

## Letter to students in LSP530

Hi!

I hope you will enjoy the course as I have. I've got some recommendations for you so that you can get the most out of this course in the way I hoped I had. There are several strengths to this course and the biggest one is the discussions! Be sure to attend them and be prepared, look over your keywords and think about things you want to talk about before you get there. Are there any questions you have about the book? Write them down and bring them to the discussion.

Another strength (and sometimes weakness) is the list of books, they vary quite a bit. I'd say this is mostly a strength as you will probably be pushed out of your comfort zone in terms of what you usually read and you might find that you like more than you thought. Or even that you didn't really know what you liked at all. This is also a weakness in terms that is unlikely that you will like all of the books (I didn't), hopefully Magnus has now removed the less-liked books. He knows which they were.

So, what can you expect from the course? A lot of discussion, a lot of reading and hopefully some insights into literature that you didn't have before. This course might not be the same for you as it was for me so I wouldn't say to expect too much. Go into the course with an open mind and see where you end up!

Now the advice that I got in the beginning of the course but didn't take to heart.

Don't read before bed, set aside time in school to do your reading. You'll remember a lot more and focus a lot better if you do that. Also, be sure to make notes as you go, you will be glad you had them.

Don't be afraid of reading, it really doesn't take as long as you probably think. Get started early and read an hour or two every day and you'll finish the books without any issues what so ever in just a few days leaving you time to do your reflections and keywords without stress.

Be sure to talk in the discussion and bring questions to class. You will have plenty to discuss and you will get a lot more out of it if you actively participate. The last and most important advice: **Start your journal right away**. Ask Magnus if you aren't sure what items you need or just start writing anything down. Just start the journal, it will make the final hand-in and the course in general a lot easier and you'll regret it if you don't. Trust me.

Enjoy the course!

## **What are the strenghts and weaknesses of the course?**

The strength of the course is that it is, if you enjoy reading, really fun! You wont have to memorize formulas or understand hard concepts. You will need to put the hours into it but you will experience and learn way more about general things than you would in a math course. Do not look at reading the books as a choir. Look forward to it!

A weakness of the course is that there are a lot of words and concepts you will need to understand right away. What is a keyword? What should I write in free-writes? How do I analyze this text? Don't be afraid to ask questions and be prepared for the sessions!

Some books are also worse than others that is a weakness...

## **What to expect of the course?**

Expect long Tuesday reading sessions if you are a procrastinator. You will meet many persons from all over Chalmers.

## **How to make the most of the course?**

Work on your journal actively over time! And organize it! Then the portfolio wont be as much of a chore to work on. Losing papers with your notes suck. Don't procrastinate reading books either. Try to get into a habit of reading.

## Letter to the students on the next run of the course

### **What are the strengths and weaknesses of the course?**

The strengths are that apart from your 7.5 MTS credits, you will also get tools and experience which will enrich your own personal reading, probably for a long time to come. Another strength is that it is a fun course, and very different from your other Chalmers' courses (it was for me at least!). Also, it has been great to meet new people from different study programs who are all interested in literature and reading. The only weakness of the course I can come up with is that you are expected to spend quite a few hours each week on reading, independent of the workload in your other courses. But hey, those things always sort themselves out. Just enjoy the course!

### **What should I expect from the course?**

This is not like any other MTS course. It will spark your interest in reading again and you will read (and learn to appreciate) pieces that you perhaps wouldn't have picked yourself. You should also be prepared to actually spend several hours per week reading, attend the seminars, and write in your journal. Some weeks it can be hard to keep up with the reading, especially if you have a heavy workload in your other courses, and that is fine, but aim at always attending the seminars anyway. The discussions in the seminar will for sure help you.

### **How do I make the most of the course?**

Well, I have three small pieces of advice to give:

- Start working on your journal right away! It was incredibly helpful to have the habit to spend a few hours after each seminar to write all my thoughts down. I appreciated my journal a lot while writing my portfolio.
- Research! Something that helped me appreciate the pieces we read during the course is to read about the setting and the author before you start reading. In this course, you will perhaps encounter some genres that you are not familiar with (plays, poems) and it can be challenging to understand the pieces while reading. But if you have done your homework before and read a bit about the piece and the author, you will grasp the piece much faster and the reading becomes a much more enjoyable experience.
- Take your time! To me, it took many seminars before I felt comfortable speaking up in front of the class. I am usually not the quiet type but I was not used to sharing my reading experience with others, and it made me feel uncomfortable in the beginning. If you are like me, relax! It is alright to take your time, for some of us this was something that we needed to learn too :)

Dear future students,

You have decided to attend Fiction for Engineers. Maybe you're already a frequent reader or maybe like me you simply wanted those 7.5 hp MTS. Whatever your intentions are I can with confidence say that you have made a good choice. For me this course was the first course in a long while where I felt a sense of freedom. This course is not about learning specific facts or producing certain results. This course aims for you as the student to develop and deepen a relationship to literature.

