



DEPARTMENT OF NEUROBIOLOGY, CARE SCIENCES AND SOCIETY

H1F6130, Health Literacy: Theory, Measurement and Research Methodology, 1.5 credits (hec)

Hälsolitteracitet: teorier, mätning och forskningsmetodik, 1,5 högskolepoäng

Third-cycle level / Forskarnivå

Approval

This syllabus was approved by The Committee for Doctoral Education on 2026-08-28, and is valid from spring semester 2027.

Responsible department

Department of Neurobiology, Care Sciences and Society, Faculty of Medicine

Prerequisite courses, or equivalent

No prerequisite courses, or equivalent, demanded for this course.

Purpose & Intended learning outcomes

Purpose

The aim of the course is to deepen participants' knowledge and critical understanding of health literacy from a research perspective. The course provides doctoral students with the opportunity to explore the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological foundations of health literacy and its relevance across diverse research contexts at both the individual and organizational level.

Through engagement with current scientific literature, discussions, and applied assignments, participants will develop the analytical and communication skills needed to integrate health literacy into their own research in a critical and reflective manner.

Intended learning outcomes

After completing this course, the participant is expected to be able to:

- select and justify an appropriate definition, theoretical framework, and measurement instrument for health literacy in a specific research context, including considerations of translation, cultural adaptation, and validation

- critically assess how different conceptualizations of health literacy relate to other health-related concepts, such as literacy, health knowledge, and person-centred care
- evaluate and critically appraise the methodological quality of health literacy research, including both quantitative and qualitative approaches, and identify implications for future research
- communicate research-related insights on health literacy clearly and effectively to peers and interdisciplinary audiences.

Course content

The course provides an introduction to health literacy from a research perspective, with a focus on theory, measurement, and methodology. The course addresses different definitions and conceptualizations of health literacy and how these influence study design, selection of measurement instruments, and interpretation of findings. Key theories and models in health literacy research are presented and discussed with regard to their applications and limitations.

The course also examines the relationship between health literacy and related concepts, such as literacy, health knowledge, and person-centred care, and highlights the importance of conceptual clarity in research. In addition, the course covers the selection and use of instruments for assessing health literacy at both the individual and organisational levels.

The course further addresses translation, cultural adaptation, and validation of health literacy instruments, focusing on methodological considerations when applying instruments in new populations and contexts. Finally, quantitative and qualitative approaches to health literacy research are examined, including common methodological challenges and strategies for enhancing research quality.

The course is delivered in an international learning environment with participants from different universities and research disciplines, providing opportunities for comparison and exchange of experiences across research contexts.

Forms of teaching and learning

The course is delivered online and consists of lectures, seminars, and applied assignments. The course is based on active participation and a critical approach to scientific literature and research questions. Between course sessions, participants undertake independent study and work on assignments that relate the course content to their own research project. Seminars provide opportunities for scientific discussion, critical appraisal, and exchange of experiences among participants.

Language of instruction

The course is given in English

Grading scale

Pass (G) /Fail (U)

Compulsory components & forms of assessment

Compulsory components

Participation in all seminars and applied assignments is compulsory. Absence may, after agreement with the course coordinator, be compensated through supplementary written assignments.

Forms of assessment

Assessment is based on active participation in seminars and an individual written assignment. In the written assignment, participants are required to analyse how health literacy can be applied in their own research project by justifying the choice of definition, theoretical framework, and measurement instrument, and by reflecting on issues related to translation, cultural adaptation, and validation. To pass the course, participants must obtain a passing grade on the written assignment and complete all compulsory elements.

Course literature

Required reading

- Sørensen K, Van den Broucke S, Fullam J, et al. Health literacy and public health: a systematic review and integration of definitions and models. *BMC Public Health*. 2012;12:80. doi:10.1186/1471-2458-12-80.
- Bremer D, Klockmann I, Jaß L, Härter M, von dem Knesebeck O, Lüdecke D. Which criteria characterize a health literate health care organization? A scoping review on organizational health literacy. *BMC Health Services Research*. 2021;21(1):1–14.
- Urstad KH, Andersen MH, Larsen MH, Borge CR, Helseth S, Wahl AK. Definitions and measurement of health literacy in health and medicine research: a systematic review. *BMJ Open*. 2022;12(2):e056294. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2021-056294.
- Cruchinho P, López-Franco MD, Capelas ML, Almeida S, Bennett PM, Miranda da Silva M, et al. Translation, Cross-Cultural Adaptation, and Validation of Measurement Instruments: A Practical Guideline for Novice Researchers. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Healthcare*. 2024;17:2701–2728. doi:10.2147/JMDH.S419714.

In addition to the required reading, further scientific articles will be assigned by the course coordinators throughout the course. Parts of the literature are assigned individually and may therefore vary between participants.