

## Letter to students

Hello guys!

First let me tell you that you did a great choice by selecting this course, it has been one of my favorites of all my studies! This course will make you read books you would (for most people) not read in another context and will lead you to discussions about different notions and issues these books raise.

If you want to get as most as possible from the course, I would recommend that you actively participate during the seminar sessions by suggesting new analyzes and discussing with others about theirs. This is how you will improve in oral expression and analyzing skills. Moreover, don't hesitate to take notes of the main ideas that were raised during the session, this can facilitate you the journaling-job. And do not forget to take some time after each session to fill your journal with everything you remember; it can be difficult to remember some details at the end of the semester, when you do your portfolio. If you have time, start writing down some analyzes, as they will be good starts for the items of your portfolio.

Do not forget or procrastinate about the creative starters! It is a real part of the experience of this course, even if I know that it feels a little bit confusing at first, when you don't really know what is expected from you. But the great thing is: you can do approximately whatever you want! So please use this opportunity to try out some things.

Enjoy this course! I hope that you will be able to do it on campus, but even if we did it remotely, Magnus still made it a great experience.

Best regards,

Laetitia

## **Dear Student!**

Here is a short letter as to describe what you might expect during the course in fiction for engineers.

### **Strenghts and weaknesses of the course:**

This is a very fun course if you enjoy literature and might have become disconnected with reading during your time at chalmers. If you have reflections on the books you read (and you will of course) then you will have a great time during the seminars. The course feels a lot like a book-club, and Magnus (the examiner) usually invites to friendly conversation and always takes time for questions.

If you have a lot on your plate the reading might take a surprising amount of time, but get in a habit of reading some before you sleep and you will be fine.

Another downside can be if you are paired with some people you don't agree with in a breakout room, but there is always a way, but it's more fun with engaged people to talk to.

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

The course consists of reading books followed by seminars consisting mainly of students discussing their reactions to the book, with some other tasks sprinkled in, like brief analyses and freewrites (these are quick and fun). In between the reading and the seminars is the journaling, try to stay on top writing it, because you wish you had written more once it is time for the portfolio (this is a document where you present 20 items from your journal) the portfolio is kind of the exam in this course.

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

Like mentioned, stay on top of writing your journal. The journal consists of keywords and your reactions to your own reading as well as to discussions during the seminars. And when you have a good subject, this is where you also put your creative starters, which are pieces of your own writing (or other creative stuff). Except for that I think you should enjoy a free environment which is so very different from all the other courses, learn to collaborate and understand others. Learn how to express your point of view whilst understanding someone else's that might be completely different but just as viable/plausible.

I think this was a great course, and I hope you will feel the same, good luck!

Kind regards

Stefan E.

# Letter to Future Students

January 2021

You're about to start a really fun course. Congratulations on a good choice! You finally get to read every week even when you have a lot to do, and you will not even have to feel guilty about it since you are actually studying. You will also get to try a variety of different genres, and might find something new that you really like. If you're like me, it might be a very different course from what you are used to, so I will try to give you some tips on how to handle it.

Maybe you have not taken an evening course before. Seminars taking place in the evening means they will not be as likely to coincide with other classes, but also means you need to plan your day different as usual as you are essentially working late. Sometimes that means taking the recharge time you would usually have in the evening and move it to another time of the day. And sometimes it means having to get other courses work done one day earlier than you usually would because you can not spend the evening studying.

Another thing that might be new is the discussion based seminars. Unlike maths lectures, these seminars are often about exploring many sides of something together and sharing personal opinions. Try to think of something before each seminar that you would like to discuss. It could be something you are confused about, something you relate to or something you would like to change about the book you have been reading. The important bit is that you feel like you can spend a while talking about it without getting bored or running out of things to discuss. I personally felt that I got the most from a seminar when I had done this beforehand, even if I ended up discussing a completely different subject instead, because it meant I had reflected a little more on the book. So it was effective even on the days when I did not feel confident enough to share the subject I had initially thought of.