At first this was a bit weird. Otherwise I'm used to doing what I'm told instead of doing what I find interesting. Being creative and finding your topics if interests can therefore be a bit tricky. But once you start reflecting over what you have read you start asking questions. And in this course no question is too small or too off topic. Anything can be discussed and any opinion can be raised. This really motivated me. Here you could let your mind wander off wherever it pleases without being concerned that you are wasting time on something unrelated to the course.

Make sure to go to the seminars and write down the topics that are discussed. They are great for starting journal entries. I myself quite enjoyed the seminars. Being engaged in conversation about the topics in an open and inviting way made the book more enjoyable.

Create a journal structure as soon as possible so that it becomes easy to write entries. When writing an entry don't try to make it perfect. Just try to get your thoughts down. Use bulletpoints if you need to. Afterwards you can rewrite the texts if you want to include them in your portfolio.

And lastly, you don't have to enjoy a book to have an opinion about it. A bad book doesn't necessarily have to result in a bad reading experience.

Good luck!

Martin

Hello new students to the course Fiction for Engineers!

I hope that you will have a nice semester with this course. It is a very nice course if you like to read, for me it really widened my selection of books since it forced me to read books that I would not pick up myself.

The beginning of the course can be very tough since it is a really new mindset (if you haven't done a similar course before). A tip from me is to accept that you might not contribute to all points because you thought of other things while reading. Another tip is to really focus on taking notes and quotes while reading, it will help a lot on the seminars and later on for your portfolio.

I would say that one weakness with this course is that it is "only" 7.5 credits which means that you have to at least one study period has to study 125%, which can be demanding from time to time. However, the next study period you can instead study 75%, which is really nice!

Kind regards,  
Previous Student

Hello Student,

So, you've decided to take English Literature for Engineers. Congratulations.

I wonder, however, over your reason for taking this course. Perhaps you're like me and enjoy reading, perhaps you just want something different than the usual courses at Chalmers, or perhaps you're taking this course thinking it's going to be easy. It's just a little reading after all.

Well, a little reading can become a lot of work if you're not prepared.

Therefore, my first recommendation to you is to get a journal. You can have a physical one or one on your computer. Doesn't matter. Your choice. But get yourself a journal. And when I say 'a journal', I mean **one** journal. Don't be like me and keep your notes all over the place. Trust me, the course is long and you're going to lose them. So, pick a tool and stick to it.

My second recommendation is to start the weekly reading assignment early on. Don't leave it until the weekend, you're not going to make it. Trust me, it takes longer than you think, especially when you have to take notes and think of keywords, (and by notes, I mean reactions to your reading, anything really that catches your interest).

Third recommendation: do the work. For each seminar you need to have a total of 5 items in your journal: keywords, reaction to reading, reaction to discussion, brief analysis, and creative starter. Do them. Some are done before the seminar and some are done after. Doesn't matter, do them. If you do them, you'll be making yourself a huge favor by the end of the course when it's time to get your portfolio together.

Fourth recommendation: go to the seminars. It might not have been possible to change the time for the seminars, at which point you're also stuck with late night 3-hour seminars, and I get it. It's late. But go to the seminars. How are you going to fill in your reaction to discussion if you're not there at the discussion?

Which brings me to my fifth, and last, recommendation: participate! Don't worry about asking questions or bringing up a topic you want to discuss. This is the point of the discussions. And if there is something you're wondering about or didn't understand, chances are someone else is too. So, talk!

Well, that's all I can think of as far helping you goes. This course is different, and it might feel like a break from the usual stuff at Chalmers. But don't let that fool you into a false sense of security. You still got to do the work. Apart from that I can honestly say that this has been a fun course. I've enjoyed all the pieces we've read, some more than others, and I've had a lot of fun discussing with my fellow students. The best part for me has been that I've rediscovered my passion for books. So, whatever your reason is for taking this course, I hope you will enjoy it as much as I have.

Sincerely yours.

## Letter to the students on the next run of the course

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One of my favourite things with this course is that you get to discuss what you are reading and help each other out as much as you want during this course. The coffee-breaks are great and it would have been nice to maybe get to know each other even better during these breaks and drink some coffee or tea together.

