



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Political Science

Syllabus

Disinformation and Security

Course Code:	SVAP12
Course Title:	Disinformation and Security <i>Desinformation och säkerhet</i>
Credits:	15
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 2025-03-06, 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:

Knowledge and understanding

1. give an account of relevant concepts as well as analytical and theoretical tools in social science research on disinformation, and
2. give an account of relevant social science research concerning the effects of disinformation, as well as the security strategies employed by Western democracies to combat it.

Competence and skills

3. contrast analytical and theoretical tools found in existing research on disinformation, and
4. compare the strategies for combating disinformation used by different societal actors and states.

Judgement and approach

5. review social science research on disinformation, and
6. critically assess strategies used to counter disinformation in Western democracies.

Content

Disinformation has increasingly come to be perceived as a serious security threat by Western democracies. Various measures have been taken to protect against disinformation campaigns. As part of this development, Sweden has attempted to strengthen its psychological defense, just like during the Cold War.

The course places particular emphasis on influence campaigns by foreign actors, in the context of shifting geopolitical dynamics both in Sweden's immediate vicinity and globally. It also highlights domestic political developments in an era of polarisation, and what these may mean for the effects of such campaigns as well as the challenges involved in combating disinformation.

The aim of the course is to enable students to assess both the research on disinformation and the security strategies devised to counter it critically.

The course is structured in weekly modules including a thematic introduction, in-depth reading, written assignments, and interactive components. Both formative and summative assessments are part of the course design.

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.