

Opasraportti

Future Studies (2016 - 2017)

Future Studies

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Website: <http://www.oulu.fi/tulevaisuudentutkimus/> (*in Finnish*)

Admission requirements

Courses in the Future Studies programme are organized by the Finland Futures Academy (FFA), which is a national education and research network. The Academy itself is co-ordinated by the Finland Futures Research Centre at the University of Turku.

In order to study at the FFA, students must have the study rights at one of the partner universities or institutes of higher education. Studies in the programme can be included in the student's elective studies. Students are free to complete individual courses or compile a study package of 25 ECTS credits. (nearly) equal to that of a subsidiary (minor) subject.

Study guidance

Study guidance in the University of Oulu is provided by the University Lecturer, Erkki Urpilainen, tel. +358 29 448 3305

Future Studies

In many ways the point of departure in the Future Studies programme is the same as in the social sciences in general: it is based on society's need to increase the number of moral choices on the horizon and provide meaning to the choices we make in the present. However, those choices are always dependent on past developments and our previous choices. One could say that, for certain matters at least, we can follow the traces of our choices and their consequences far into the past—perhaps even hundreds of years back. In addition, the choices we make now are always intrinsically connected to the information we have at the moment as well as our view of the future. Additionally, the information and knowledge that societies or individuals use to make decisions are themselves dependent on history, culture, values as well as on the decision maker's level of education, character and experience.

The aim of Future Studies is to discover, evaluate and suggest possible or probable futures and thereby help people to go through the various alternative futures they want so that they can use this information in their decision making. In this way, it is possible to make effective plans to enhance the chances of achieving the best possible future. Futurologists use research and innovations from other disciplines when sketching out the various possible, probable and desirable futures that await us.

It is not possible to directly research the future. It does not exist in the same way as the present and past do. Instead, it exists in the present as intentions, which we can explore. We can also explore the matters and phenomena that will affect the future. The future is not predestined either. We can explore alternative paths of development so long as we remember that different outcomes have different levels of probability. Because it is possible to influence the quality of

the future by individual decisions, it is naturally important to define what kind of choices lead to the best and most approved of state of the future. For that reason, discussion concerning values takes on essential importance in the Future Studies programme.

Study packages and learning outcomes

Upon completion of the study package, students have a conception of the academic tradition in the research of the future, a basic knowledge of the academic thought on the future, and knowledge of the central concepts and methods in the discipline. Students can explain the significance of methodological choices in research as well as the connections between theoretical approaches, points of departure concerning philosophy of science and methods. They can apply the perspectives and methods of their expertise in Future Studies in their own research.

Courses

Basic Studies, 25 ECTS cr:

700714P Future Thinking and Future Scenarios, 5 ECTS cr

700715P Introduction to Futures Studies, 5 ECTS cr

700716P Methods of Futures Studies, 5 ECTS cr

700717P Methods of Futures Studies in Practice, 5 ECTS cr

700713P Thematic Course in Futures Studies, 5 ECTS cr

Tutkintorakenteisiin kuulumattomat opintokokonaisuudet ja -jaksot

700714P: Future Thinking and Future Scenarios, 5 op

700715P: Introduction to Futures Studies, 5 op

700716P: Methods of Futures Studies, 5 op

700717P: Methods of Futures Studies in Practice, 5 op

700713P: Thematic Course in Futures Studies, 5 op

Opintojaksojen kuvaukset

Tutkintorakenteisiin kuulumattomien opintokokonaisuuksien ja -jaksojen kuvaukset

700714P: Future Thinking and Future Scenarios, 5 op

Voimassaolo: 01.08.2012 -

Opiskelumuoto: Basic Studies

Laji: Course

Vastuuyksikkö: Faculty of Humanities

Arvostelu: 1 - 5, pass, fail

Opettajat: Urpilainen, Erkki Juhani

Opintokohteen kielet: Finnish

Leikkaavuudet:

ay700714P Scenario Thinking (OPEN UNI) 5.0 op

Voidaan suorittaa useasti: Kyllä

ECTS Credits:

5 ECTS credits

Language of instruction:

Finnish

Timing:

Period I

Learning outcomes:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to recognise and name the main contributors and the central national and international communities of Futures Studies; students will also be able to use the material produced by the aforementioned in their studies. Students will understand the nature of Futures Studies and how knowledge about the future is acquired. Upon completion of an assignment, students will be able to apply scenario thinking and the morphological field method for perceiving future options and analysing future trends.

Contents:

The course offers the basic knowledge of future thinking and pre-emptive attitudes. The course will introduce the main concepts of researching the future and future thinking. In addition, the course will teach scenario work.

