COURSE UNIT DESCRIPTION

Course Unit Title	Code
FUTURE POLITICS	

Lecturer(s)	Department(s)
Coordinator: asist. dr. Vilius Bartninkas **Other(s):** asist. dr. Vilius Mačkinis, j. asist. Augustė Dementavičienė	Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius university, Vokiečių str. 10, LT-01130, Vilnius, tel. +370 52514130, e-mail: tspimi@tspmi.vu.lt

Study cycle	Type of the course unit
First	Elective

Mode of delivery	Course unit delivery period	Language (s) of instruction
Face-to-face	4 (spring) semester	English

Requirements for students	
Pre-requisites: -	**Co-requisites (if any): -**

Number of credits allocated	Total student's workload	Contact hours	Self-study hours
5	145	32	113

Purpose of the course unit: programme competences to be developed
The course aims to provide a broad overview of the debates on future politics in literature, philosophy, and social sciences; to develop abilities of critical thinking and complex analysis in relation to the ideas and theories regarding the key questions and problems of futuristic, utopian, and dystopian texts; to train the necessary skills in building future political scenarios.

Learning outcomes of the course unit	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods
Students will be able to understand and examine the main political ideas, theories, concepts, and arguments in futuristic texts coming from the field of social sciences, to understand their origins and practical impact, to assess their importance to future thinking.	Problem-oriented lectures, seminars (text analysis, comparative assessment and systemic analysis of practical issues, case study, group discussions), individual studies and group work (search of information, critical literature studies and the analysis of theoretical and practical problems)	Participation in seminars, essay, exam, group project
Students will be able to understand and explain the major debates on future politics in the field of humanities.		
Students will be able to work with different theoretical frameworks, discourses, and styles of arguments, to employ different methodological approaches to future thinking while participating in collaborative activities.		
Students will be able to use different conceptual and practical tools used in future studies and strategic public policy (including foresight) for independent analysis.		
Students will be able to use different conceptual and practical tools used in future studies and strategic public policy (including foresight) for independent analysis.		Participation in seminars, essay, exam, group project
Students will identify and respect diverse backgrounds and perspectives, be familiar with the notion of equality and the principle of non-discrimination and apply this knowledge to the resolution of ethical and other professional dilemmas while working in a miscellaneous team.	Seminars (text analysis, comparative assessment and systemic analysis of practical issues, case study, group discussions), group work (search of information, critical literature studies and the analysis of theoretical and practical problems)	Participation in seminars, group project

To obtain conceptual and practical tools for individual and group work that would allow them to become independent scholars and informed practitioners in future studies and strategic public policy.	Problem-oriented lectures, seminars (text analysis, comparative assessment and systemic analysis of practical issues, case study, group discussions), individual studies and group work (search of information, critical literature studies and the analysis of theoretical and practical problems)	Participation in seminars, essay, exam, group project
To develop skills in critical thinking, informed and rational discussion, conceptual creativity, to engage in productive interpersonal dialogue.		

Content: breakdown of the topics	Contact hours							Self-study: hours and assignments	
	Lectures	Consultations	Seminars	Practical sessions	Laboratory activities	Internship/work	Contact hours	Self-study hours	**Assignments**
1. Introduction to the field: • The key notions: predictable future, a variety of potential futures, and the end of history. • What are the literary, philosophical, and political genres for future thinking? How these genres interact with models of future? • How the cultural horizon informs future thinking? Can future thinking escape the present cultural beliefs? • What are the tools for envisioning the content of new politics? Can we predict or build the future?	2						2	6	Reading and analysis of literature: - Jasanoff, Sheila, "Future Imperfect: Science, Technology, and the Imaginations of Modernity"
2. How did we used to image the future? • The meaning of utopia in literature and philosophy. • The modern utopian tradition on future as a political project: between socialism, Darwinism, and imperialism. • The dystopian critique: totalitarianism and the nuclear apocalypse. • The space age and building an alternative future with science fiction.	2		4				6	14	Reading and analysis of literature: Vieira, Fátima, "The Concept of Utopia" H. G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds* *William* Morris, *News From Nowhere* Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* George Orwell, *1984*
3. How do we imagine the future now? • The cyberpunk world: the machine and the humans. • The posthuman condition: transhumanism, biotechnologies, AI, and the technological singularity. • The Feminist utopias: the role of gender in future thinking. • The environmental dystopias: the ecocide and the green self.	2		4				6	14	Reading and analysis of literature: William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (1984) Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaids Tale* (1986) Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower* (1993) Cormac McCarthy, *The Road* (2006)
4. How past choices determine the future? • Yali's question: Jared Diamond and "Guns, Germs and Steel" argument • What makes a successful society: definitions and measures of success	2		4				6	14	Reading and analysis of literature: Hall, P. A. and Lamont, M. "Introduction" in *Successful Societies:*