Finally, spend some time early in the course thinking about how to keep your journal. While reading, it is often nice to have a physical book to write in, which you can bring with you when reading. If it's a nice book it also adds to the general feeling that the course is actually just a book club rather than a class. But when putting together the portfolio in the end it is of course easier to have a digital journal from which you can quickly copy the entries you want to use. I personally thought it was worth spending the time copying from my handwritten journal, but if you don't want to spend that time you might want to go for the digital option instead.

# Letter to Students

Hi there,

Welcome to the course. This course is truly unique, and you will be guaranteed to leave with insight into literature and your role as an engineer in society.

The weakness of this course happens to be its strength. You are probably used to having a crystal clear sense of direction. You might be used to choosing only the mathematics you need or just enough text to explain what you did. It requires some work on your part, but it will eventually make sense to you. It is fundamentally different from the hard sciences but a chance for you to strengthen that discipline. It is like learning a useful new language.

I went into this expecting another experience. I am an avid reader, but not getting to choose what you read requires more work. It is a good thing to leave your comfort zone, and getting input from the other participants makes this course enjoyable. Hopefully, you won't have to deal with a pandemic this time around.

The journal will require that you gather your thoughts, quotes, and ideas in a way that might not come naturally. Beyond doing a little every day and writing after seminars, you should think hard about how you want to structure this. I recommend separating the different prompts into individual documents without too much cross-referencing. It might be useful to come back to a text or change the topic, but remember that perfect is the enemy of good.

Freewriting exercises will prove a useful tool for your writing. They teach us the valuable lesson of keeping apart writing and editing. In my opinion, jumping between these modes is less effective. There are great tools out there for grammar and spell checking. Use them once you feel like you have exhausted your thoughts.

Good luck, soldier.

To: The Future

Dear student of Fiction for Engineers.

Below is a compilation of useful things to keep in mind while taking this class.

**The strengths and weaknesses of the course:**

Strengths: It is a different way of studying than one might be use to at Chalmers which is refreshing. The seminars are truly fun and enjoyable, towards the end of the semester I even found that they helped relieve stress.

Weaknesses: Since the course was solely online 2020 I sense that the weaknesses I stumbled upon might not be relevant the next time around. But you are for instance most likely going to have to plow through a book or two that you don't enjoy. It is also easy to neglect the journal thus having to catch up on a lot towards the end.

**What to expect of the course**: You will read a variety of genres and most likely books that you might not have picked up in other circumstances. I was personally surprised by how close we became as a class and looked forward to the seminars way more than I at first anticipated

**How to make the most pf the course:**

- Go to every seminar, even if you're not up to speed with the reading.
- Don't forget to take notes during the group discussions.
- Decide early on how you want to journal and stick to it.
- Put notes in the books while reading to easier find quotes and relevant passages later on.
- Most of the books are cheaper to order from Adlibris than at Chalmers Store.
- Use the ability to send in parts of your journal for feedback during the course.

Sincerely, Olivia

# **Letter to the Students - LSP530**

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

One of the weaknesses with this course is that the students are not allowed to pick a book that they want to read. I think that if students could choose together what book or books they want to read then that would probably be very beneficial for the student and the teacher. Another weakness is that there is a lot of focus writing when it comes to the examination and not so much focus on oral assignments and such. It would have been positive to have a mix between oral and written examination and not only focus on writing.

The strengths of the course are many. The teacher is very good and enthusiastic. The tempo and workload is not too much if you are good at planning your studies. The lectures are also placed in a good time slot so you can focus on more advanced technical courses during the day time. The learning outcomes are very clear and the assignments are well-structured. The discussion sessions with the other students are also highlights. The MTS aspect is also a very important strength.

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

Expect to plan your reading and do it as soon as you have time and do not procrastinate. Put time aside for your other studies so you do them first and then you can finish a day by reading a couple of chapters. Be prepared to meet many new wonderful students who love to read and make friends with them when discussing books. Learn from them and listen to the teacher and you will gain something new. Expect to develop your writing skills, both analytically and creatively. Be prepared to answer questions that you may not be used to if you are a technical student.

