



## DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL SCIENCES

### **MV2120 Conspiracy theories, populism and audiovisual media, 15 credits**

Konspirationsteorier, populism och audiovisuella medier, 15 högskolepoäng  
*Second Cycle*

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#### **Confirmation**

This course syllabus was confirmed by Department of Cultural Sciences on 2024-02-16 to be valid from 2025-01-20, spring semester of 2025.

*Field of education:* Arts 100%

*Department:* Department of Cultural Sciences

#### **Position in the educational system**

The course is given as a free-standing course.

#### *Main field of studies*

Musicology

Cultural Studies

Film Studies

#### *Specialization*

A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

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#### **Entry requirements**

Admission to the course requires completed courses of at least 180 credits, the equivalent course requirements for Bachelor's degree in humanistic or social sciences educational field or an equivalent discipline. Furthermore, knowledge corresponding to English A/English 5 is required.

#### **Learning outcomes**

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

*Knowledge and understanding*

- Give an account for central theoretical formations, concepts and analytical perspectives within contemporary research on conspiracy theories and political/cultural populism.
- Give an account for theoretical perspectives on the political significance of the audiovisual in the spread and impact of conspiracy theories and political/cultural populism.
- Explain the role aesthetic, semiotic and affect-related aspects play in audiovisual media that advance conspiracy theories and populist messages, with particular focus on how sound, music and images are used.

*Competence and skills*

- Analytically combine and critically apply theories and concepts from the course in relation to a selected empirical material.
- Critically examine and present in an argumentative text different positions within contemporary research on conspiracy theories and political/cultural populism.
- Independently reflect on how theory formation and research perspectives pertaining to audiovisual media challenge current research and contribute to increased knowledge and understanding of contemporary conspiracy theories and political/cultural populism.

*Judgement and approach*

- Discuss and critically evaluate how audiovisually mediated conspiracy theoretical and populist truth claims are constructed and conveyed through the use of aesthetic, visual and auditory expressions (images, image editing, camera angles, music, sound and voice, etc).
- Discuss and critically evaluate socio-cultural, normative and ideological aspects of conspiracy theoretical and populist discourse as these are conveyed via audiovisual media.

**Course content***Sub-courses***1. Conspiracy theories and populism: epistemic and cultural perspectives**

*(Konspirationsteorier och populism som epistemiska praktiker och meningsskapande berättelser)*, 7.5 credits

Grading scale: Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass (G) and Fail (U)

In sub-course 1, conspiracy theories are studied from philosophical, epistemological

and cultural-theoretical perspectives. Furthermore, the relationship between conspiracy theoretical discourse and various forms of political and cultural populism is discussed. Along the way, a number of definitions of conspiracy theory and populism are examined.

**2. Konspirationsteorier och populism: audiovisuella konstruktioner, retoriker och dramaturgier** (*Konspirationsteorier och populism: audiovisuella konstruktioner, retoriker och dramaturgier*), 7.5 credits

Grading scale: Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass (G) and Fail (U)

In sub-course 2, the contemporary medialization of conspiracy theories and populist discourse is studied from a combination of media theory, musicology, cultural theory, film studies and semiotic perspectives. Particular focus is here placed on how contemporary conspiracy theoretical and populist worldmaking are mediated and built up via audiovisual media discourses, with specific emphasis on the role of the auditory dimension (music, sound, voice, silence) in such discourses. Examples of audiovisual material studied are fiction films, documentaries, political election films, news media and shorter videos on social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. Central to the course is how conspiracy theories, populism and audiovisual media interact and relate to each other in a world characterized by political crises, social turbulence, mediatization and digitalization.

**Form of teaching**

The teaching takes place in the form of lectures and seminars.

*Language of instruction:* English

**Assessment**

Examination is made in the form of a home exam.

A student who has taken two exams in a course or part of a course without obtaining a pass grade is entitled to the nomination of another examiner. The student needs to contact the department for a new examiner, preferably in writing, and this 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 give the student an adjusted exam or alternative form of assessment.

If the course has been discontinued or substantially revised, a student should be guaranteed to take the exam on at least three occasions (including the ordinary

examination occasion) during a period of at least one year, but not later than two years after the course was discontinued or revised.

**Grades**

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

For Pass with distinction on the entire course, it is required that at least one of the sub-courses is assessed with the grade Pass with distinction and that none of the sub-courses has been assessed with the grade Fail.

**Course evaluation**

The course coordinator is responsible for gathering feedback from the students regularly and systematically, and also that the results of different evaluations as a whole form the basis for the design of the course.

**Additional information**

Equality aspects should be taken into consideration in content, literature, teaching and evaluation. Also, the course should to the extent that it is relevant, make students aware of and problematise ecological, economical and socially sustainable development.