



**LUND**  
UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Social Sciences

## **MESS56, Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science: Sustainability and Popular Culture, 7.5 credits**

*Miljö- och hållbarhetsvetenskap: Hållbarhet och populärkultur, 7,5  
högskolepoäng*

**Second Cycle / Avancerad nivå**

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### **Details of approval**

The syllabus was approved by The Board of the Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies on 2017-09-05 and was last revised on 2017-09-05. The revised syllabus applies from 2017-09-05, autumn semester 2018.

### **General Information**

The course constitutes a 3rd term elective (non-compulsory) course at LUMES, Lund University Master's Programme in Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science.

*Language of instruction:* English

*Main field of studies*

Environmental Studies and Sustainability  
Science

*Depth of study relative to the degree  
requirements*

A1F, Second cycle, has second-cycle  
course/s as entry requirements

### **Learning outcomes**

On completion of the course, the student shall be able to:

#### **Knowledge and understanding**

- Demonstrate critical knowledge and theoretical understanding of popular culture and its representations of nature.

#### **Competence and skills**

- Demonstrate the ability to analyze how sustainability discourses are manifested in cultural understandings of nature and the environment.
- Demonstrate the ability to work constructively in a team and communicate effectively with people from different backgrounds.

## Judgement and approach

- Demonstrate the ability to critically reflect on and provide examples of the way sustainability is communicated and contested through popular culture.

## Course content

Discourses of sustainability are increasingly embedded within culture in all of its multiple dimensions, including different worldviews and values, ways of life, and other forms of cultural expression. This increase of sustainability discourses in the daily practices of society might contribute to shift the current unsustainable trajectory.

For this course, popular culture is defined as the entirety of attitudes, ideas, images, perspectives, and other phenomena that are within the mainstream of a given Culture. The most common pop culture categories are: entertainment (movies, music, television, games), sports, news (as in people/places in news), politics and fashion/clothes

The overall aim of this course is to increase the students' awareness and understanding of popular culture and its different representations of sustainability and nature. The course is divided into three parts:

Part 1 will provide an overview of the competing theories and concepts surrounding popular culture and its linkages with sustainability.

Part 2 will examine a series of case studies such as sustainable fashion, food, political campaigns and advertisement, and critically analyze the way they represent sustainability. In this part, the complexities of popular culture are in greater focus. Examples of questions that can be discussed: How advertisement and entertainment influence the ways we imagine nature and the environment; and how ideas about sustainability are communicated in politics through political campaigns.

Part 3 will ask what strategies sustainability studies can learn from popular culture, for example by analysing media strategies of successful sustainability initiatives. The course will, as an example, analyse visual data to understand how visual methods such as photography and documentary film create arenas for the public to engage in and discuss sustainability.

## Course design

The teaching consists of lectures and seminars.

Unless there are valid reasons to the contrary, compulsory participation is required in students' presentations and seminars. Students who have been unable to participate due to circumstances such as accidents or sudden illness will be offered the opportunity to compensate for or re-take compulsory components. This also applies to students who have been absent because of duties as an elected student representative.

## Assessment

Assessment is based on one individual assignment (take-home exam) (70%) and one group assignment (30%). Each assessment item is designed to further student understanding of, and skills in, analysing and researching popular culture and society.

Three opportunities for examination are offered in conjunction with the course: a first examination and two re-examinations. Two further re-examinations on the same course content are offered within a year of the end of the course. After this, further re-examination opportunities are offered but in accordance with the current course syllabus.

A student who has taken two examinations in a course or a part of a course without obtaining a pass grade is entitled to the nomination of another examiner, unless there are special reasons to the contrary. Students getting a passing grade cannot re-take an exam or re-submit a paper to get a higher grade.

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.

*Subcourses that are part of this course can be found in an appendix at the end of this document.*

## Grades

Marking scale: Fail, Three, Four, Five.

The highest grade for the course as a whole is 5 and the lowest passing grade is 3. The grade for a non-passing result is Fail. The student's performance is assessed with reference to the learning outcomes of the course. The grade 5 denotes outstanding performance in all learning outcomes. The grade 4 signifies very good performance in all learning outcomes. To receive the grade 3, the student must obtain minimum criteria in fulfilling all course learning outcomes. The grade Fail signifies that the student has not fulfilled the learning outcomes of the course, or that additional work is required before the grade can be awarded.

At the start of the course, students are informed about the learning outcomes stated in the syllabus and about the grading scale and how it is applied on the course.

### Overall course grade

The grade for the entire course consists of the average grade of all assessed assignments. The individual assignment is worth 70% of the final grade, the group assignment (including presentation) is worth 30% of the final grade. For a grade of 3 on the entire course the student must have been awarded at least 3 on all assessments. The student must also have actively participated in all compulsory components.

## Entry requirements

To be admitted to the course, students must be admitted to Lund University International Master's Programme in Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science 120 credits, and have fulfilled course requirements of at least forty higher education credits in the programme.

Subcourses in MESS56, Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science:  
Sustainability and Popular Culture

Applies from H18

1801 Sustainability and Popular Culture, 7,5 hp  
Grading scale: Fail, Three, Four, Five