

# Third-cycle education course: Re-Framing Digitalization, 5hp – Västerås, Sweden

## Purpose

The course aims at offering the Ph.D. candidate contemporary perspectives on digitalization with an emphasis on how digital technology transforms organizations, work and businesses, as well as the society. The course offers theoretical approaches that can be mobilized to produce knowledge on these changes. On the one hand, advances in technologies with great malleability and flexibility have altered not only the environments of organizations but also their business models and how they organize in digital ecosystems. Consequently, this digital transformation has reinvented business and social interactions between businesses and between businesses and consumers. On the other hand, digital technologies and organizational practices are nowadays so inextricably entangled (the analogue exists only as a romanticized version of itself) that we risk losing sight of how the use of digital technologies may fundamentally change how we conceive of work and management as well as the society – sometimes without us even noticing it.

The course thus provides PhD candidates with the opportunity to critically relating to digitalization as a phenomenon and to go beyond technology-driven accounts by better understanding how business, management and organizing practices are integral parts of the current digital transformation. It does also put these transformations into a societal context. Ethical issues arising as digital transformation unfolds are also discussed.

To this end, the course covers theories focusing both digitalization as a new phenomenon which can be captured and studied in the same way as other kinds of innovations and change processes, and digitalization as a new phenomenon with specific characteristics for which researchers need to pose new questions.

- The course requirement is being an admitted Ph.D. candidate in business administration, industrial engineering and management or adjacent academic fields.
- The course is open for students from outside MDH.
- For information and for applying for the course please contact Madelène Westerberg: [madelene.westerberg@mdh.se](mailto:madelene.westerberg@mdh.se). It will be possible to entirely or partly participating remotely via zoom, depending on the circumstances.

## Learning objectives (ILOs)

After the course, the PhD candidate shall be able to: Describe and critically discuss different contemporary theoretical perspectives on digitalization and distinguish some central methodological approaches (SEM1).

1. Describe and critically evaluate how digitalization has consequences at the individual, organizational and societal level (including markets), as well as how these levels are related to each other; this includes ethical considerations related to the use of digital technologies. (SEM1; summary discussion)

2. Present and discuss, in text and orally, how contemporary research on digitalization may inform their own study (from one selected theoretical perspective). (INL1 & 2)
3. Critically review, value and constructively comment on other Ph.D. students' academic presentations. (INL1)
4. Critically discuss one's own ongoing Ph.D. project from relevant perspectives on digitalization and relate the study to a suitable theoretical and methodological domain. (INL1 & INL2)

## Language

The course is given in English.

## Teaching team, course director and examiner

The teaching team will consist of faculty members from Mälardalen University, and it entails external guest scholars that adds insights on current internationally-recognized research on digitalization. Course responsible and examiner: Rana Mostaghel ([rana.mostaghel@mdh.se](mailto:rana.mostaghel@mdh.se)) and Michela Cozza ([michela.cozza@mdh.se](mailto:michela.cozza@mdh.se)) from Mälardalen University.

## Learning activities

The learning activities are concentrated to four days according to the structure below. Each day is accompanied by readings that needs to be done prior to the seminars.

Day 1: Introduction – digitalization as a phenomenon to study in business and management studies

- Discussion about what digitalization is, in which way it is different from other technological transformations, and which new technologies are entering the scene
- Mapping of important areas of research and currently relevant theoretical approaches
- Inspiration: current examples of digitalization research

Day 2: Digitalization, work and organizing – a practice-based approach

- Studying digitalization, work and organizing practices with a sociomaterial approach
- Discussion of current examples of digitalization research

Day 3: Digitalization and business – effects and outcomes

- Digital Business Models
- Platforms and ecosystems
- Discussion of current examples of digitalization research

Day 4: Seminar

- An individual presentation where they frame a contemporary digitalization problem (or opportunity) based on a literature review (INL1).

- Give constructive feedback on two other Ph.D. students presentation.
- Summarizing discussion on digitalization at the different levels and their relation.

After the four days

- Hand in; (building on the prior literature review, and prior peer feedback) an individual reflection regarding how to frame digitalization in her/his ongoing Ph.D. study and thesis (INL2).

