

“Energy and literature – An Introduction to the Energy Humanities”

Syllabus

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“Energy and literature – An Introduction to the Energy Humanities”

This course introduces the Energy Humanities, an emerging interdisciplinary field that looks at how energy has shaped western and global culture during the past centuries. Literary texts and literary theory will act as key resources, complemented by approaches from other disciplines, including from history, philosophy, and futures studies. Students will be asked to actively develop new insights into what questions can be asked by this discipline, and about what kinds of material can be used. Part of the independent course work will consist of presenting the results of focused literary reviews in group presentations. Regular theory reading and active participation are required. The evaluation will be based on participation, course work, and an open-book exam.

The course will provide students with a thorough understanding of the development of the Energy Humanities, and of the methods and sources of this developing discipline. The course will also provide students with a detailed knowledge about contemporary approaches to interdisciplinary research in the humanities.

Time and place: 2023 / 3rd and 4th period / Tampere University

Outline and reading:

9.1 Welcome to the Energy Humanities

16.1 What energy, what humanities?

Reading:

Williams (forthcoming) “Energy Humanities” *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Critical and Cultural Theory*

Drees 2016: “Humans, Humanities and Humanism” *Humanism and Technology*

23.1 No class - group work

30.1 “Extraction.” First literature review presentation

Reading:

Yaeger 2011: editorial, “Literature in the Ages of...” *PMLA* pp. 305-310

Zola 1894: *Germinal* chapters I-II

6.2 “Stewardship.” Second literature review presentation

Reading:

Leopold 1949: *Sand County Almanac* pp. 201-226

Sacco 2020: *Paying the Land* pp. 33-50, 105-108, 263-265

13.2 “Allegory.” Third literature review presentation

Reading:

Aho 1883: “When Father Brough Home the Lamp”

Marx 1964: *The Machine in the Garden* pp. 169-179.

20.2 No class - group work

27.2 Spring break

6.3. “Utopia” Applied session

Reading:

Hossain 1905: “Sultana's Dream”

Mookerjea-Leonard 2017: “Futuristic Technologies and Purdah in the Feminist Utopia: Rokeya S. Hossain's ‘Sultana's Dream’” *Feminist Review*

Optional reading: Ameal 2016: “Cities Utopian, Dystopian and Apocalyptic”

13.3. “Materiality” Visit to Tammerkoski hydroelectric plant

Optional reading:

Calvino 1974: “The Petrol Pump”

MacDonald 2013: “The resources of Fiction” *Reviews in Cultural Theory*

20.3 No class – individual work

27.3 “Agency” Applied session

Reading/Viewing:

“Woman at war / Kona fer í stríð” (2019); opening scene

Extinction Rebellion 2021: “Press release”

30.4 Conclusion and open book exam

The course includes research literature sessions and applied sessions, which students prepare in group meetings. The course is structured along six key concepts: “Extraction”, “Stewardship”, “Allegory”, “Utopia”, “Materiality” and “Agency”.

For the first group work, students will review 3 academic texts in the Energy Humanities from the perspective of methods, sources, and aims, and present their findings to the class.

For the second group work, students examine one literary or cultural work alongside one theoretical text. Students meet and discuss the texts with the help of pre-assigned questions, summarize their discussion, and present their findings to the class. Students write down their answers to at least two of the assigned questions in a 2-3 page group paper.

Evaluation is based on 70 % participation in the course work / 30 % exam.

The exam is a brief open book exam. Students will be asked to define 2 key concepts discussed during the course, and to give an illustrative example. They will also answer one open question along the following lines: What can the energy humanities (as academic discipline) achieve? What are the most urgent research questions to address?