

Public Digitalisation

The changes being brought about digitalisation processes are particularly visible in the public sector. A successful digital future, such as the one envisaged in various Danish digitalisation strategies, requires awareness of the motivations, priorities, histories and choices that drive digitalisation processes.

This specialisation provides you with grounding in the history, theory, policy, expectations, challenges and practicalities of digitalisation initiatives. In the first part of the specialisation, you develop competences in critical approaches to policy, and the politics of how states handle information. The second part of the course involves a practical research project in a local government setting, and the different kinds of processes currently underway. Together, the two parts of the specialisation provide a grounded and comparative understanding of the digitising state in Scandinavia, and prepares you to work at the forefront of public sector transformations.

Spring Semester:

The Digital State (7,5 ECTS)

The Digital State uses ethnographic studies and theoretical frameworks from Anthropology, STS and organizational studies to examine the new responsibilities, obligations and of state actors as they implement IT systems. It asks how public bodies use and store data, explores political and ethical questions of infrastructure and responsibility during public digitalization initiatives.

The course is arranged by themes, which move us from past examples into the present. First, we examine different ways the State can be present in everyday life, and how this varies according to country. Next, we move on to examine some of the motivations driving digitalization projects, and consider the responsibilities of those implementing such schemes. In our third theme, we consider the technologies involved in digitalization projects. To see this clearly from where we are –in Denmark – we must use comparative material from other countries, where digitalization projects play out differently. Using international case examples, we look at the different priorities and concerns

arising around State digitalization globally. The course concludes with a regional focus on the Scandinavian State.

Autumn Semester:

Digitalizing and Public Sector Transformations (15 ECTS)

Public sectors are currently undergoing large-scale institutional changes: digital technologies are transforming both internal work practices and the relation between welfare professionals and citizens. This course provides theoretical tools and empirical insights into how public sector transformations take place with a specific focus on governance, institutional change and welfare management. The course zooms in on the Danish public sector and provides contemporary tools for understanding and working with digitalization processes across governmental institutions. The course prepares and equips you to work at the forefront of public sector transformations.

To provide a solid basis for understanding contemporary transformations, the course moves from a concern with the shifting historical forms of the welfare state into a specific focus on local institutions and work practices. The mixed practical and theoretical lectures will cover the following areas:

- **Public sector reforms in a historical and institutional perspective:** How has the public sector changed over time? And why?
- **Theories of welfare management, meta-governance and governance failures:** How is the public sector governed? And why do some projects fail?
- **Local government and welfare professionals:** How do local governmental institutions function? And how are welfare encounters changed through digitalization?

As part of the course, you will carry out your own research project in a local governmental setting. Doing so, you will study the implementation and/or changes caused by digitalization, linking your empirical work to core theoretical concepts in the course.