



AK1205 Science Goes Fiction: Science Fiction, Film and Tech- nological Futures in a Historical Perspective 7.5 credits

Science Goes Fiction: Science Fiction, film och tekniska framtider ur ett historiskt perspektiv

This is a translation of the Swedish, legally binding, course syllabus.

If the course is discontinued, students may request to be examined during the following two academic years

Establishment

Course syllabus for AK1205 valid from Spring 2011

Grading scale

A, B, C, D, E, FX, F

Education cycle

First cycle

Main field of study

Technology

Language of instruction

The language of instruction is specified in the course offering information in the course catalogue.

Intended learning outcomes

The aim of the course is to introduce the students to different themes within the field of the history of technology, as well as analyse the role of technology in our society and in popular culture in a historical perspective. Questions regarding the role of film as historical source material and the connection between popular culture and attitudes toward technology will also be discussed.

Course contents

During the last 100 years, Science Fiction film- and literature has been a forum through which technology and science has, directly and indirectly, been brought out to the public, discussed, and interpreted. Within the genre, images of the role of technology in future society have not only mirrored existing discourses and discussions about technology, but have also created visions of the future, as well as inspired and/or discouraged research and technological development. Taking works of science fiction as a starting point, we will analyse statements regarding technology and technological change and relate these to 20th century discussions and discourses regarding technology and society. The objective is both for the students to critically reflect upon these discussions, and get an introduction in the history of technology. The course will touch upon themes such as images of scientific research and technological development, technology and gender, futuristic visions of industrialization and environmental problems, research ethics, and the relation between man and machine.

A certain focus will also be on the role of popular culture in spreading images of science and technology. Therefore a part of the course will be dedicated to source criticism of images and film, as well as the connection between facts and fiction.

Disposition

Lectures and seminars.

Written assignments.

Film screenings.

Specific prerequisites

Undergraduate students and professionals with basic university eligibility

Course literature

The course literature consists of films, as well as articles and bookchapters gathered in a reader that will be made available at the beginning of the course.

Equipment

The students need to have access to a DVD-player or computer with possibility to view films outside classes.

Examination

- INL1 - Assignment, 7.5 credits, grading scale: A, B, C, D, E, FX, F

Based on recommendation from KTH's coordinator for disabilities, the examiner will decide how to adapt an examination for students with documented disability.

The examiner may apply another examination format when re-examining individual students.

Other requirements for final grade

To pass the course the students should be able to:

- describe how one or several works of Science Fiction relates to one or more questions discussed in the field of history of technology, such as for example the relationship between industrial development and the environment, the connection between man and machine, technology and gender, or science ethics.
- compare several works of science fiction, and give examples of how attitudes towards technology may change over time.

For a higher grade, the student should also be able to:

- critically analyze a statement regarding or image of technology or technological change in one or several works of science fiction, using the theoretical tools presented in the course.
- critically reflect on how their own as well as others' attitude towards technology is influenced by images from popular culture.

Ethical approach

- All members of a group are responsible for the group's work.
- In any assessment, every student shall honestly disclose any help received and sources used.
- In an oral assessment, every student shall be able to present and answer questions about the entire assignment and solution.