To make the most of this course I would say start journaling a lot from the start. Every thought, every idea or theory you might notice is something you might want to build on later. Help yourself even from the start and write things down, even during the discussions! Someone else might say something really helpful.

Hi

To start I would like to welcome you to the course and congratulate you on an excellent choice. My experience with the course last year was fantastic and the literary experiences I had will stay with me for a long time and some of the tools I learned have already made it into my reading routine. Next, I would like to offer you some advice on how to best handle the course. I would first recommend you get over yourself. If you are anything like me, you like your writing to be close to perfect and would rather not write anything at all than write something subpar. This is silly and will only hold you back in this course. If you have a thought or idea write it down in your journal. No matter how silly it might seem at that moment you never know in what way it might come in handy later in the course and you can always rework it later. This lead nicely into my next point, write and write a lot. You will thank yourself toward the end of the course when it became time to turn in your portfolio. Also, don't anticipate that you will remember things that you don't write down because you probably won't. Try to be somewhat organised when keeping notes. Marking words in the book without any real explanation might seem fine at that moment but you will curse yourself later when your skimming through the books full of markings you don't quite remember why you made. Also, from my personal experience, I would recommend writing down quotes with page numbers and a short explanation of why you wanted to write it down in a separate notebook or document and not in the book itself. Simply underlining a quote might be quicker but all the flipping through pages you will be forced to do later when you are looking for that one quote that you remember making will quickly eat up that time you originally saved. I'm writing from experience. I would also like to say that this is a course that will take up a fair bit of time. Simply getting through the novels take time and when you are taking notes at the same time, and you should be taking notes at the same time, it takes even more time but if your experience is anything like mine it will be well worth it. I would also urge you to not panic at this point. I distinctly remember being both overwhelmed and confused at what I was supposed to be doing, and writing, at the beginning of the course, but it all became clear later. I would like to end with wishing you the best of luck with the course and I hope that you find it as enjoyable and worthwhile as I did.

Sincerely Pontus Gustafsson



## Letter to future students.

### **What are the strenghts and weaknesses of the course?**

Strenghts? It is a very good course, if you like to read of course. You get to read a lot of works of different types, some of which I am sure you would not have read had you not signed up for this course, which in my opinion was great. Another positive is that you get to discuss literature with people who have more or less voluntarily chosen to participate, which was a new experience for me. The discussions themselves are also great.

I actually struggle to come up with weaknesses. One or two of the individual novels were a bit of a disappointment, but that is of course to be expected. One little thing is that it takes a few seminars for the discussion to actually work as good as it did in the end.

### **What to expect of the course?**

The first thing you must expect is to read a lot, that you of course already expected. You should also expect to be "exposed" to many different types of words. You should also expect to write a lot. For me, this was clearly a positive, since I felt that learned a lot about writing from the "freewriting" sessions.

Expect also that the discussions will be very fruitful and interesting, especially later on in the course. It takes a few weeks to get things running smoothly.

### **How to make the most of the course?**

I already told you to expect to read a lot, but it is more to it than to "simply" read a few hundred pages, how you read is also of great importance. Of course it comes down to personal preference in the end, but I would recommend reading a little every day, and read carefully. The works that was allowed to take time was the works I could discuss better during the seminars, whereas I was unable to really participate in the discussion about the ones which I had to read in a day or two.

You should also make use of the lighter reading load in the first few weeks and read the entirety of the narratology resource. Having words for things that appear when you read simplify the discussion a lot.

The final thing, which I should have taken note of, is to have an open mind about literature. Everybody has their own taste, but I suppose I was to insular in my reading experience to expect that a book about colonialism and the victorian expectations on upper-class women would be one of my greatest reading experiences ever.

This course is really different from other courses, so that is something to keep in mind. There is a seminar one evening every week which doesn't seem like much but keep in mind, you actually have to read several books as well. If you normally never read novels this will obviously be much more challenging than if you're on the other side of the spectrum and read a book every week anyway.

I chose the course both because it seemed like a fun MTS alternative and because the evening seminars made it feel manageable to take it alongside my usual studies. The seminars were really fun for me but if you're not the type who loves to discuss things it might be three very long hours, so try to take part in the discussion and try to care about the discussion, it is what you make of it!

First of all, write in your journal both during your reading (after every chapter or something if you're like me and don't want to break the immersion) and especially during the seminars. It's surprising how much you forget things that happened a few weeks ago so this definitely saves a lot of time when it's time to put your final assignment together. You can also watch your progress in how you read and analyse literature which is quite fun. I didn't expect to develop much since I already read a lot but I have definitely developed my way of thinking and talking about literature which is an unexpected bonus.