Topic										Literature
• Problems with indicators of happiness and success • The role of states and institutions: overcoming poverty, inequality and culture	2							6		*How Institution and Culture Affect Health*, edited by Hall, P.A. and Lamont, M. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Pp. 1-22 - Merry, Sally Engle. "Measuring the World: Indicators, Human Rights and Global Governmance." Current Anthroplogy 52 (3), 2011: Pp. 83-95. - Hall, P. A. and Soskice D. „Introduction" in *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. Pp. 1-64.
5. How do we understand and achieve progress? • Modern and postmodern notions of progress • Progress and conducive agency • Politics and policies of progress: reaching for the better future • Progress strategies in the World: differences in values and framing	2		4					**6**	**14**	Reading and analysis of literature: - Sztompka, Piotr. "Agency and progress: the idea of progress and changing theories of change." *Rethinking progress. Movements, forces, and ideas at the end of the 20th century* (1990): 247-263. - Noll, Heinz-Herbert. "Progress: Concept and measurement." *A Life Devoted to Quality of Life*. Springer, Cham, 2016. 93-104. - Vink, Martinus, Martijn van der Steen, and Art Dewulf. "Dealing with long-term policy problems: Making sense of the interplay between meaning and power." *Futures: the journal of policy, planning and futures studies* 76 (2016): 1-6.
6. How to build a future scenario? • Introducing foresight: how to think about the future in public policy, defining the future project in strategic terms, using the future toolkit.	2							**2**	**6**	Group project

							Group project
7. Tutorials on building a future scenario. • The future in context. Choosing a policy area / subject, framing the system, performing horizon scanning, identifying megatrends and drivers, reading the future signals. • The building blocks of future. Mapping the drivers, identifying the axes of uncertainty, choosing the scenarios. • Telling a story about the future. Developing the alternative scenarios, evaluating their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, defining the vision. • Testing the future. Identifying the relevant policy issues, policy stress-testing, creating an action plan.		4				4	45	
Total	12	20				32	113	

Assessment strategy	Weight, percentage	Assessment period	Assessment criteria
Participation in seminars	20%	During semester	2 points – actively participates in seminars, engages with other participants, critically evaluates arguments and theories, raises constructive questions; 1 point – participates in seminars, raises questions; 0 points – misses more than 30% of seminars or does not participate in seminars;
Essay	20%	During semester	Essay (3 000 – 4 000 words) on a topic of one's own choice (with the permission of lecturer): 4 points – a detailed and comprehensive answer to the question, correctly identifies and contextualises the problem relating to the topic, conception or theory, reconstructs, examines, and critically evaluates its arguments and ideas, an extensive and nuanced use of secondary literature. 3 points – a sufficient answer to the question, understands the problem relating to the topic, conception or theory, examines its arguments and ideas, sufficient use of secondary literature. 2 points – partly answers the question, partly understands the problem, examines its arguments and ideas. 1 point – partly understands the problem relating to the topic, conception or theory, offers unstructured reasoning. 0 points – does not hand in the essay.
Group project	40%	During semester	The group project is developed during the tutorial sessions. 4 points – a fully realized project, which has a clear policy area, an in-depth discussion of the relevant trends, signals, and system drivers, which constructs and develops four future scenarios in relation to the policy area, tests it with the pressing policy issues and creates a detailed action plan. 3 points – a sufficiently realized project, which has a clear policy area, a discussion of the relevant trends, signals, and system drivers, which constructs and develops four future scenarios in relation to the policy area, tests it with some policy issues and offers some countermeasures. 2 points – a partly realized project, which has a policy area, a discussion of various trends, signals, and system drivers, which constructs less than four future scenarios in relation to the policy area, discusses their practical applicability. 1 point – a partly realized project, which has a vague policy area, does not discuss the relevant trends, signals, and system drivers, constructs less than four future scenarios in relation to the policy area, does not discuss their practical applicability. 0 points – does not finish a project.

		The exam questions are based on the lectures.
Examination	20%	At the end of the course

| | | The exam questions are based on the lectures.
2 points – a detailed answer to questions, correctly identifies and contextualises the problems relating to the topic, conception or theory, examines and critically evaluates its arguments and ideas.
1 point – partly answers to questions, partly understands the problems relating to the topic, conception or theory, offers unstructured examines its arguments and ideas.
0 points – does not complete the examination. |

