



Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology

ENGC10, English: The Great American Novel, c. 1850-1987, 7.5 credits

Engelska: The Great American Novel, c. 1850-1987, 7,5 högskolepoäng
First Cycle / Grundnivå

Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by The Pro Dean of First and Second Cycle Studies at The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology on 2024-06-10 (U 2024/427) and was last revised on 2026-02-16 (U 2026/49). The revised syllabus comes into effect 2026-03-01 and is valid from the autumn semester 2026.

General information

The course is offered as a freestanding course. It can normally be included as part of a first or second cycle degree.

Language of instruction: English

Main field of study *Specialisation*

English G1F, First cycle, has less than 60 credits in first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Learning outcomes

On completion of the course, the students are to be able to

Knowledge and understanding

- at a basic level, give an account of the cultural contexts that are covered in the course
- communicate an understanding, both orally and in writing, of the concept of the 'Great American Novel' and how it relates to the novels on the reading list
- communicate an understanding of novels on the reading list, orally and in writing

Competence and skills

- discuss and write about American fiction using relevant theoretical concepts
- analyse the relationship between the novels studied on the course and their cultural and historical contexts
- discuss and evaluate the usefulness of the critical concept 'the Great American Novel'

Judgement and approach

- compare, assess and argue for different analyses of a novel
- identify their own need for further knowledge and expertise

Course content

The course will introduce students to the concept of the 'Great American Novel,' a term frequently used to describe classic works of American fiction that in some way engage with the question of what it means to be American. We will read six American novels roughly spanning the years 1850-1987 and will focus on how the novels represent the United States and what it means to be an American. The course will also query the 'Great American Novel' as a critical concept and discuss its usefulness in describing a specific genre. The large span of the course will also give students a broad survey of American fiction, from the mid-nineteenth up until the late twentieth centuries.

Course design

The course is based on active participation, discussion and reflection. The teaching consists of scheduled sessions comprising lecture components and group discussions.

Assessment

The course is examined through active participation in six–even seminars, through five short response papers, and through a final essay of 2,000 words, to be submitted after the course has ended. Students are free to choose their own topics for the final papers, in consultation with the course convenor.

If the student does not complete the course with a Pass grade, an opportunity to resit the examination in accordance the regulatory framework of the faculty is given. The examiner may deviate from the regular form of examination if it cannot be implemented during a retake. Information about retakes should be available at the beginning of the course.

The examiner, in consultation with Disability Support Services, may deviate from the regular form of examination in order to provide a permanently disabled student with a form of examination equivalent to that of a student without a disability.

Grades

Grading scale includes the grades: Fail, Pass, Pass with distinction

Activity at seminars gives a maximum of 12 points, the response papers a maximum of 15 points, and the final essay a maximum of 33 points. For the grade of Pass, at least 40 of a maximum of 60 points are required, and to pass with distinction at least 51 points are required.

Entry requirements

General entry requirements and 30 credits in the subject English.

Further information

- The course is offered at the Centre for Languages and Literature, Lund University.
- The credits allocated for course content that in whole or in part is commensurate with another course can only be credited once for a degree.
- For further details, see current registration and information materials