relates to the topic chosen by the student for the master thesis and, for example, could constitute the building blocks of your theory chapter. It is therefore recommended that you start working on the topic of your master's thesis before selecting your individual reading list.

The reading list is approved by the student's supervisor prior to the announcement of the take-home exam. It is a prerequisite that you have established contact with your thesis supervisor before you can enroll for the examination on the reading list you have selected.

[Frequently asked questions about this course \(lenke til ny side som kan oppdateres fortløpende – se siste side\)](#)

Learning outcome

- On this course you must work independently to compile an individual reading list directed at what you intend to write about in your master's thesis.
- Your supervisor can give you advice while you are compiling the final list, but you must select the literature yourself.
- You will acquire training in searching databases such as [Oria](#), selecting literature that is considered relevant for your research project, and comparing various forms of literature in relation to the master's thesis you will later write.

Admission

Students who are admitted to study programmes at UiO must each semester register which courses and exams they wish to sign up for [in Studentweb](#).

If you are not already enrolled as a student at UiO, please see our information about [admission requirements and procedures](#).

This course is not available for single course students.

Admission to the course is dependent on admission to the master's degree programme in Human Geography.

Prerequisites

Recommended previous knowledge

[HGO4011 – Philosophy and methodology of human geography](#) and at least one course on theory.

Overlapping courses

- 10 credits overlap with [SGO4040 – Individual reading list \(continued\)](#)

- 10 credits overlap with SGO341
- 10 credits overlap with SGO342

Teaching

- There is no regular teaching for this course, but the supervisor must approve the reading list well before the examination is distributed.
- To be able to sit the exam, students need to hand in an Agreement of Supervision signed by the thesis supervisor and themselves.
- You must deliver the approved reading list within the stated deadlines, normally two weeks prior to the examination. If you do not comply with this requirement, you will not be allowed to sit the examination. The completed and approved compulsory activity will be valid for the entire period the course is offered.
- The reading list must not include literature on which the student has based previous written assignments or which has been part of the student's curriculum earlier. [Frequently asked questions about this course \(lenke til ny side her også\)](#)
- The reading list must be included at the end of your assignment. The grading commission receives both the examination paper and the reading list for information.
- On this course, supervision is given only on formulating the individual reading list. No supervision is given on writing the assignment, i.e. the answer paper.

Examination

The examination consists of a 14-day take home exam. The exam question is handed out at 10 am on the day of the exam and must be submitted 14 days later at 12 PM.

[In the autumn semester the exam is offered early in the semester \(October\), while in the spring semester, exams will be offered more closely to the end of the semester \(May\). See semester page for updated exam information.](#)

The following formal requirements apply for HGO4040:

- The reading list consists of a self-selected syllabus of 700 pages.
- The reading list must be submitted together with your examination answer.
- The **maximum** length of the exam paper is 6000-8000 words, including notes, but excluding references.
- ~~Font size 12 points, line spacing 1 1/2.~~
- The exam answer must include a cover page with the following information: exam question, candidate number, semester-year, word count.

For a detailed criteria for the assessment of an exam in HGO4040 see: [Examiner guidelines](#)

Written examination

The written examination is conducted in the digital examination system Inspira. You will need to familiarize yourself with the digital examination arrangements in Inspira. [Read more about written examinations using Inspira.](#)

Submit assignments in Inspira

You submit your assignment in the digital examination system Inspira. [Read more about how to submit assignments in Inspira.](#)

Use of sources and citation

You should familiarize yourself with the rules that apply to [the use of sources and citations](#). If you violate the rules, you may be suspected of [cheating/attempted cheating](#).

Language of examination

The examination text is given in English. You may submit your response in Norwegian, Swedish, Danish or English.

Grading scale

Grades are awarded on a scale from A to F, where A is the best grade and F is a fail. Read more about [the grading system](#).

Explanations and appeals

- [Explanation of grades and appeals](#)

Resit an examination

If you are sick or have another valid reason for not attending the regular exam, we offer a [postponed exam](#) later in the same semester. See also our information about [resitting an exam](#).

Withdrawal from an examination

It is possible to take the exam up to 3 times. If you [withdraw from the exam](#) after the deadline or during the exam, this will be counted as an examination attempt.

Special examination arrangements

Application form, deadline and requirements for [special examination arrangements](#).

Frequently asked questions about the Individual Reading List (IRL)

Must the reading list be 700 pages?

Yes, the IRL must be as close to 700 pages as possible. If you exceed a few pages (maximum 10-12 pages), due to the length of an article or chapter, that should be okay.

Does the 700 pages include the printed front page of the articles I use, and bibliography?

The journal's printed front page does not count. The article itself counts, including the article's reference list.

Can I include readings from courses I have taken before, they are very relevant for my topic.

It is not relevance that defines whether you can include readings from other courses into your individual reading list, but whether or not you have taken an exam on those readings. If you have taken an exam that includes those readings, you cannot include them in your IRL.

Can I include readings from courses I have taken before, but were not part of the syllabus the semester I took that course?

Yes, you can include the new readings, because they were not part of your exam for that course.

Can I include readings from courses I followed before, but never took the exam?

Yes, you can include those readings, since you did not take the exam for that course.

What are the guidelines or regulations that apply to re-using or copying paragraphs and wording from my exam answer in HGO4040?

When it comes to the use of the text from HGO4040, one must distinguish between the use of the text from one's own answer and the literature itself. The vast majority of students use literature from HGO4040 for their master's thesis and provide references in the usual way. Sometimes it is appropriate to use certain sections or parts of the answer from HGO4040 in the theory chapter of the master's thesis, but preferably in a revised form. Then one must also state references to the works in the individual reading list used in the new text.

It is rare that the entire answer can be used as a theory chapter, and if it is done, it can be considered as cheating. This particularly happens when the reference to your own work is not stated, but it can also occur when you provide a reference. Why? Because the master's thesis must be a new work, and extensive use of previous exam answers is not allowed. This applies to all previous assignments you have written before, both from master's and bachelor's studies.

Remember that all exam assignments are checked in Urkund, which is a text recognition program used for plagiarism control in Inspira, so it is very important that students state all sources, even when this is their own work. UiO has good websites for source use and references, see especially points three and four:
<https://www.uio.no/studier/eksamen/kildebruk/>.

In answering the exam question, can I use other references, that is, references outside my IRL?

Yes, you can use references other than the ones in your IRL, if relevant. But remember that your answer should show your command and understanding of the IRL, so you should actively engage with those readings.