



SCHOOL OF GLOBAL STUDIES

GS1613 The Handmaid's Tale as Dystopian Diagnostics: Reading Global Politics Through Popular Culture, 7.5 credits

Handmaid's Tale som dystopisk diagnostik: Att läsa global politik genom populärkultur, 7,5 högskolepoäng

First Cycle

Confirmation

This course syllabus was confirmed by School of Global Studies on 2023-02-06 to be valid from 2023-08-28, autumn semester of 2023.

Field of education: Social Sciences 100%

Department: School of Global Studies

Position in the educational system

The course is given as as a single subject course.

Main field of studies

Global Studies

Specialization

G1N, First cycle, has only upper-secondary level entry requirements

Entry requirements

General entrance requirements.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of the course the student will be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

- Identify and understand key concepts for studying central themes in global politics;

Competence and skills

- Employ central concepts in an analysis of key themes in contemporary global

politics;

- Critically read popular culture to reflect on contemporary global politics and developments;

Judgement and approach

- Critically reflect on central themes in contemporary global politics;
- Actively reflect on the lessons that dystopian fiction can provide about global politics;

Course content

Taking its point of departure in Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel, *The Handmaid's Tale* (1986), its sequel, *The Testaments* (2019), as well as the TV series based on these books (Hulu), this course critically address key aspects of contemporary global politics. How might the *Handmaid's Tale* speak to and or about present-day political developments, such as changing gender relations, the rise of religious fundamentalism and totalitarianism, climate change, persistent racism and coloniality, the politics of immigration, political violence, and popular resistance? Can we see Atwood's dystopian future as a harbinger of the future or even a reflection of the contemporary political landscape? In this course we will read and watch *The Handmaid's Tale* as a lens through which we can together probe such vital questions. Primarily an online course, this course will engage students in actively reflecting on the lessons that dystopian works of fiction might teach us as we seek to critically consider our own societies and the political developments that have occurred, are occurring, or may occur therein.

Form of teaching

The course includes both synchronous and asynchronous modules. Lectures will be on-line or hybrid. Some optional seminars will be offered on campus.

Forms of teaching vary and include:

- Self-study
- Lectures
- Seminars at which the students will engage in 'flipped classroom' activities

Language of instruction: English

Students wishing to submit their assignments in Swedish may do so.

Assessment

The course will be examined through both group and individual work. Examination will occur through the following activities:

1. Participation in at least 5 out of 7 seminars;
2. Active participation in the group student-led seminar;

3. A final exam in which the students will be expected to apply the scholarly literature to an analysis of how the *Handmaid's Tale* speaks to a contemporary issue covered in the course. The students can choose if they prefer to record a mini lecture video as their final project, or if they prefer to write a take home essay.

If a student who has twice received a failing grade for the same examination component wishes to change examiner ahead of the next examination session, such a request should be made to the department in writing and should be approved by the department unless there are special reasons to the contrary (Chapter 6 Section 22 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

If a student has received a recommendation from the University of Gothenburg for study support for students with disabilities, the examiner may, where it is compatible with the learning outcomes of the course and provided that no unreasonable resources are required, decide to allow the student to sit an adjusted exam or alternative form of assessment.

In the event that a course has ceased or undergone major changes, students are to be guaranteed at least three examination sessions (including the ordinary examination session) over a period of at least one year, but no more than two years after the course has ceased/been changed. The same applies to internships and professional placements (VFU), although this is restricted to just one additional examination session.

Grades

The grading scale comprises: Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass (G) and Fail (U).

The obligatory seminars and group student-led seminar are graded with the grades Pass (G) or Fail (U). The final exam is graded with the grades Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass (G) or Fail (U).

Pass with distinction (VG) for the whole course, one must pass receive the grade Pass (G) on the seminars and group work (group student-led seminar) and a Pass with Distinction (VG) on the final exam.

Course evaluation

The course coordinator is responsible for systematically and regularly collecting the students' views of the course, and for making sure that the results of the evaluations in different forms are taken into consideration when developing the course. The results and possible changes to the course will be shared with the students who participated in the evaluation as well as the students who take the course in the subsequent term.

Additional information

The course requires access to a computer and the internet.

The course requires access to the TV series, *The Handmaid's Tale* (Hulu/HBO Max).