



# **Iran Academia**

## **Social Studies Program**

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# 1 - GENERAL INFORMATION

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## Objectives

The Institute for Social Sciences & Humanities also known as Iran Academia is dedicated to academic teaching in the humanities and social sciences disciplines. The objective of the Institute is to advance rigorous learning opportunities for students interested in examining and analyzing current events and social developments occurring in Iran through the prism of the modern world.

Social Studies program is an interdisciplinary master's level study program that aims to provide students with a strong foundation for understanding of social developments. Its main objectives are:

1. Introducing students to critical thinking and writing, foundational social science theories and social science methodologies.
2. Exposing students to more advanced approaches to examining social developments in the realm of political philosophy, sociological theory and political economy, including case study research courses in gender and social change, social movements, human rights and good governance.
3. Examining advanced topics in the aforementioned social studies disciplines and supervising students on planning and conducting thesis research projects.

## Study Load

The Program will consist of courses valued at 7.5 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and a thesis of 15 ECTS. Students must at least enroll in six courses (45 ECTS) during the study program.

## Study Periods

First semester is from February each year, with courses until June. Final papers are due end June. From July until August there will be no classes. Second semester is from September each year, with courses until November. Final papers are due at the end December.

## Study Tracks

The Institute offers in the second semester a comprehensive academic curriculum consisting of two different subject areas, called study tracks. The students may specialize in one of the two study tracks. It is noteworthy that all the courses will be taught with regard to the current and historical realities of Iran and will require students to engage with the myriad of historical, political and human rights issues and concerns which these realities will confront them with.

## 2 – CURRICULUM

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### Components

The Institute offers a 12-month program in Social Studies. This Academic guide provides an overview of the program in Social Studies. The Social Studies program encompasses the following elements: Methodology, Fundamentals and Elective Courses/Tracks.

### Methodology

In particular, this program will, by means of a critical approach, focus on the methodology of social science research.

### Fundamentals

As Social Studies is an interdisciplinary field of study, the principle aim of the fundamental courses is to provide students with sufficient theoretical knowledge and understanding of its main underlying disciplines: critical thinking and political philosophy, sociological theories, and political economy.

### Elective Courses/Tracks

The Social Studies program offers the opportunity to specialize further in a specific area of interest. A specialization consists of a) a designated set of two courses (15 ECTS s in total) that fit well together, and b) a thesis that addresses an issue, problem or question within the theme of the specialization. This means that the successful completion of two designated specialization courses alone is not sufficient for a specialization to be mentioned on the transcript. The Thesis is also part of the specialization.

Element	Course(s)	ECTS	Cumulative
Methodology	1	7.5	-
Fundamentals	3	22.5	30
Elective courses	2	15	45
Thesis	-	15	60

## 3 – COURSES

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### SEMESTER 1

#### Compulsory Courses (30 ECTS)

##### Methodology

Title	<b>Methodology: a critical reflection</b>
Instructor	Saeed Paivandi
ECTC	7.5
Description	This course explores major epistemological and methodological approaches in Social Science research. Based on the study of a set of methods for collecting and processing qualitative and quantitative data, we examine main similarities and differences in the approaches covered.

##### Fundamentals

Title	<b>Political Thought (Critical Thinking)</b>
Instructor	Mohammad Reza Nikfar
ECTS	7.5
Description	<p>The topic of the course on political thought can be updated each year and focus on the works of a specific philosopher. In 2022 it focuses on the concept of peace in the political thought of Kant.</p> <p>This course follows a double goal: it is simultaneously an introduction to critical thinking and the modern political thought. The modern reflection is essentially critical. We study the character of the modern thought and examine the methods and skills of critical thinking especially in the field of politics.</p> <p>“Something is wrong.” The experience of wrongness is the starting point of the modern critical thought. We analyze this experience on the basis of some certain cases and try to find out how it motivated critics and reflections.</p>

Title	<b>Sociological Theory</b>
Instructor	Farzin Vahdat
ECTS	7.5
Description	After over a century from the birth of modern sociology, sociological analysis still relies on ideas and questions posed by founders of the discipline. Much of the conceptualization of contemporary social issues is still grounded in perspectives developed by early social thinkers whose ideas shaped modern sociology. As an advanced introduction to sociological theory, this course introduces students to sociological theories of Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Adam Smith, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber as well as Simone de Beauvoir; discusses the above theorists' concerns with issues of their times and places of their living; relates these theories to core controversies in the historical development of a modern society; draws out the relevance of these theories for the understanding of contemporary social issues; describes the continuing influence of classical sociological theory on sociology today; and prepares students for analyzing their own life through the application of sociological theory.

