

Course Content

This course familiarizes social scientists with genetically informed social science research, with a special emphasis on sociological studies of social stratification. The course provides the relevant theoretical and empirical background for incorporating genetics into social science research and introduces the main methodological approaches. Throughout the course we use examples from stratification research and family demography to illustrate how the integration of genetic knowledge can help us better understand the forces shaping social phenomena. Conceptually, we move beyond the “nature vs nurture” debate and focus on the “gene-environment interplay” acknowledging that the influences of both genetics and environments depend on one another.

The course is organized around a set of questions, including but not limited to, why should social scientists care about genetics? How can the integration of genetics enhance our understanding of intergenerational transmission processes? To what extent, and how do social forces moderate the impact of genes? How can we assess the role of genes empirically? What are the challenges and the ethical concerns of genetically sensitive research?

This course is taught in English and intended for both Norwegian and international students.

Learning outcome

Knowledge

You shall:

- acquire knowledge about the main concepts and methodological approaches used in behavioral genetics
- acquire an understanding on whether and how the integration of genes can help to study social phenomena

Skills

You will:

- learn to critically evaluate findings from genetically informed research
- discuss implications of said research for sociological theories
- learn to independently conduct genetically informed research using behavioral genetic data and methods

General competence

- awareness of the advantages and drawbacks of genetically sensitive sociological research
- knowledge of the ethical and privacy concerns of social science genetic research

Teaching

- lectures
- practical sessions

The course will meet for 10 sessions throughout the semester. Meetings will be either lectures or practical sessions.