## Examination

The learning objectives in the course are examined through three assignments:

- SEM 1: Seminars on digitalization, 2 hp (Pass/Fail) consists of:
  - Four (day-long) seminars where the Ph.D. student must participate in at least three days.
- INL 1: Presentation - 1,5hp (Pass/Fail) consists of:
  - Complete a literature review, summarize the findings, and develop a presentation that is related to a contemporary digitalization problem or opportunity. Carry out an opposition (i.e., constructive and critical review) on two other Ph.D. students' work.
- INL 2: Essay – 1,5hp (Pass/Fail) consists of:
  - Writing an individual essay linking the course material to their own Ph.D. study alternative describing a current digital phenomenon using one of the presented theoretical perspectives (1,500-2,000 words).

All examination elements must be passed in order to receive a “Pass” on the course.

## Literature

*Day 2: Digitalization, work and organizing – a practice-based approach*

Aroles, J., Mitev, N., & de Vaujany, F. X. (2019). Mapping themes in the study of new work practices. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 34(3), 285-299.

Baptista, J., Stein, M.-K., Klein, S., Watson-Manheim, M. B., & Lee, J. (2020). Digital work and organisational transformation: Emergent digital/human work configurations in modern organisations. *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 29(2)

Gherardi, S. (2016). Sociomateriality in posthuman practice theory. In: *The nexus of practices* (pp. 50-63): Routledge.

Orlikowski, W. J., & Scott, S. V. (2008). 10 sociomateriality: challenging the separation of technology, work and organization. *Academy of Management Annals*, 2(1), 433-474.

Orlikowski, W. J., & Scott, S. V. (2016). *Digital work: a research agenda*. In *A research agenda for management and organization studies*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Plesner, U. & Husted, E. (2020). *Digital Organizing*. Red Globe Press, London

Riemer, K., & Peter, S. (2020). The robo-apocalypse plays out in the quality, not in the quantity of work. *Journal of Information Technology*, 35(4), 310-315

### *Day 3: Digitalization and business – effects and outcomes*

Amit, R., & Zott, C. (2001). Value creation in e-business. *Strategic management journal*, 22(6-7), 493-520.

Cenamor, J., Parida, V., & Wincent, J. (2019). How entrepreneurial SMEs compete through digital platforms: The roles of digital platform capability, network capability and ambidexterity. *Journal of Business Research*, 100, 196-206.

Cenamor, J., Sjödin, D. R., & Parida, V. (2017). Adopting a platform approach in servitization: Leveraging the value of digitalization. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 192, 54-65.

Firoz Suleman, M., Rashidirad, M., & Firoz Suleman, S. (2019). The applicability of Porter's generic strategies in pure online firms: A case study approach. *Strategic Change*, 28(3), 167-176.

Frishammar, J., Cenamor, J., Cavalli-Björkman, H., Hernell, E., & Carlsson, J. (2018). Digital strategies for two-sided markets: A case study of shopping malls. *Decision Support Systems*, 108, 34-44.

Hänninen, M. (2020). Review of studies on digital transaction platforms in marketing journals. *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, 30(2), 164-192.

Parida, V., Sjödin, D., & Reim, W. (2019). Reviewing literature on digitalization, business model innovation, and sustainable industry: Past achievements and future promises. *Sustainability* 2019, 11, 391; doi:10.3390/su11020391

Pomykalski, P. (2019). Revenue and valuation of companies with digital platform business models. *Management Sciences. Nauki o Zarządzaniu*, 24(1), 11-18.

Schwanholz, J., & Leipold, S. (2020). Sharing for a circular economy? an analysis of digital sharing platforms' principles and business models. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 122327.

Senyo, P. K., Liu, K., & Effah, J. (2019). Digital business ecosystem: Literature review and a framework for future research. *International Journal of Information Management*, 47, 52-64.

Stone, M., Aravopoulou, E., Gerardi, G., Todeva, E., Weinzierl, L., Laughlin, P., & Stott, R. (2017). How platforms are transforming customer information management. *The Bottom Line*.

### *Suggested additional reading*

Cozza, M. (2020). *Key Concepts in Science and Technology Studies*. Studentlitteratur, Lund.

Ekman, P., Dahlin, P., Keller, C. (Eds., 2021). *Management and Information Technology after Digital Transformation*, Routledge, London.

There will also be articles or books based on guest lecturers.