



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Political Science

Syllabus

Threatened democracy

Course Code:	SVAP11
Course Title:	Threatened democracy <i>Hotad demokrati</i>
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:
SKA (Political Science)

Course Approval

The syllabus was approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences 2025-03-05, and is valid from the Autumn semester 2025 at Karlstad University.

Prerequisites

At least 90 ECTS credits, with at least 30 ECTS credits at the G2F level or higher, in Political Science or related main fields of study like Sociology, Psychology, Philosophy, Media and Communication Studies, History, Social Science, and Human Geography, including a degree project of at least 15 ECTS credits at the G2E level, and upper secondary level Swedish 3 and English 6/A, or equivalent

Learning Outcomes

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

1. identify and critically examine central arguments for and against democracy,
2. identify and critically examine various threats and challenges to democratic institutions, both at the system level and at individual levels, and
3. analyse and reflect upon the spread of disinformation and misinformation critically in light of various challenges to democracy.

Content

Democratic institutions are characterised by respect for the fundamental principles of democracy, that is, individual freedoms and rights as well as the equal value of all people. The dissemination of disinformation and misinformation risks threatening public discourse and by extension interpersonal trust and trust in democratic institutions. The course introduces and discusses democracy critically with a particular focus on its proponents and critics. It is based on the classic by Robert Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics*. Key dilemmas of democratic governance in terms of content, procedures, and practical implementation are discussed. The threats posed by disinformation and misinformation, as well as the underlying causes of their dissemination, constitute a recurring theme throughout the course.

Reading List

See separate document.

Examination

Assessment is individual and based on written hand-in assignments, a written take-home exam, and active participation in seminars.

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.