

The Joys and Woes of Interdisciplinary Research *- perspectives and dilemmas*

RVS Autumn Course 2-4 November 2020

VID Specialized University, Oslo

Course presentation

In the last decades, there has been a move towards interdisciplinary research, also on the Ph.D. level. This is not surprising, having in mind that the (social) changes and challenges that researchers are expected to explore for are increasingly complex and can thus only be solved if several different disciplines or fields of expertise are linked together. While the benefits of interdisciplinary efforts seem obvious, it is not self-evident what it means to conduct interdisciplinary research. Professions are often based on common guidelines and ethical standards, outspoken and tacit agreements govern disciplines, but there are only a few explicit standards for doing interdisciplinary research. Consequently, some projects might only be interdisciplinary on paper, but in fact, dominated by one discipline. For interdisciplinary Ph.D. projects, this can imply that they risk being caught between the disciplines and cannot satisfy (implicit) disciplinary expectations, for example, concerning method or theory.

The aim of the course is to achieve a better understanding of interdisciplinary research by moving from principal questions to reflections about successful strategies for handling interdisciplinarity in research practice. The first day focuses on disciplines as preconditions for interdisciplinarity, taking sociological perspectives as a starting point, and the field of research about professions as an example. Based on specific examples for hyphen disciplines, the second day reflects how different disciplines can be linked and the consequences of these links. The third day reflects how interdisciplinary plays out in different steps and stages of the research process, such as designing and governing interdisciplinary research, collecting data, using methods, finding, applying and developing theoretical concepts, conducting analysis, and evaluating interdisciplinary research.

Program

Monday, 2 November 2020

Theme: *What is a discipline?*

- From kl. 9 Registration – Fruit and Coffee (Diakonveien 14)
- 10.00 Welcome (by Geir Afdal and VID) (D14-AU 17)
- 10.15 Keynote Lecture: What is a discipline?
Sociological and Practice-Research Approaches by Ingunn Moser
(Diakonhjemmet Foundation/VID)
- 11.00 Coffee Break
- 11.30 Interdisciplinary Research Traditions in Professions (Jens-Christian Smeby,
OsloMet, Centre for the Study of Professions)
- 12.15 Common Discussion of Both Lectures
- 12.45 Lunch (in the VID canteen)
- 13.45 Seminars based on the papers of Ph.D. students about their own disciplinary
and professional identities and challenges related to them – Round 1 (Rooms
D-14-D125, D-14-126, SDP EU 001, SDP EU 003, D14-E118).
- 15.30 Coffee Break
- 16.00 Guided City Walk – Focus on Graffiti (Carl Petter Opsahl)
- 18.00 Dinner at Oslo Streetfood, Torggata 16 (to be confirmed)

Tuesday, 3 November 2020

Theme of the day: *Hyphen-Disciplines*

- 9.00 Focussing on the Hyphen - What Binds Hyphen-Disciplines and Research
Traditions in Professions together? (D14-AU 17)
Example Sociology of Religion (Nancy Ammerman; University of Boston)
- 10.00 Coffee Break
- 10.15 Example Medical History (Hilde Bondevik, University of Oslo, Faculty of
Medicine)
- 11.15 Coffee Break
- 11.30 Group Work with the Task to Prepare Questions to the Panel (D-14-AU 17, D-
18-324, D-18-325, SDP EU 001, SDP EU 003, D14-E118).

- Kl. 12.15 Panel Discussion with all the Keynote Lecturers of Day One and Two (D-14-AU-17)
- Kl. 13.00 Lunch
- 14.00 Seminars based on the papers of PhD students about their own disciplinary and professional identities and challenges related to them – Round 2, (D-14-AU 17, D-18-324, D-18-325, SDP EU 001, SDP EU 003, D14-E118).
- 16.00 Coffee Break
- 16.30 Discussion Groups with Senior and Ph.D. researchers reflecting on “What challenges disciplines (and professions?) Power relationships in disciplines and professions (D-14-AU 17, D-18-324, D-18-325, SDP EU 001, SDP EU 003, D14-E118).
- 17.00 End of the Day
- 18.00 Dinner with music and culture at VID Atrium

Wednesday, 4 November 2020

Theme of the day: *What is Interdisciplinarity? The Perspectives of Ph.D. Researchers, Supervisors, and Higher Education and Research Leaders*

