Sociology of Tourism

Course Code: DSV295_1, Credits: 5 credits
Offered by: Faculty of Social Sciences, Norwegian School of Hotel Management
Semester tuition start & duration: Spring, 1 semester
Exam term: Spring

Course staff
Jens Kristian Steen Jacobsen (Course coordinator)

Learning outcome

This course will provide the candidates with a comprehensive understanding of contemporary tourists, their interests and challenges and relations between tourism and societies at large.

At the end of the course candidates should be able to:

- Competently discuss sociological tourism theories and concepts and their relevance to the tourism sector and society at large
- Critically interpret and evaluate various types of sociological research
- Exercise their sociological imagination and apply multiple theoretical perspectives to sociological questions and issues/problems related to tourism
- Formulate sociological research questions and initiate tourism research based on sociological and related social science perspectives

Knowledge:

After the course the candidate will have in-depth knowledge of central aspects of conceptual and empirical tourism research within contemporary sociological discourses. The course will provide topics for critical reflections.

Skills:

The course will aid the candidate in implementation of sociological theories and concepts in tourism research projects. The candidate will acquire skills in reflecting on theoretical and practical implications of up-to-date research issues. The course will not only familiarise the candidate with central aspects of a body of sociological theories and knowledge but will also contribute to improving abilities in academic writing.

General competence:

The candidate will know and be able to discuss:

- Sociological contributions to tourism research, particularly tourist interests, self-understanding and travel genres/styles and how research on such aspects can be operationalised.
- Social actions related to tourism from a sociological point of view.
- The characteristics of sociology as social science, its level of analyses and its methodological diversity, with a particular focus on internationalisation and globalisation.

- Central perspectives on tourism, such as modernity, internationalisation, quest for authenticity, and differences related to gender and other forms of social stratification.

- Potential influence of tourism on social and cultural forms.

Content

General description:

This course is founded in sociological tourism discourses, focusing on theories and concepts that are pivotal in sociologically based tourism research, even though it comprises certain contributions from neighbouring social science disciplines. Also implementation of theory in research projects on tourism will be dealt with.

The sociology of tourism will be presented mainly through research papers on the wide scope of interests, activities and concerns that present-day tourism comprises. The conception of tourism as a mostly socially stratified activity will be illuminated, including studies of travel modes/genres, holiday types, gender differences and sustainability issues.

Tourism understood as a fundamental aspect of modernity is often related to the quest for authenticity—a kind of travel that has often been described by social scientists as the true essence of tourism. The discourse of authenticity and recent attempts to rethink authenticity in tourism experiences will be elucidated.

Moreover, tourism’s links to globalisation and general advances of internationalisation will be exposed. Certain parts of tourism represent cosmopolitan ambitions and similar phenomena related to vanishing distance and enhanced access to diversity. In this context, tourism and long-distance mobilities are not only an obvious outcome but also a crucial catalyst. The concept of society in sociology is typically embedded within notions of nation-state and national society. This perspective, studying one’s own society within the limits of the nation-state, appears to be increasingly problematic, particularly when it comes to international tourism, and some of these challenges will be examined.

Teaching methods

The course will be offered as an ordinary university course with lectures, student presentations, and discussions if there is a sufficient number of participants. In the case of few participants, the course will be offered as a supervised reading course with some meetings between professor and participants.

Required prerequisite knowledge

None

Exam
Individual term paper, 4000 - 5000 words, exclusive of references.

Marks: Passed / Not Passed.

Open to
PhD candidates who have chosen the Major in hospitality and tourism or candidates from other similar research training programs.

Course assessment
Early dialogue and end evaluation.

Literature


