



Course syllabus

Faculty Board of Humanities and Social Sciences
School of Cultural Sciences

1HI210 Att läsa människan. Historiska och litterära biografier, 15
högskolepoäng

Reading Life. Historic and literary biographies, 15 credits

Main field of study

History

Subject Group

History

Level of classification

First Level

Progression

G1N

Date of Ratification

Approved by the Board of the School of Cultural Sciences 2009-12-14

Revised 2011-04-12. English translation.

The course syllabus is valid from autumn semester 2011

Prerequisites

NO VALUE DEFINED

Expected learning outcomes

After completing the course, the student should be able to:

- present the history of literary biographies,
- problemise the relationship between fiction and facts,
- problemise the relationship between fiction and history,
- discuss critique against and possibilities concerning literary biographies as historical sources.

Content

Human beings may be described in many different ways. In literature studies the written portrayal of a human being has traditionally been cause for concern: is it not an impossible task to describe the complexity of a person in words? Nonetheless literary biographies and autobiographies exist in world literature from ancient times to present days.

The literary biography as a historical phenomenon has two aspects. One concerns the historical science approach to literary biography as a genre, and whether the literary biography may form the basis of a good-quality scientific product. Another concerns how to best utilise older literary biographies and primarily autobiographies as historical sources. This requires a critical discussion on genres, prerequisites and objectives for writing about oneself.

This course will combine these two aspects and students will thus receive a dual introduction to one of the most popular genres of our time, which is located in between literature and history.

Type of Instruction

Teaching may be in the form of lectures, seminars and groups assignments. Some elements of the course require obligatory attendance.

If the course is offered as a distant tuition course, specific means of instruction will be used suitable for this type of distribution.

Examination

The course is assessed with the grades Fail (U) or Pass (G).

In order to pass the course, students need to meet the expected learning outcomes.

Examination occurs through home assignments and active participation at seminars.

A resit is offered within six weeks (within the framework of regular terms) and the number of resits is limited to five (in accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance 6 chap. 21§).

Course Evaluation

When the course has finished, an evaluation is compiled. The results are reported back to students and then archived according to the rules of the School.

Other

Joint studies with the subject Literary History Studies.

Required Reading and Additional Study Material

Non-fiction, literary history studies

Ambjörnsson, Ronny & Ringby, Per & Åkerman, Sune. 1997. *Att skriva människan. Essäer om biografien som livshistoria och vetenskaplig genre*. Carlssons. 150 p. (selection)

Jensen, Bernard Eric & Richard, Anne Birgitte. 1999. *Livet fortalt. Litteraturhistoriske og faghistoriske biografier i 1990'erne*. Roskilde Universitetsforlag. 250 p.

Larsson, Inger. 2003. *Text och tolkning i svenska författarbiografier. Elin Wägners 'Selma Lagerlöf', Elisabeth Tykessons 'Atterbom' och Fredrik Bööks 'Verner von Heidenstam'*. Gidlunds förlag, p. 9-49. 41 s.

Larsson, Lisbeth. 2007. "En berättelse om slash". In: Bodil Axelsson & Johan Forsnäs (red.). *Kulturstudier i Sverige*. Studentlitteratur, p. 39-54. 16 p.

Larsson, Lisbeth. 2001. *Sanning och konsekvens. Marika Stiernstedt, Ludvig Nordström och de biografiska berättelserna*. Norstedts. 250 p. (selection)

von Platen, Magnus. 1989. *Den litterära biografien*. Almqvist & Wiksell international. 90 p. (selection)

Non-fiction, history

Hvidt, Kristian. 1997. "Den historiske biografi - en spændingsfyldt genre". In: Ronny Ambjørnsson et al. (ed.), *Att skriva människan*. Carlssons, p. 31-42. 12 p.

Krantz, Kjell. 1997. "Livshistoria - biografi – livsöde", in Ronny Ambjørnsson et al. (ed.). *Att skriva människan*. Carlssons, p. 43-60. 18 p.

Linné, Agneta & Skog-Östlin, Kerstin. 2001. *Biografi och kollektivbiografi som historisk metod*. Forum för pedagogisk historia. 89 p.

Nilzén, Göran. 1989. "Personhistorisk metod". In: Magnus von Platen (ed.). *Den litterära biografen*. Almqvist & Wicksell, p. 41-46. 6 p.

Popkin, Jeremy D. 2005. *History, historians, & autobiography*. University of Chicago Press. 339 p.

Possing, Birgitte . 1997. "Biografen ud fra et kvinde- og et historievidenskabeligt synspunkt". In: Ronny Ambjørnsson et al. (ed.). *Att skriva människan*. Carlssons, p. 61-47. 14 p.

Rosengren, Henrik & Östling, Johan. 2007. *Med livet som insats*. Biografen som humanistisk genre. Sekel. 180 p.

Compendium, autobiographical texts. Approx. 200 p.

Fiction

Texts selected in consultation with the teacher. Approx. 1 000 p.