You will read a lot of different kinds of literature so to wrap things up, I'd strongly recommend you to not let your prior opinions and preferences affect you too much. If you love the book it's certainly a bonus and judging from the range of literature we read you will probably really like some of it, but when you face something that is *not* your thing, try to at least make something out of it by writing down why you like and don't like it and why, or something like that. At least you can have some interesting discussions about it during the seminar and get some nice journal entries for free. Sometimes talking about what you don't like is easier than to talk about what you like, and it's a good opportunity for self-reflection as well. Make the best of it!

Dear fellow student,

As I suspect, you must be someone who enjoys reading. This is exactly a course for you. You might have read one or several genres of books which had some specific difficulty grade, but in this course, you will witness from an easy read to a very hard read literature.

To make the most out of the course, please do read the book/ text thoroughly beforehand and try to rethink what you understood of the text, if you have time before the session.

My advice for you is to record what you learned on your journal no later than one week after each session. Try to do it in one place, might be a book or a drive folder or an Overleaf document with different files. Personally, I had an easy time compared to my course-mates, because I recorded everything in an Overleaf document in a specific format which I attach by the end of this letter. Because it will help you a lot by the end, when you are to set up a portfolio, then you will not forget or miss the good points that you discussed in the session or in your head to yourself.

My Overleaf format:

```
\newpage
\section{Study week-2-Short stories}
\subsection{Reactions to reading}
\subsection{Reactions to discussion}
\subsection{Keywords}
\subsection{A brief analysis of an important passage in the
text}
\subsection{Creative impulse or generator}
```

Best regards and wishes, Kopika Kugathanan, MPBME-2.

**What are the strenghts and weaknesses of the course?**

There is a lot to read. If you are not in the habit of reading every day, you should definitely start with that. This can be tough in the beginning, and also in the second part of the course when the tempo is increased, however, it feels great when you do get into that habit and you might want to keep it up even after the course.

**What to expect of the course?**

If you, like me, don't have a lot of experience with analyzing fiction, this course will be an eye-opener. One of the most important things I realized is that there is no strict right or wrong, it is your interpretation of the text which is based on your knowledge and experiences.

**How to make the most of the course?**

Start reading early. It is possible to read a book the night before the seminar, but you won't have time to reflect upon what you have read. Reading a bit every day will give you time to process it in a deeper way and notice more details in the book, at least that is my experience.

You are expected to use quotes from the literature. If you own the copy of the book, I found it easy to have a pen when reading and underlining parts of the text that I found interesting. This will give you a lot of quotes to work with and I found it much easier than having to actually write down the quote which takes time and interrupts your reading.

Also, do all the journaling right away. It is fine if the entries are not perfect at the beginning of the course as this will show improvement in your portfolio later on. If all the entries are done at the end of the course, you will not only have forgotten many things, but it will also not show any improvement which is one of the goals for the course.

January 18, 2020

Dear reader

You have a wonderful fall term ahead you, filled with the magical world of literature. I hope you are as excited as I was when I started this journey 5 months ago. I did not know what to expect, what books we were going to read and what topics the course would cover. Luckily, this course has a good mix of books that are both thought provoking and good reads. Furthermore, the class discussions have been great to widen your views of the stories. People interpret books differently and notice different things, and it might feel like people were reading a different book than you.

To make most of the course you should come prepared to each seminar with a your list of worked through list of keywords, maybe a discussion topic, and generally a good understanding of the text you've read. That could be in the form of quotes or bullet points.

Finally, as a reminder, always write a summary of your thoughts of the passages you read before the class, and to summarize your thoughts after each class. This makes the portfolio work much easier. I.e. keep good notes of the books you read!

Best regards

Hi

Before I started this course last year, I had doubts about my own interest in literature, and my previous experience in literature. Before the course, I had only read certain books such as Harry Potter and The Hunger Games, but I had never familiarized myself with plays, poems or different types of short stories. It does not matter if you have not read all types of literature before - that's why you take the course! Don't worry, there will be so many opportunities to learn and explore!

Don't expect a normal Chalmers course, expect something completely else. A safe zone where you can learn from others, speak your mind if you have a different opinion or interpretation, and just have a lot of fun.

I believe the strength of the course are the seminars, and specifically the discussions on the seminars. If you haven't had the time to read the complete book - still go to the seminar! Everyone else can help you fill in the gaps if needed, and you can still participate in the discussion!