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

Have fun when reading. Get all the books in paper form and sit down and read them. If you do not understand everything, mention that in the next discussion sessions and learn from your student friends. Start working on your Journal as soon as you can because otherwise you will be sitting with a lot of homework. Finish a book and then try to finish most of the journaling for that book as soon as you can, before the events of the book disappear from your mind. Also do not be afraid to ask questions during the lecture and share your opinions with the rest of the students. Have a positive attitude and be optimistic and the course will be a blast for you. And one more thing, do not miss any of the lectures, they are really helpful and valuable for you.

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# Letter to the next run of the course Fiction for engineers - LSP530

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**What are the strengths and weaknesses of the course?** For me a strength was how different it is from a lot of other courses I have read. It was refreshing to spend most of the course reading and then discussing it on Wednesday evenings. Even if we had the seminars from home it worked really well in my opinion. A weakness could probably be that if you have a stressful week it can be hard to relax and try to enjoy the book you are supposed to read, especially if you have a lot you need to read in a short time.

**What to expect of the course?**

Expect a different kind of layout of the course than you might be used to. It is also really nice to sit down and discuss books on Wednesday evenings.

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

Try to keep up with the reading and journal. Even if you do not write down much about each book it will be helpful when doing the portfolio. It is also good to try and write down thought and keywords while reading the books, since it is hard to remember the entire book when you have finished it. Try to also spread out the reading and not do all of it in one day.

January 18, 2021

Dear student,

I know that most letters will likely recommend you to spread out your reading over the week or to be consistent with working on your journal. For that reason, I will skip to elaborate on those and instead give three recommendation which I think are not as common, but still potential game-changers.

### **Reduce the friction in your reading**

Come up with ways to make it easier for you to (i) get into reading in case that you do not have the routine for it, and (ii) a way to collect your reading reactions in one place. For example with (i), I noticed that it would help to put away my phone on the other side of the room and light a candle to get into a "reading mood". And with (ii), I always kept a pen with me to write in the book and then I would gather all these notes in the same document on my computer after finishing the reading session or later on. It is possible to things differently, but try to settle with some routine early on and avoid making it too complicated.

### **Reflect, reflect and reflect**

Did I mention reflect? I did not think about this enough during the course, but a good thing is to reflect on your own progress in the course. While writing the portfolio it will be necessary to show your development over the course and it can be difficult to see it yourself. Thus, I would recommend to ask yourself questions at multiple points in the course such "What have I learned this week?" or "How would I have reacted to the same thing in an earlier stage of the course?". Maybe write down answers to these questions, but simply going through this in your head can also be enough to prepare you for the end of the course.

### **Find your new friends**

I strongly encourage you to attempt to keep in touch with your fellow students in the course, otherwise, it could be lost opportunity. Compared to your typical course, it seems like this course gathers students from all over Chalmers. Take the initiative to get together and discuss your readings outside of the seminars, or just hang out. Not only do you get a new set of potential friends but it also makes the seminars a lot more fun if you know the people who attend it.

And have fun!

R.K.



## **For the new students**

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

I would say the strengths of this course is that it is not as heavy as many other courses, which is especially appreciated if you read it at the same time as when you have two other courses. The seminars are also fun to participate in, and since you have a lot of interactions it is much easier and enjoyable to sit through than your average lecture, despite being 3 hours. The examiner for this course is also a strength for sure.

A weakness I felt was that at the start I was not sure about what the items you are supposed to write was expected to be like. I would have wished for there to be a clear document further explaining the purpose of the items, since it would have made it easier to start on my journaling. Another weakness was my personal dislike for some of the books read in the course, it would of course have been more enjoyable to read something in my taste. But then again challenging yourself to read books you would not normally pick up is good for you too, probably!

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

You should expect to read a lot of books you might not be a fan of. The books are quite different from each other so I would not expect anyone to like all books. You should also expect long Wednesday evenings (provided that the seminars are held that day this year too). It can be quite dragged out if you do not manage to get a discussion going, but when you do it is really rewarding. So try your best to participate in the discussions!

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

To make the most out of this course you simply need to do what everyone else is saying, to start your journaling as soon as possible. It will even out your workload greatly. You do not want to sit during exam week writing down 5 reactions to what you read weeks or months ago. I would go so far as to say, start your portfolio as soon as possible too. If you already know some items you like a little extra, why not clean them up and have them portfolio ready right away. Again, it will ease your stress.