- 09.00 Governing Interdisciplinarity – Perspectives from a Higher Education Leader
Rector Roger Klinth (Ersta Sköndal Bräcke University College, Sweden/earlier Linköping University) (D-16-114)
- 10:00 Questions and Discussion
- 10.30 Coffee
- 11.00 Parallel Seminars with focus on Interdisciplinarity– Round 1
Every participant has the possibility to participate in two seminars, one before lunch and one after lunch
1. Interdisciplinarity and Theory (Mia Lövheim, Magdalene Thomassen) (D-18-324)
 2. Interdisciplinarity and Method (Nancy Ammerman, Annette) (D14-E118)
 3. Interdisciplinarity and Analysis (Iselin Frydenlund, Anne Austad) (SDP EU 003)
 4. Interdisciplinarity and the Contribution of a Ph.D. Project (Bjørn Hallstein Holte, Gry Espedal) (SDP EU 001)
 5. Evaluation of Interdisciplinary Projects (Bodil Tveit, Geir Afdal) (D-16-114)
- 12.30 Lunch

13.30	Second Round of Parallel Seminars – Round 2
15.00	Coffee
15.30	Concluding Panel: Interdisciplinarity – Reflections about Challenges and Future Prospects Perspectives from Ph.D. students, three keynote lecturers, and three supervisors. Room D-16-114
16.30	End of the Seminar
17-19	Meeting of the RVS Board

About the Lecturers

Course Requirements

1. Send a short paper (approximately 800 words) for the group session before 19 October 2020. The paper should be a reflection about your Ph.D. project in relation to interdisciplinarity: In which ways would you describe your Ph.D. project as an interdisciplinary and/or disciplinary project? What opportunities and challenges implies interdisciplinarity and/or disciplinarity implies for your project?
2. Familiarise yourself with the course literature.
3. During the course, make a 5-10 minute presentation of your paper, followed by two responses and approximately 30 minutes of feedback and discussion.
4. Prepare feedback and respond to other papers in your group. The groups will consist of groups of approximately five paper presenters and two lecturers.
5. To receive the credit points for the course, you have to submit a full paper of about 2000 words after the course.

ECTS credits: 3

For practical questions about RVS contact Henrik Nykvist, henrik.nykvist@mf.no. For practical questions about the autumn seminar at VID Specialized University, contact Gyrid Gunnes, gyrgun@vid.no. For questions about the program, contact Annette Leis-Peters at VID Oslo, annette.leis-peters@vid.no. For overarching RVS questions, contact Geir Afdal, geir.afdal@mf.no

Course Literature

Akkerman, Sanne & Bakker Arthur (2011), Boundary Crossing and Boundary Objects, in: *Review of Education* 82 (2), 132-169.

John H. Aldrich (2014), *Interdisciplinarity. Its Role in a Discipline-based Academy*, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.

Blumer, H. (1954) What is Wrong with Social Theory? In: *American Sociological Review*, 19 (2), 3-10.

Espedal, Gry, & Carlsen, Arne (2019), Don't Pass Them By: Figuring the Sacred in Organizational Values Work, in: *Journal of Business Ethics*, 1-18.

Courtney Goto (2018), Taking on Practical theology. *The Idolization of Context and the Hope of Community*, Leiden: Brill, 18-52.

Heggen, Kåre, Smeby, Jens-Christian & Vågan, André (2015), Coherence. A Longitudinal Approach, in: Jens-Christian Smeby & Molly Sutphen (ed.) *From Vocational to Professional Education. Education for Social Welfare*, London: Routledge, 70-88.

Huuntoniemi, Katri, Thompson Klein, Julie, Bruun, Henrik & Hukkinen, Janne (2010), 'Analyzing Interdisciplinarity. Typology and indicators, In: *Research Policy* 39, 79-88.

Lincoln, Yvonna S., Lynham, Susan, A. & Guba, Egon. G. (2018), Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences Revisited, in: Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna S. Lincoln (ed.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 213-263.

Merton, Robert (2012/1949), On Sociological Theories of the Middle Range, in: Craig Cahoun, Joseph Gerteis, James Moody, Stephen Pfaff & Indermohan Virk (ed.), *Classical Sociological Theory*, New York: John Wiley, 448-459.

Thomassen, Magdalene (2020), *Theory and its Use in Empirical PHD projects*, Oslo: VID, 14 pages.

Additional optional literature in Norwegian

Hjelde, Sigurd (2007), Teologi og religionshistorie – slektskap til besvær? in: Sigurd Hjelde & Otto Krogseth (ed.) *Religion. Et vestlig fenomen*, Oslo: Gyldendal, 31-50.

Moxnes, Halvor (2008), *Teologi i den kulturelle vendingen*, in: *Norsk teologisk tidsskrift* 109 (3), 207-226.

Salomonsen, Jone (2003), Feminisme, kjønn og tolkning: refleksjon over metodiske og teoretiske problem og program i studiet av feministisk liturgi og ritualiserende kvinner Teologi i den kulturelle vendingen, in: *Norsk teologisk tidsskrift* 104 (2), 59-89.