Title	<b>Political Economy</b>
Instructor	Mohammad R. Moeini-Feizabadi
ECTS	7.5
Description	This course is designed to allow students to have a more complete and in-depth understanding of the economic system we live in (Capitalism) and of ways in which to think of and evaluate the system. The major topics that this course will cover include introduction to a way of thinking about this formations and its problems. Emphasis will be put on economic analysis; market forces as manifested in demand and supply; analysis of economic theorizing; decision making and profit maximization by businesses in the market place; different market structures beyond pure competition; market failures and the role of the government; class conflict and class struggle. In addition, we will try and understand some basic philosophy of economics. The course also provides applications of these economic concepts to help students learn the applicability of basic economic principles to real life.

## SEMESTER 2

### Elective Tracks (15 ECTS)

#### Track 1: Social Change

Title	<b>Social Movements, Comparative and Historical Analysis</b>
Instructor	Farhad Khosrokhavar / Saeed Paivandi / Mohsen Mottaghi
ECTS	7.5
Description	The course begins by introducing existing theoretical frameworks for the study of social movements, and a historical perspective on social movements in modern Iran. It will then focus on new social movements, in particular the intellectual, regional, feminist, student and global movements including Iran's 'green movement'. The course also provides a comparative approach to the study of social movements in different countries of the region. The role of new social actors, new media and social networks and the evolution of the position of intellectuals in social movements will be critically analyzed.

Title	<b>Gender and Social Change</b>
Instructor	Nayereh Tohidi
ECTS	7.5
Description	This interdisciplinary course focuses on the gender dimension of social change, especially women's role and their individual and collective actions and strategies in the social movements in general and in women's movements in particular. To illustrate the gendered nature of social change, we will begin with a historical and comparative review of changes in women's status, gender relations and roles, and sexuality from pre-modern to modern times. Along this review, we will explore different strategies and feminist theories that inform participation of women in various collective actions and grassroots movements of broader socio-political scale on the national, transnational and global levels. Following this theoretical, global and macro level analysis, we will focus empirically on modern Iran and study the concrete trajectory of change in women's status and roles in not only the sphere of formal politics and institutions

	associated with the state, but also (on micro and mezzo levels) within the informal spheres of civil society and people's daily lives within different social institutions such as the family, school, NGOs and local communities, literature and arts, religious and ethnic communities, work and occupational settings.
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### Track 2: Human Rights and Democracy

Title	<b>Human Rights: Origins, History, and Challenges</b>
Instructor	Mahmoud Masaeli
ECTS	7.5
Description	This interdisciplinary seminar-style course provides a specialized opportunity to graduate students to undertake studies at an advanced level in the field of human rights. However, the course extends the issues and debates of human rights to the discipline of international political theory. As the main focus of analysis, this course examines the universalistic grounding, claims, and promises of the mainstream human rights discourse which has been prevailing over the world from the issuance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

Title	<b>Democracy and Good Governance</b>
Instructor	Jalil Roshandel
ECTS	7.5
Description	This course provides insights into the principles of democratic governance and its application in modern world. Among other things, it will discuss how the application of good governance brings respect of human rights, the rule of law and respect for civil society rights. It will also discuss how effective participation, transparency, and accountability can result in good governance. The course aims to provide an intellectual footing as well as conceptual tools necessary to understand and evaluate critical issues of democracy and good governance. Policy advocacy, implementation and evaluation well as scientific analysis are also primary topics of the course. Comparative methodology, quantitative and qualitative study of evidences from selected cases of authoritarian regimes and democratic systems will be examined throughout the instruction. Students in this course will be encouraged to work individually or in small groups to work on case studies and develop recommendations as well as discuss how best to implement those recommendations in their real case studies.

### Additional elective course

Title	<b>Habermas and the question of legitimacy</b>
Instructor	M.R. Nikfar
ECTS	7.5
Description	Each semester we offer an additional elective course. In 2022 study year the Habermas and the Question of Legitimacy is offered as an additional elective course.

## Thesis

All students will write a thesis. They can choose between a short thesis of 7.5 ECTS or a 15 ECTS Thesis. Students that choose for a short thesis of 7.5 ECTS, need to choose also another elective course of 7.5 ECTS. More information about the Thesis can be found in the Thesis Guidelines, available on the LMS.

Title	<b>Practical Reaserch Seminars (Short thesis)</b>
Instructor	Saeed Paivandi, Zeinab Peyghambarzadeh
ECTS	7.5

Title	<b>Practical Reaserch Seminars (Long thesis)</b>
Instructor	Saeed Paivandi, Zeinab Peyghambarzadeh
ECTS	15