# Letter to students of the course

January 18, 2021

Hi, if you are reading this letter then that means you have decided to take the course "Fiction for engineers".

**What are the strengths and weaknesses of the course?** The course is very different from most other courses I have taken at Chalmers. You meet once a week during the evening to discuss and analyze books which you read during the rest of the week. Over the course of the semester you will have to discuss with many different people and you can expect to get to know people from different programs this way.

The only weakness that comes to mind is that the MTS-perspective of the course is often not so obvious.

**What to expect of the course?** Expect to read a lot and potentially be introduced to genres of literature that you have not read before. The workload might seem high at the beginning of the course but when you get used to it you will get through the books fairly quickly.

**How to make the most of the course?** Start reading early and make notes! The discussions are going to be more interesting if you spend some time preparing discussion topics and carefully motivating your keywords. It is also going to lessen the work needed towards the end of the course if you write a lot in your journal during the course.

# Letter to students

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

Some of the strengths are the variety of books to read. Some of course more interesting than others, it is however more fun to have the different discussion each seminar.

A weakness this time around was the fact that it was a digital course, so everything was on zoom, making it difficult for some element. It was something that at the end of the course got better and everyone had learned to adapt to the format.

## What to expect of the course?

Lots of reading and interesting discussions. It is the discussion that makes the course fun! Discussing with people who loved a book that you disliked or the other way. Learning parts and hearing other peoples analyse and how it differs from your own.

## How to make the most of the course?

Make the time to read so you can take part and understand the discussion, making it a lot more fun! I personally find it a lot easier reading the books not digitally, which is difficult to do for all of the books, but it was worth buying the Saturday book.

# Letter

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

It's different from any other course I have taken. That is a good thing, but at first, it might feel a bit alien. You can structure your time however you want, which is good! But the course is long, and it easy to lag behind. However, if you write a little every week, and read a bit on most days, the time spent won't feel overwhelming. You can do it!

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

Expect to have fun. Really. I miss the routine of the Wednesday seminar. It's like a book club, where not all the books are great, but you get university credit. And it's an excuse to read and write more (if you ever needed a reason to do so).

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

The course will feel deceptively easy. Start early, make sure you have a plan, and write a little more than you think is necessary.

Find your weakness and work on it, whether it is the writing or the reading, it will work if you just put in the time.

Good luck!

# Letter to the next students of the course

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

The biggest strength of the course are the interesting discussions during the sessions. I really enjoyed talking about the different topics of a book. In contrast to most courses at Chalmers you will talk and engage a lot with the other people in this course. There is no strict topic or constraints and you have a lot of freedom to explore different topics. Out of the a three hour session you will be actively engaging in discussions about two and a half hours. If you are interest in books and like to having some discussions it's a lot of fun.

The weakness of this course was the timing of the sessions. I didn't enjoy the 6 to 9 pm Wednesday time slot a lot. However this was also related to the Covid restrictions, where all sessions where held online. It would have been a lot easier to engage in the discussions in the evening, while talking to others in person.

Another weakness is the amount of reading you have to do for this course. It is still a 7 credit course and you will have to read a lot each week. This can be troublesome, if you have a lot of other lectures. So if your time management isn't the best there will be some stressful weeks, especially you are a slow reader.

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

A lot of reading and discussion about the books. You will read half of a book each week and talk about the different themes or topics of this book in 3 hour sessions. Expect to make some notes, otherwise the final portfolio will be a lot more challenging to complete. The best tip I can give is to use a note making program and collect the results of your discussion sessions every week. This will make your life a lot easier. You can also expect to read a lot. Depending on your reading habits this can be a challenge for some people. You can also expect to read at least 1 book you will hate. However most of the books were interesting and not too long.

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

If you read all the books in this course and engage in all the discussion you can have a lot of fun. Try to be open for different opinions and topics .