Author	Year of publication	Title	Issue of periodical or volume of publication	Publishing place and house or web link
Compulsory reading				
Fátima Vieira	2010	"The Concept of Utopia" in *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*		Cambridge University Press
Sheila Jasanoff	2015	"Future Imperfect: Science, Technology, and the Imaginations of Modernity" in Jasanoff and Sang-Hyun Kim (eds.), *Dreamscapes of Modernity: Sociotechnical Imaginaries and the Fabrication of Power*		The University of Chicago Press
H. G. Wells	2005 (1897)	*The War of the Worlds*		Penguin
William Morris	1993 (1890)	*News From Nowhere*		Penguin
Aldous Huxley	2007 (1932)	*Brave New World*		Vintage
George Orwell	2004 (1949)	*1984*		Penguin
William Gibson	2013 (1984)	*Neuromancer*		Voyager
Margaret Atwood	2006 (1986)	*The Handmaids Tale*		Penguin
Octavia Butler	2019 (1993)	*Parable of the Sower*		Grand Central Publishing
Cormac McCarthy	2009 (2006)	*The Road*		Picador
Peter. A. Hall and Michele Lamont	2009	*Successful Societies: How Institution and Culture Affect Health*		Cambridge University Press
Merry, Sally Engle	2011	„Measuring the World: Indicators, Human Rights and Global Governmance."	*Current Anthroplogy* 52 (3)	
Peter A. Hall, and David Soskice	2001	*Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*		Oxford University Press
Jeffrey C. Alexander and Piotr Sztompka	2002	*Rethinking progress. Movements, forces, and ideas at the end of the 20th century*		Routledge
Filomena Maggino ed.	2015	„A life devoted to quality of life: Festschrift in honor of Alex C. Michalos"	Vol 60	Springer
Martinus Vink, Martijn van der Steen, and Art Dewulf	2016	„Dealing with long-term policy problems: Making sense of the interplay between meaning and power"	*Futures: the journal of policy, planning and futures studies* 76	
Recommended reading				
Claeys, Gregory	2017	*Dystopia: A Natural History*		Oxford University Press

Claeys, Gregory	2000	The 'Survival of the Fittest' and the Origins of Social Darwinism	*Journal of the History of Ideas*	
Freeden, Michael	1979	Eugenics and Progressive Thought: A Study in Ideological Affinity	*Historical Journal*	
Hale, Piers	2010	Of Mice and Men: Evolution and the Socialist Utopia: H. G. Wells, William Morris and George Bernard Shaw	*Journal of the History of Biology*	
Belleto, Steven	2012	"Inventing Other Realities: What the Cold War Means for Literary Studies" in Duncan Bell & Joel Isaac (eds.), *Uncertain Empire: American History and the Idea of the Cold War*		Oxford University Press
Claeys, Gregory	2010	"The Origins of Dystopia: Wells, Huxley & Orwell" in Claeys (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*		Cambridge University Press
Isaac, Jeffrey	2003	"Critics of Totalitarianism" in Terence Ball and Richard Bellamy (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Twentieth Century Political Thought*		Cambridge University Press
Carbonell, Curtis	2015	Misreading *Brave New World*	*Extrapolations*	
Murray, Nicholas	2003	*Aldous Huxley*		Little, Brown
Rodden, John	2007	*The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell*		Cambridge University Press
Donna Haraway	1985	"A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century" in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*		Routledge
Ursula Le Guin	1989	"Is Gender Necessary?" in Le Guin, *The Language of the Night: Essays on Fantasy and Science Fiction*		Women's Press
Frederic Jameson	1982	Progress versus Utopia; or, Can we Imagine the Future?	*Science Fiction Studies*	
Vernor Vinge	1993	The Coming Technological Singularity: How to Survive in the Post-Human Era	*Whole Earth Review*	
James Hughes	2002	The Politics of Transhumanism: Version 2.0		http://www.changesurfer.com/Acad/TranshumPolitics.htm
Various	2012	Transhumanist Declaration		https://humanityplus.org/transhumanism/transhumanist-declaration/
Crawford, Neta	2003	"Feminist Futures: Science Fiction, Utopia, and the Art of Possibilities in World Politics" in Jutta Weldes (ed.), *To Seek out New Worlds: Science Fiction and World Politics*		Palgrave Macmilla
Pepper, David	2005	Utopianism and Environmentalism	*Environmental Politics*	
Sargissoon, Lucy	2001	Green Utopias of Self and Other	*Critical Review of International Social &*	

			Political Philosophy	
Canavan, Gerry	2016	*Octavia E. Butler*		University of Illinois Pres
Frye, Steven	2013	*The Cambridge Companion to Cormac McCarthy*		Cambridge University Press
More, Max and Natasha Vita-More	2013	*The Transhumanist Reader: Classical and Contemporary Essays on the Science, Technology, and Philosophy of the Human Future*		Wiley-Blackwell
Zaki, Hoda M.	1990	Utopia, Dystopia, and Ideology in the Science Fiction of Octavia Butler	*Science-Fiction Studies*	
Jared Diamond	1999	*Guns, Germs and Steel*		W. W. Norton & Company