

- Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines
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Imagination and governing the future (2PS2165)

Filières concernées	Nombre d'heures	Validation	Crédits ECTS
Master of Arts en innovation, orientation Innovation et société	Séminaire: 2 ph	Voir ci-dessous	5
Pilier principal M ScS - anthropologie	Séminaire: 2 ph	Voir ci-dessous	5
Pilier principal M ScS - géographie humaine	Séminaire: 2 ph	Voir ci-dessous	5
Pilier principal M ScS - migration et citoyenneté	Séminaire: 2 ph	Voir ci-dessous	5
Pilier principal M ScS - migration et citoyenneté (EuMIGS)	Séminaire: 2 ph	Voir ci-dessous	5
Pilier principal M ScS - psychologie et éducation	Séminaire: 2 ph	Voir ci-dessous	5
Pilier principal M ScS - sociologie	Séminaire: 2 ph	Voir ci-dessous	5
Pilier secondaire M ScS - anthropologie	Séminaire: 2 ph	Voir ci-dessous	5
Pilier secondaire M ScS - géographie humaine	Séminaire: 2 ph	Voir ci-dessous	5
Pilier secondaire M ScS - migration et citoyenneté	Séminaire: 2 ph	Voir ci-dessous	5
Pilier secondaire M ScS - psychologie et éducation	Séminaire: 2 ph	Voir ci-dessous	5
Pilier secondaire M ScS - sociologie	Séminaire: 2 ph	Voir ci-dessous	5

ph=période hebdomadaire, pg=période globale, j=jour, dj=demi-jour, h=heure, min=minute

Période d'enseignement:

- Semestre Printemps

Equipe enseignante

Oliver Clifford Pedersen

Contenu

This seminar explores the many ways the future is imagined. Imaginations of the future are ubiquitous, subtly shaping and governing the present, driving social transformations and movements, and informing people's actions and decisions. For example, it is imaginations of climate and biodiversity collapses underpinning Greta Thunberg's attack on the fantasies of eternal growth on a finite planet and her accusations against politicians of "stealing her future". Imaginations of more democratic institutions, reduced corruption, and human rights also contributed to igniting the Arab Spring, primarily led by young activists, and organised through social platforms, which eventually resulted in toppling governments in Tunisia, Egypt, among others. While certain individuals, such as Greta Thunberg, become the voice for specific imaginations, this process is never solitary nor devoid of tensions. Often, conflicting imaginations of future generate clashes, with different forces aiming to govern people in part through their imaginations. This seminar explores the functions and generative potential of these imaginations in the present, map the forces that work to dismantle or propagate them, and the individuals who are visibilised or invisibilised by them. In short, we explore the relationship between people's imagination and different forms of societal transformations, such as when imaginations emerge to spearhead social movements, but also how some institutions become resilient to change.

This seminar offers an interdisciplinary overview of different theories on imagination, equipping students with tools to approach the future as a research topic and understand how it can be used analytically to capture the complexities of the social world. Through case studies, students will be asked to analyse past or current social transformations, identifying the role of imaginations. They will explore who or what is fueling these imaginations, the resources used to construct them, the barriers erected against certain imaginations, and who the intended audience is for these imagined futures. Students will undertake a small research project. We will, therefore, also discuss the practical aspects of conducting research. Students are also expected to present their work at the end of the semester to receive feedback to improve their final analysis. Through the course, we will also touch upon protests, capitalism, deportations, crises, technologies of the imagination, and more.

The course will be taught in English, and most sessions will begin with a short presentation followed by a collective discussion of the required readings and/or assignments.

Forme de l'évaluation

Students are evaluated on three criteria:

Active participation

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- Preparing for each session by reading the required literature or conducting the assignment.
- Prepare questions or comments for required readings.
- Actively participating in class discussions.
- Active participation accounts for 25% of the final grade.

Written evaluation

- Produce a 4000-word essay on a historical, contemporary, or fictional case applying the theoretical models discussed during the semester.
- Identify and analyse a case focusing on the role of the future.
- This task can be achieved either individually or in groups of 2–4 students (500 words extra per student).
- The essay accounts for 50% of the final grade.

Presentation of case

- The students will do group presentations (in whatever format they see fit) of the case and its direction, which serves as a means of getting feedback.
- The oral presentation accounts for 25% of the final grade.

Documentation

A detailed list of texts and sources will be made available on Moodle.

Pré-requis

All students with a background in social sciences and interested in exploring and discussing the role of the future in the present are welcome.

Forme de l'enseignement

The first part of this seminar is dedicated to discussing key texts and concepts useful for analysing questions related to the future.

In the second part, we will focus on how to utilise these theoretical tools and apply them to different past and current cases. Students are more than welcome to suggest cases (e.g., the alt-right, deindustrialisation, Extinction Rebellion, new sub-sea tunnel). Students will select and analyse a case over the course of the seminar.

Most sessions will start with a brief presentation followed by a collective discussion of the required readings or assignments.

Objectifs d'apprentissage

Au terme de la formation l'étudiant-e doit être capable de :

- Discuss and critically evaluate theories of the future
- Design and execute a small research project with imagination and the future at its core
- Analyse complex societal phenomena and discern the role of the future

Compétences transférables

- Carry out research project
- Apply theoretical perspectives to understand current societal issues
- Simulate creative and critical thinking
- Discuss ideas and theoretical concepts