For getting a good grade:

- Chose a program or app for writing down your comments and reading journal. I used an app called notion to collect and organize all of my comments and texts. This makes it a lot easier to write your portfolio in the end
- Make notes while reading the book and write down your thoughts after every chapter. You don't need to write a whole analysis, but every comment about small things and topics you like are really helpful for the portfolio
- Make notes in the discussions of the sessions and try to summarize them after a lecture, while this can be annoying from time to time, you will save a lot of time at the end. Trust me!
- Write your reading journal after the session or one day later, where you still remember most of the things from your session
- If you have a well written reading diary the portfolio isn't a lot of work at the end

# LSP530 - Letter to future students

Erik Strandberg

January - 2020

## **Hello, future student!**

Hey, student getting ready for 2021 years run of LSP530. I hope you are doing well and that corona has gone away and you can take this course in person. If not taking the course entirely online went smooth, but I think meeting people is always a plus.

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

The biggest strengths of this course is the weekly seminars. Having weekly discussions were you need to try to articulate something about what you have read, made me read with much more attention and care then I have done in past.

I thought speaking up was quite hard in the beginning. And I never really got good at it, especially during the sections with discussions in a bigger group. My best suggestion for you is to try to speak up more then me and get as involved as possible. I think I got more out of the course, the more I tried to be active.

I think that the above state strengths of the course makes it very dependent on your participation as a student and that you keep up every week with the course. So try to start getting into the course straight away. I think it will greatly reduce how hard you think the workload is.

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

Expect to get surprised from literature that you would not read otherwise. If you are like me you will not have read all the genres that we went over in the course. I also found myself getting fond of books that I initially did not like, due hearing other people share their perspectives and takeaways from the weekly seminars. So please, share your thoughts!

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

As stated above start reading straight away and start with the journaling straight away. If you can follow along the course I think you will get the most out of the course and I think it will make the course pass along easy for you.

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

- + The Stone Gods is awesome
- + When you don't like a book, you can make an argumentative text on some of its issues and use textual evidence and things like that and make a nice portfolio item
- There is a lot to read
- You have to think a bit about how the different books relate to the MTS-theme – it is not served to you.
- + Discussing books is actually quite fun!

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

There are some things that you have to do in your journal, and it is going to take some time beside just reading the books. I read this course at 125% the whole term, and that took a lot of energy and stress. Just so you know. Don't expect to do everything in this course on your free time.

There are some fun books to be read, and some fun analyses to be made. Enjoy.

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

Start journaling right now. Just write anything. It doesn't have to be good. Set a timer for 3-5 minutes and just write what you think and voilà – you have now another journal item!

Word has a nice system so that you can make headings and sub-headings into infinity and navigate them using a navigator pane. Get the latest version of Word from Chalmers if you haven't got it yet and use it. It is awesome for organising your journal entries, and very easy to go back to and pick some nice things for your portfolio later.

Write a brief analysis early and keep on doing it. It is easy to put a lot of prestige into them, but chill.

Write a short reaction to discussion right after the seminar – it can be a free-write! This is just to have something but of course you can react again later.

Try to enjoy the fiction, and don't get too caught up in the prestige. Use the mid-term feedback to get help and check if you have done enough.

If you don't have the books yet – email me! I may want to keep The Stone Gods and I don't have Alice in Wonderland separate, so I'll keep that as well. But email [orjan.sun@gmail.com](mailto:orjan.sun@gmail.com) to buy the others 😊



# Letter To The New Student

January 2021

Hi, dear new students!

I am very happy that you have the chance to read my text because it means that just like me, you are studying this nice course too. It is a good course if you want to study English, reading novels and get some MTS points at same time. It is the best choice! Do not hesitate!

As a student who studied this course in 2020, I have some advice to you. Hope that it can help you for your studying.

- Start to write your portfolio as early as possible. Do not postpone and keep it left to the last month. It needs longer time than you think.
- I recommend you to write your portfolio in Latex. So it is easy to organize your article.
- Write your journal after each course. It is easy to forget those important things which you learn from the course if you wait too long time. And you can take some photos of your course and put the in your journal. It can remind you of what happened in class before and what was going on your mind. When you begin writing your portfolio, it is easy for you to pick up information which connects to your writing.
- If you have any question, it is best to ask and solve the problem in time.

Good luck!

Best regards,

Jane