



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Cultural Studies

Syllabus

History of Ideas I

Course Code:	KVGH10
Course Title:	History of Ideas I <i>Idéhistoria I</i>
Credits:	30
Degree Level:	Undergraduate level
Progressive Specialisation:	First cycle, has only upper-secondary level entry requirements (G1N)

Major Field of Study:
KSU (Cultural Studies)

Course Approval

The syllabus was approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences 2019-09-03, and is valid from the Autumn semester 2020 at Karlstad University.

Prerequisites

General admission requirements

Learning Outcomes

Module 1. Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (7.5 ECTS cr)

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

Knowledge and understanding

- outline the history of views of life, social belief systems, world views, philosophy, and science, mainly in the Western cultural sphere from Antiquity to the Renaissance
- give an account of, compare, and problematise different lines of development in the history of ideas,

- give an account of the meaning of central analytical concepts in the discipline of history of ideas,

Competence and skills

- identify the use of concepts, ideas, and structures of thought in sources and place them in an intellectual history context,
- formulate and delimit research-related problems and seek relevant information to address them,

Judgement and approach

- apply history of ideas approaches through comparing and contextualising different ideas and structures of thought in Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance as well as in their relation to the present day, and
- assess and discuss the Western idea tradition and its historiography and reflect on it from different power perspectives.

Module 2 The Enlightened World (7.5 ECTS cr)

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

Knowledge and understanding

- outline the history of views of life, social belief systems, world views, philosophy, and science, mainly in the Western cultural sphere from the scientific revolution to the French revolution,
- give an account of how the emergence of colonialism affected people's worlds of ideas,

Competence and skills

- identify the use of concepts, ideas, and structures of thought in source texts and place them in an intellectual history context,
- formulate and delimit research-related problems and seek relevant information to address them,

Judgement and approach

- apply history of ideas approaches through comparing and contextualising different ideas and structures of thought in the past as well as in relation to the present, and
- assess and discuss the Western idea tradition and reflect on it from different power perspectives and in relation to colonial experience and encounters between the coloniser and the colonised.

Module 3 Modern Times (7.5 ECTS cr)

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

Knowledge and understanding

- outline the history of views of life, social belief systems, world views, philosophy, and science, mainly in the Western world from Romanticism to Postmodernism,

Competence and skills

- identify the use of concepts, ideas, and structures of thought in sources and place them in an intellectual history context,
- formulate and delimit research-related problems and seek relevant information to address them,

Judgement and approach

- apply history of ideas approaches through comparing and contextualising different ideas and structures of thought in the 19th and 20th centuries as well as in relation to the present day, and
- assess and discuss the societal function of knowledge and different approaches to the scientific and technological development and its consequences.

Module 4 The Swedish History of Ideas (7.5 ECTS cr)

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

Knowledge and understanding

- outline ideas and cultural traditions, social structures, life of learning, building the Swedish welfare state ('folkhemmet'), equality politics and political, social and cultural movements, ideologies and debates in Sweden from the 19th century until today,

Competence and skills

- identify the use of concepts, ideas, and structures of thought in sources and place them in an intellectual history context,
- formulate and delimit research-related problems and seek relevant information to address them,

Judgement and approach

- apply history of ideas approaches through comparing and contextualising different ideas and structures of thought in the past as well as in relation to the present, and
- relate Swedish identity and self-image to a Northern, European, and global context and reflect on these from historical and theoretical perspectives,
- relate to Swedish historiography and reflect on it from different power perspectives, and
- assess and discuss the research situation in the field of Swedish history of ideas.

Content

The course provides a basic survey of the history of human thought from Antiquity to the present day. In relation to societal development, a critical perspective is adopted on central ideas, world views, and life philosophies mainly in Western culture considered in a global context, regarding areas such as philosophy, science, politics, aesthetics, religion, and daily life. The ideas relate to areas such as the origin of the world, the structure of society, the nature of the future, the potential of knowledge, the range of morality, and the driving force of the psyche as well as to how our self-conceptions affect our relation to nature and to others. One basic assumption is that the past is reflected in the present and the present in the past, without the loss of the intrinsic value of historical reflection. The course includes exercises in seeking information and solving problems in interpreting historical sources and presenting the result orally and in writing.

Module 1. Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (7.5 ECTS cr)

The module provides a basic history of ideas survey of philosophy, science, views of life, culture, and society from early major cultures until the mid 16th century, with an emphasis on Ancient Greece, Early Christianity, and the Middle Ages (and examples from the Western Christian, Byzantine, and Arabic-speaking cultural spheres) and the Renaissance and Reformation. Central history of ideas concepts and themes are treated and the source text analysis method is introduced.

Module 2. The Enlightened World (7.5 ECTS cr)

The module provides a basic history of ideas survey from the early 16th century until the French Revolution with a focus on conceptions of nature, society, and humanity. The science revolution and the European intellectual development in early modern times are treated in relation to changing societal and global conditions. One focus area concerns significant intellectual movements such as the Enlightenment, another the emergence of the colonial world order and its ideologies. The emphasis is on European thinking and how it changed in the encounter between the coloniser and the colonised.

Module 3. Modern Times (7.5 ECTS cr)

The module provides a general history of ideas survey of the 19th and 20th centuries with extensions into the early 21st century from Romanticism to Postmodernism, and illustrates the changes taking place in conceptions of nature, society, science, culture, and humanity. Political ideologies, systems thinking, social movements and the development and institutionalisation of science are treated along with philosophical specialisations and diversification. The diversity of intellectual trends and recurring patterns and structures are of special importance. Also, other power aspects of knowledge are addressed in the study of positive and negative approaches to the development of science and technology.

Module 4. The Swedish History of Ideas (7.5 ECTS cr)

The module provides a historical survey of ideas, culture, and science in Sweden in its European context with a focus on the 19th and 20th centuries. There is a special focus on the emergence of modern Sweden, which includes social movements, expansion of education and science systems, democratisation, the welfare state, political and cultural ideologies and debates, equality policy and Sweden in the globalised world. The module is research-based and reverberates with issues of history consciousness, historiography and the use of history.

Instruction is in the form of lectures, presenting essential content, and mandatory seminars on course content in the light of course literature, in which students discuss their understanding orally and in writing.

Reading List

See separate document.

Examination

Assessment is based on:

Module 1: written exam, active participation in mandatory seminars, and an individual written source text analysis presented in a seminar.

Module 2: written exam, active participation in mandatory seminars, and an individual written source text analysis presented in a seminar.

Module 3: a take-home exam and active participation in mandatory seminars where short individual hand-in assignments are presented and discussed.

Module 4: a take-home exam and active participation in mandatory seminars where short individual hand-in assignments are presented and discussed.

The examiner may decide that a student who is very close to a passing grade can complete a supplementary assignment to receive a passing grade for a specific examination. If this is a possibility, the students must be informed in writing no later than the start of the course, and the examiner must specify when and how such a supplementary assignment may be permitted.

If students have a decision from Karlstad University entitling them to special pedagogical 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. The grade of Distinction is awarded to students who have earned this grade for at least 22.5 of the 30 course credits.

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.