



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
History

Syllabus

History as Social Therapy and Trauma Recovery

Course Code: HIA200

Course Title: History as Social Therapy and Trauma Recovery
Historia som samhällsterapi och traumabearbetning

Credits: 7.5

Degree Level: Master's level

Progressive Specialisation: Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements (A1N)

Major Field of Study:
HIA (History)

Course Approval

The syllabus was approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences 2025-03-10, and is valid from the Autumn semester 2025 at Karlstad University.

Prerequisites

90 ECTS credits completed in History, Cultural Studies, History of Ideas, Religion, Sociology, Political Science, Ethnology, or Anthropology, including at least 30 ECTS credits at the G2F level or higher, or equivalent

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. describe different historical conflicts and traumas,
2. assess the historical consequences of societal conflicts and traumas,
3. discuss, analyse, and apply ways in which the past has been used in society and history in relation to various conflicts and traumas, and
3. use central concepts in relation to conflict and trauma.

Content

The course explores the extent to which history can serve as a tool for processing collective trauma, potentially functioning as a form of social therapy. When established ways of life dissolve, confusion, frustration, and experiences of crisis often emerge. Such experiences carry the risk of being denied, repressed, or handled in other very destructive ways.

Unresolved crises can be passed down through generations, with history repeating itself in new outbreaks of hatred, violence, or identity dissolution. For this reason, the question of the practical use of historical scholarship, that is, applied history, has gained significant traction in research and public debate. This also brings up the issue of the moral implications of history, and whether ethical judgments about right and wrong, guilt and responsibility, can be reconciled with the scientific ideal of impartial knowledge.

The course moves across an interdisciplinary landscape that includes history, cultural studies, history of ideas, religion, sociology, political science, ethnology, and anthropology. A wide range of examples are explored regarding how problematic historical conflicts of interpretation have, or have not, been dealt with, including post-apartheid South Africa, post-Franco Spain, post-communist Eastern Europe, and experiences of Latin American military dictatorships. Topics such as social marginalisation, populist movements, and shifting gender roles are also addressed, particularly through the exploration of collective narratives, memory production, and ideology.

Reading List

See separate document.

Examination

Learning outcomes 1-4 are assessed based on participation in oral seminars and an individual written take-home exam.

If students have a decision from Karlstad University entitling them to Targeted Study Support due to a documented disability, the examiner has the right to give such students an adapted examination or to examine them in a different manner.

Grades

One of the grades Distinction (VG), Pass (G), or Fail (U) is awarded in the examination of the course.

Quality Assurance

Follow-up relating to learning conditions and goal-fulfilment takes place both during and upon completion of the course in order to ensure continuous improvement. Course evaluation is partly based on student views and experiences obtained in accordance with current regulations and partly on other data and documentation. Students will be informed of the result of the evaluation and of any measures to be taken.

Course Certificate

A course certificate will be provided upon request.

Additional information

The local regulations for studies at the Bachelor and Master levels at Karlstad University stipulate the obligations and rights of students and staff.