



## Course syllabus

Faculty of Arts and Humanities  
Department of Film and Literature

1LI159 Sjukdom, rädsla och berättande, 7,5 högskolepoäng  
Disease, Fear and Narration, 7.5 credits

**Main field of study**

Comparative Literature

**Subject Group**

Comparative Literature

**Level of classification**

First Level

**Progression**

G1N

**Date of Ratification**

Approved 2021-01-15

Revised 2021-03-10 by Faculty of Arts and Humanities. Revised literature.

The course syllabus is valid from autumn semester 2021

**Prerequisites**

General entry requirements for university studies.

### Objectives

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

- account in general terms for the impact of numerous epidemic diseases on western cultural history, in past and present time;
- account for scientific theories that discuss fear as a social construction, and view the phenomenon of disease in the light of these;
- perform their own critical analysis of an artistic representation of disease on the basis of the scientific theories introduced in the course.

## Content

In this course, the representation of disease in narratives created at the intersection of fantasy and reality is studied. Specific focus lies on the study of the relation between disease and fear. In this course, fear is considered as a social construction, formed by cultural and historical factors. In the past as well as in present time, outbreaks of disease have given rise to conflicts and dissension; conspiracy theories have flourished; specific ethnic groups have been identified as the vectors of contagion, and the diseased have been stigmatised. At the same time, epidemic diseases have also contributed to cooperation across national borders and between different social, ethnic and religious groups. Students get an insight into the significance of diseases for the development of history, as well as academic tools for discussing and analysing the subject. The course is organised thematically, and focuses on a selection of fabled diseases that have had a major impact on western cultural history. Contemporary epidemics – especially COVID-19 – are also discussed, analysed and reviewed in the light of history.

## Type of Instruction

Teaching is delivered in the form of written and recorded lectures and students' group discussions of different assignments.

## Examination

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

In order to receive the grade of Pass, the student must achieve the objectives. Grading criteria for the grade of Pass with Distinction will be specified in writing when the course starts.

The course is examined through discussion posts and an individual written analysis assignment. The student chooses a suitable representation of disease for their individual analysis, in consultation with the examiner.

Repeat examination is offered in accordance with Local regulations for courses and examination at the first and second-cycle level at Linnaeus University.

If the university has decided that a student is entitled to special pedagogical support due to a disability, the examiner has the right to give a customised exam or to have the student conduct the exam in an alternative way.

## Course Evaluation

During or shortly after the course, a course evaluation is conducted. Results and analysis of the course evaluation are promptly communicated to the students who have taken the course. Students who are taking the course when it is offered the next time are informed of the results at the start of the course. The evaluation is anonymous.

## Required Reading and Additional Study Material

### Theoretical texts

Furedi, Frank. 2007. "The Only thing we have to fear is the 'culture of fear' itself" 12 p. (available online)

Furedi, Frank. 2018. *How Fear Works*, Bloomsbury Continuum. 320 p. ISBN: 9781472947727

Keck, Frederick. 2020. *Avian Reservoirs*, Duke University Press, 256 p. ISBN: 978147800698

Pamuk, Orhan. 2020. "What the Great Pandemic Novels Teach Us". *The New York Times* April 23 (Available online)

Sherman W. Irwin. 2007. *Twelve Diseases that Changed Our World*, American Society for Microbiology, 230 p. ISBN: 9781555814663

Excerpts from scientific publications and journals of relevance for the subject, ca 150 p. The literature will be provided in the form of e-resources on the course learning platform.

### **Fiction**

Camus, Albert. 1947. *Pesten* (ca 250 p). Any unabridged edition.

Defoe, Daniel. 1722. *A Journal of the Plauge Year*. Ca 100 pages in selection. (Available online)

Del Toro, Guillermo & Hogan, Chuck. 2009. *Släktet*. Ca 100 pages in selection. Any edition.

Dumas, Alexandre. 1848. *Kameliadamen*. Ca 100 pages. Any Swedish, English or French unabridged edition, available as an e-resource.

Camus, Albert. 1947. *Pesten* (ca 250 p.). Any unabridged edition.

Johnson, Eyvind. 1937. *Slutspel*. Ca 10–15 pages in selection. (Provided on the course learning platform).

Manzoni, Alessandro. 1827. *The Betrothed*. Ca 100 pages in selection. (Available online)

Matheson, Richard. 1954. *I Am legend*. Ca 300 pages. Any unabridged edition.

Maupassant, Guy de. 1887. "Horla". Ca 100 pages. Any Swedish, English or French unabridged edition, available as an e-resource.

Wharton, Edith. 1934. "Roman Fever ". Ca 11 p. (Available online)

Woolf, Virginia. 1925. *On Being Ill*. Ca 60 p. (Available online)

### *Film/Tv-serier*

*The Walking Dead*. (2010–) Creators: Frank Darabont & Angela Kang. Season 1. Episode 1

*Outbreak*. 1995. Director: Wolfgang Petersen

*The Hunger*. 1983. Director: Tony Scott

Material in the form of artistic representations of the diseases discussed in the course. The material consists of fiction texts, such as short stories, novels, and excerpts from novels; films, tv series, film clips, podcasts, debate contributions and images published on different digital platforms, equivalent to ca 700 pages.