

Project study [Projektstudium]: Work and environmental psychology

Prof. Dr. Meinald Thielsch & Dr. Mira von der Linde

Brief description:

Background:

Our research focuses are described at <https://aupsy.uni-wuppertal.de/en/chair-of-work-and-environmental-psychology/research/>. As part of the project study, we provide insight into all fields, focusing on the topics of work and civil security: Our environment and the security situation have changed significantly in recent years. The consequences of climate change and armed conflicts, as well as the associated migration movements, are placing increasing demands on society and security authorities. In addition, there are still “classic” dangers such as fires (Germany, approx. 200,000 every year) or accidents involving personal injury (in Germany alone, around 300,000 per year in road traffic). Such events require quick and appropriate responses at all levels, from those affected and the general public to local organizations and companies to higher-level authorities with security responsibilities, politics, and society.

Certain organizations (e.g., fire services, THW, (first) aid organizations) and certain areas (e.g., critical infrastructure, cultural property protection) are particularly challenged in this regard. Using the example of fire services, participants will learn more about the specifics of these work contexts: Whether traffic accidents, fires, or emergency assistance—the activities of fire services are characterized by high demands and sometimes extreme conditions with a lack of transparency, suboptimal information availability, stress, and a potentially high level of self-endangerment. In a cooperation project with the Fire State Service Institute North Rhine-Westphalia [Institut der Feuerwehr NRW], we at the Chair of Work and Environmental Psychology are conducting research in particular on leadership in these high-risk environments.

In most cases, however, the very first people on the scene are laypeople – who, in the best-case scenario, have been prepared for possible emergencies and trained for this by their respective organizations, at least at a basic level. How this can be done optimally, how trust in warning systems can be built up, and how resilience in society can be promoted as a result will be another component of this project study.

Organization:

The course will begin with a brief overview of our research topics in general and the topic of work and leadership in high-risk environments in particular. This will be followed by sessions on academic work and writing, requirements for theses at our department, specific methods, and examples of research results. Building on this, the third part of the course will involve the creation of your own research concept, which will be converted into an exposé after receiving appropriate feedback. The course will generally take place in 3-hour blocks and therefore not on a weekly basis, as individual sessions are scheduled for independent preparation work. We will discuss this together during the first session.

Requirements:

Participants should have an interest in our outlined areas of application and research, as well as in new methodological approaches. In addition, regular and active participation in the course is expected. The course concludes with a project report in the form of an exposé. The exposé should be five to eight pages long (excluding the bibliography) = a maximum of 2,500 words.

Learning objectives:

The project study is intended to prepare students for writing their bachelor's thesis. Upon completion of the seminar, participants will have acquired specific methodological skills in addition to content-related knowledge in the field of application, particularly in the area of qualitative methods (e.g., critical incident interviews). They will also have gained in-depth knowledge of typical steps and aspects of the research process.

General guidelines for the bachelor thesis:

General information and our supervision concept can be found online at <https://aupsy.uni-wuppertal.de/en/chair-of-work-and-environmental-psychology/teaching/thesis/>. Your own ideas for theses that fall within our area of research and expertise can be outlined as part of the project study. In order to make effective use of the feedback from the project study, it is usually advisable to work directly on the bachelor thesis idea in the following semester. All members of our working group who are authorized to conduct examinations can supervise bachelor theses.