



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Cultural Studies

Syllabus

History of Ideas II

Course Code:	KVGH20
Course Title:	History of Ideas II <i>Idéhistoria II</i>
Credits:	30
Degree Level:	Undergraduate level
Progressive Specialisation:	First cycle, has less than 60 credits in first-cycle course/s as entry requirements (G1F)

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 Spring semester 2020 at Karlstad University.

Prerequisites

History of Ideas I (30 ECTS credits) with 22.5 ECTS credits completed, or equivalent

Learning Outcomes

Module 1. Global History of Ideas (7.5 ECTS cr)

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

Knowledge and understanding

- identify and give an account of the main features of historical non-Western world views and relate these to European world views and ideals of life,
- analyse the encounter and interaction between Western and non-Western worlds of ideas as expressions of a globalisation process,

Competence and skills

- critically discuss arguments for the dissemination of ideas, hybridisation, modernisation, and homogenisation as explanatory models for similarities between Western and non-Western world views and thought patterns,
- contextualise and analyse world views in texts and documents of non-European cultures,
- outline the most important problems, arguments, and conclusions in a non-European intellectual history primary source,

Judgement and approach

- give an account of and discuss historical courses of events through analysis of the connection between world views and human action, and
- critically reflect on Western idea traditions, canon, universal norms, and axiomatic truths when considering non-European perspectives and experiences.

Module 2. Meta Theories: Science, Culture, Politics (7.5 ECTS cr)

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

Knowledge and understanding

- give an account of some of the most important intellectual traditions and the most discussed problems in theory of science and philosophy of science in the past 100 years,
- give an account of some central politico-philosophical and cultural theoretical approaches today,

Competence and skills

- identify different interpretative alternatives in reading meta-theoretical texts,
- summarise some main features of meta-theoretical discussions in the past decades and actively participate in current meta-theoretical debates,

Judgement and approach

- discuss the social and historical context of meta-theories, and
- critically approach the consequences of meta-theoretical views on the relation between knowledge and culture in terms of power, conflict, and representation.

Module 3. Theoretical and Methodological Traditions of the History of Ideas (7.5 ECTS cr)

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

Knowledge and understanding

- give an account of the main features of the emergence, development, and identity of the discipline History of Ideas in Sweden,
- give an account of some key theories in the contemporary discipline History of Ideas,
- outline how theory, method, concepts, and source criticism can be used in research in the field of History of Ideas,

Competence and skills

- formulate their own research questions against the background of different History of Ideas traditions,
- assess, select, and apply theoretical and methodological approaches to answer their own research questions, and

Judgement and approach

- reflect on the traditional Swedish History of Ideas in terms of class, gender, culture, ethnicity, and accessibility.

Module 4. Independent project (7.5 ECTS cr)

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

Knowledge and understanding

- give an account of the importance of formal aspects for the quality of academic papers,
- give an account of the importance of the writing process and language use in academic presentations,

Competence and skills

- formulate a delimited research question in the field of History of Ideas,
- collect relevant information to answer a research question in the field of History of Ideas,
- present the results of a history of ideas study according to guidelines for academic writing,
- critically review and assess their own project and those of others, and

Judgement and approach

- evaluate the possibilities and limitations of a history of ideas project in terms of knowledge and its ethical and social implications.

Content

Students deepen their knowledge and understanding of history of ideas based on skills components involving critical interpretation of short and long texts of high complexity, such as historical sources and current research articles. Themes introduced in History of Ideas I (empirical philosophy, theory of science, and cultural history) are developed in the light of theoretical and problematising perspectives. In all modules, students practise different degrees of text interpretation and close reading, which are central to the subject History of Ideas.

The course comprises four course modules (7.5 ECTS credits each). The order in which the modules are offered may vary.

Module 1. Global History of Ideas (7.5 ECTS cr)

In this module, non-European cultures are studied from a global and comparative perspective. The overarching theme is world views, with the aim to relate some of their main features, primarily beyond Western and Abrahamic cultural spheres, to a traditional history of ideas canon. The encounters of Europeans with alien cultures and their effects on understandings of the world are treated. An important aspect in this context is non-European conceptions of Europeans. The importance of the colonial heritage to the dissemination of ideas is studied with the help of postcolonial theories placed in a history of ideas context. The concept of globalisation and the emergence of global cultural patterns are also analysed.

Module 2. Meta Theories: Science, Culture, Politics (7.5 ECTS cr)

The course has a meta-scientific approach, focusing on the theory of science and philosophy of science from positivism to postpositivism as well as contemporary cultural theory and political philosophy, studied from the perspective of history of ideas. Students are expected to reflect critically on the theoretical and social basis of science, the relation between knowledge and power, the challenges to contemporary democracy, and different views of the general conditions and crises of Western culture.

Module 3. Theoretical and Methodological Traditions of the History of Ideas (7.5 ECTS cr)

The aim of the course is to introduce the distinguishing character of History of Ideas while providing methodological tools to read and interpret texts in the field as a basis and preparation for an independent project. The module has two main themes. The first one concerns the special conditions of History of Ideas, its traditional identity and recent applications, different views on its emergence and development and theoretical problems associated with research in the field. The second theme comprises a study of some current interpretation theories and a survey of collection and analysis methods in the field, including source criticism, information retrieval, and the handling of archived material.

Module 4. Independent project (7.5 ECTS cr)

Students complete a minor independent project, based on a delimited topic and on relevant questions,

theories, and methods. How to find, use, analyse, and interpret primary and secondary sources is discussed in seminars along with the characteristics of History of Ideas in terms of purpose, research questions, issues of delimitation, outline, referencing, language use, and meticulousness. At the end of the course, students present and review their projects in a final seminar.

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

Reading List

See separate document.

Examination

Assessment is based on

Module 1: a take-home exam, active participation in seminars, and a brief popular science seminar presentation on a course theme.

Module 2: a take-home exam and active participation in seminars where written individual hand-in assignments are regularly discussed.

Module 3: a take-home exam, an individual PM, and active seminar participation.

Module 4: an independent project, defended orally in a seminar, and on performance as a peer reviewer of another student's project.

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 (VG) 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.