The only weakness with the course is that during some weeks, it might be difficult to read everything. Maybe you have an exam you need to study for, or perhaps Netflix has released new episodes of your favourite TV show. It is fine, there is time to catch up - and if you need help to understand something, ask your classmates!

Don't be too hard on your own reading, and try to (if you dare) to participate in the discussions as much as you can. It will be fun, and others will definitely have a completely different opinion than you!

Kind regards!

### **What are the strengths and weaknesses of the course?**

The course is a very nice way to get away from ordinary Chalmers courses. It's like a cozy book club with many learning objectives in how to read literature and fiction, which is absolutely a strength. It doesn't feel like you are supposed to do homework when reading a book, it's just something that you do on your free time.

Weaknesses could be that you are supposed to be there every Wednesday night for two study periods. This could be very hard to fit in your schedule if you have other activities at night time. But see that you can indeed show up in order to get out the most of the course.

### **What to expect of the course?**

You are supposed to read a lot of text sometimes. This can be difficult, as this doesn't always fit with other deadlines from other courses, but try to read everything that you are supposed to do. Also, take notes from the very start of the course in order to keep track of your reading and always keep your journal close to take notes and quotes. This will make the final assignment in the course very easy to complete.

### **How to make the most of the course?**

Be active and creative during the sessions. Share ideas and interpretations with others. This will make the whole experience of reading a lot more fun and inspiring. Don't be afraid to share these things and how you read the text. Everybody can interpret a text differently, but it is important to gather textual evidence in order to support your interpretation.

## Letter to the future

### *LSP530 – Fiction for Engineers*

Congrats on picking this course! I had a lot of fun taking it. I especially enjoyed the seminars when we got to discuss the pieces we had read in a free and creative way. Good luck!

### Strengths and weaknesses of the course

**Strengths:** You will read books that you probably wouldn't find or pick out for yourself. It is also very rewarding to have a whole class of other students reading and discussing the same books – it makes you understand them so much better!

**Weaknesses:** There is not a very clear MTS connection, so you may get the feeling that it's not related to your program (for better or worse). This course is also relatively time demanding. If you don't have the habit of reading a lot on your spare time, it can be a challenge to find enough time to read everything and produce valid journal entries.

### What to expect of the course

You will read several different books and texts; some of the you'll like more, some you'll like less. Inside, and outside, the seminars, you will learn different ways to analyze a text. Also, expect to spend a lot of time reading the novels!

### How to make the most of the course

My best tip is to (surprise surprise!) try and keep up with your journaling during the whole course. If you have thoughts on something that you read, try to write it down right away. I would also encourage you to come to all of the seminars. The discussions are a great inspiration for journal entries, and often really fun!



## Letter to students of 2020

This course gives you a great opportunity to do something that is most likely different from other courses you're taking. Don't be scared off by that! It's probably quite good for you to take a course where there is no right or wrong answer. Keep an open mind, take other people's opinions and arguments to mind and see what you can learn from it.

There is obviously a lot of reading in store for you, but there is also a great deal of writing to do. I did not do all the pieces in my journal each week, and I really regret that now that exam week is here. Don't read the book on the last day, try to do it as early as you can so you have some time to write down what you thought of it and what keywords and themes you can find. That will help you to be up to speed in the seminar: you'll have something to talk about in your group and you won't feel out of place. However, don't be afraid of talking and discussing anyway. The best part of the seminars was when you got to hear what people thought, even if they agreed with you or not. It was really fun to go to the seminars, and it weighs up for them taking place in the evening.

# Letter for next year's students

## **What are the strengths and weaknesses of the course?**

The biggest strengths of the course is that it's fun. It will give you a lot insights and different viewpoints, you will learn a lot about things you haven't considered before. The seminars are also great.

The course requires that you put down a lot of time. If you study 125% during one of the study periods it might be a bit stressful. Reading is what takes the most time. At some point during the course you might have to rush through a book to be able to finish it in time for the seminar. This can be an unpleasant experience and you may not have made much sense of what you have read.

## **What to expect of the course?**

You can expect it to be fun and different from the other courses you have taken. But also be prepared to put down a lot of time.

## **How to make the most of the course?**

You make the most out of the course if you're being active while you read. Take notes, journal. Don't skip journaling. It's good to journal before the seminars so that you can gather your thoughts.

Definitely go to the seminars, even if you haven't been able to finish a book. The seminars might have been the thing that gave me the most.

Have an open mind when you start reading a new book. Don't judge a book too quickly or try to answer things like, do I like this book?