Learning activities and teaching methods:

Lectures; group work; independent study; exercises; and online discussion

Recommended or required reading:

Kamppinen, Matti & Kuusi, Osmo & Söderlund, Sari (eds.) (2003) *Tulevaisuudentutkimus. Perusteet ja sovellukset* ; other literature offered during the course

Assessment methods and criteria:

Independent study in an online environment, working in small groups

Grading:

0–5

Person responsible:

Erkki Urpilainen

700715P: Introduction to Futures Studies, 5 op

Voimassaolo: 01.08.2012 -

Opiskelumuoto: Basic Studies

Laji: Course

Vastuuyksikkö: Faculty of Humanities

Arvostelu: 1 - 5, pass, fail

Opettajat: Urpilainen, Erkki Juhani

Opintokohteen kielet: Finnish

Leikkaavuudet:

ay700715P Foundations of Futures Studies (OPEN UNI) 5.0 op

Voidaan suorittaa useasti: Kyllä

ECTS Credits:

5 ECTS credits

Language of instruction:

Finnish

Timing:

Period II

Learning outcomes:

Upon completion of the course, students will have a clear understanding of the uniqueness of futures knowledge and the philosophical foundation it builds, as well as the scientific premises of Futures Studies (e.g. systematic ontology, holistic thinking, normativity, and values). Students will know the historical milestones of the field and

the traditions of perceiving the future in different eras, as well as the methods and central theories of Futures Studies.

Contents:

The course will introduce the concept of information in Futures Studies, as well as the ontological (i.e. what Futures Studies is) and epistemological (i.e. how to get information about the future) foundations of the field. In addition, the course will introduce the aims and significance of Futures Studies in society.

Learning activities and teaching methods:

Online teaching; online assignments; independent study

Assessment methods and criteria:

Independent assignments in an online environment; essay

Grading:

0–5

Person responsible:

Erkki Urpilainen

700716P: Methods of Futures Studies, 5 op

Voimassaolo: 01.08.2012 -

Opiskelumuoto: Basic Studies

Laji: Course

Vastuuyksikkö: Faculty of Humanities

Arvostelu: 1 - 5, pass, fail

Opettajat: Urpilainen, Erkki Juhani

Opintokohteen kielet: Finnish

Leikkaavuudet:

ay700716P Future Research Methods (OPEN UNI) 5.0 op

Voidaan suorittaa useasti: Kyllä

ECTS Credits:

5 ECTS credits

Language of instruction:

Finnish

Timing:

Period III

Learning outcomes:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to assess the challenges of interdisciplinary research questions and perceive the methodological field of Futures Studies, as well as the possibilities and challenges of using various methods together. The methods studied include: the Delphi Method, SSM, CLA, participatory methods, modelling, and creative methods. After the course, students will be able to compare Futures Studies with other sciences and scientific fields, and will be able to choose methods appropriate to their own research

Contents:

The aim of the course is to equip students with basic knowledge regarding how to understand and apply the scientific methods of Futures Studies. The focus is on different research questions that allow for the utilisation of the methods of Futures Studies. In addition, the course familiarises students with the challenges and possibilities of interdisciplinary research.

Learning activities and teaching methods:

Lectures; independent work; exercises; online discussion and the use of a research tool

Recommended or required reading:

Kamppinen, Matti & Kuusi, Osmo & Söderlund, Sari (eds.) (2003) *Tulevaisuudentutkimus. Perusteet ja sovellukset* ; Bell, Wendell, *Foundations of Futures Studies*. Volumes I and II; other literature offered during the course

Assessment methods and criteria:

Online exercises and taking part in Real Time Delphi research

Grading:

0–5

Person responsible:

Erkki Urpilainen

700717P: Methods of Futures Studies in Practice, 5 op

Voimassaolo: 01.08.2012 -

Opiskelumuoto: Basic Studies

Laji: Course

Vastuuyksikkö: Faculty of Humanities

Arvostelu: 1 - 5, pass, fail

Opettajat: Urpilainen, Erkki Juhani

Opintokohteen kielet: Finnish

Leikkaavuudet:

ay700717P Futures Research Methods in Practice (OPEN UNI) 5.0 op

Voidaan suorittaa useasti: Kyllä

ECTS Credits:

5 ECTS credits

Language of instruction:

Finnish and English

Timing:

Period IV

Learning outcomes:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to apply a Futures Studies research method of their choosing to their own research.

Contents:

The aims of the course are: To deepen the future thinking of students; to apply a futures view in research; to deepen the knowledge gained from earlier courses (the philosophical theory of science, ontology, epistemology, and methodology); scientific writing; argumentation; and introducing science as a profession. The emphasis of the course is on familiarising students with the methods and practices of Futures Studies, and introducing the basics of scientific argumentation and research.

Learning activities and teaching methods:

Lectures; exercises in the virtual environment *Second Life* and *Moodle*

Prerequisites and co-requisites:

Completion of the course *700716P Methods of Futures Studies* required

Assessment methods and criteria:

Independent assignment

Grading:

0–5

Person responsible:

Erkki Urpilainen

700713P: Thematic Course in Futures Studies, 5 op

Voimassaolo: 01.08.2005 -

Opiskelumuoto: Basic Studies

Laji: Course

Vastuuyksikkö: Faculty of Humanities

Arvostelu: 1 - 5, pass, fail

Opettajat: Urpilainen, Erkki Juhani

Opintokohteen kielet: Finnish

Leikkaavuudet:

ay700713P Changing futures theme (OPEN UNI) 5.0 op

Voidaan suorittaa useasti: Kyllä

ECTS Credits:

5 ECTS credits

Language of instruction:

English (Finnish)

Timing:

June

Learning outcomes:

The aim of the course is to introduce students to current themes, methods and tools of Futures Studies through research conducted by the international Futures science community.

Contents:

The theme of the course varies annually, and the course is organised as an intensive, special course or summer school.

Assessment methods and criteria:

Varies annually, depending on theme

Grading:

0–5

Person responsible:

Erkki Urpilainen