

# Nútímafræði / Modern Studies – Áherslusvið / Emphasis Area – Challenges of Modernity

December 2022

## Premise

Following a formal request by the Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, an *ad hoc* meeting was held on the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022 with the teachers involved in running the University of Akureyri's (UNAK) degree line in Modern Studies, so as to promptly devise ways to revise the extant BA programme and be able to accommodate Ukrainian refugees interested in continuing their university studies—or starting them—in Iceland. The eventual result of this process was the creation of a new emphasis area in Modern Studies, i.e., additional to the three that existed at that point in time: History, Icelandic, and Philosophy. This new emphasis area, which was formally approved by the Faculty of Social Sciences in August 2022, is called “Challenges of Modernity” (CoM) and is described in detail in the remainder of the present document.

## Description

CoM is an English-language extension of UNAK's time-honoured BA programme in Modern Studies, focussing on central topics and study areas in the contemporary social sciences and humanities. As such, it allows the enrolled students to take up to 180 ECTS in suitable courses that are taught in English, hence to complete a full BA degree, if they so wish, in that language. However, given its historical premises and rationale, it includes opportunities and incentives to acquire and/or improve language skills in Icelandic, so as to facilitate the integration of refugees and other foreigners who live in Iceland and may aim at completing BA-level university studies by enrolling in Modern Studies at UNAK (See, in particular, the 3<sup>rd</sup>-year courses). Naturally, CoM is equally open to all potential students who happen to have a genuine interest in its contents and aims (see CoM's Learning Outcomes, as listed at the end of this document).

## Structure

The detailed structure of CoM that is offered in the following pages is only a thorough token aimed at helping the student to design his/her own study plan in a coherent manner, based on UNAK's course offering at the time of writing (November 2022). UNAK's English-language course offering changes from year to year. Therefore, *all students enrolled in CoM are expected to duly check the availability of suitable courses and tweak their study plan accordingly*, in consultation with the Head of Modern Studies, i.e., Prof. Giorgio Baruchello (GB), at the time of writing. All necessary contact details and information about the courses are available on UNAK's website.

Whenever course prerequisites apply, the enrolled students must contact, and agree with, their chief instructors, so as to be allowed to take those courses and, if needed, make use of extra readings and/or assignments that the instructors deem necessary or desirable. The teachers' first names listed in this document are those of UNAK's employees who were in charge of the various courses at the time of writing. As such, they are bound to change as time goes by, along with the listed prerequisites and other details. Nevertheless, they are included here to help the students get a clearer sense of the sort of information that it is useful to look for and consider while designing one's own curriculum. Once again, all necessary contact details and information about the courses are available on UNAK's website.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Year FALL TERM

### 4 Core courses:

**FJR0176** Media Critique I \***FJÖ0176** In. to Media S. \*\* New name as of Fall 2023

**MHU0176** Modern Studies Seminar I

**NTH0176/PKP0176** The concept of modernity / Nation, race and nationalism

**RHF0176** Research Methods in Humanities and Social Sciences \*\*Partially in Icelandic, at times

### 1 Elective from this list:

**ENS0156** English

ISLFU3030 Icelandic as a foreign language

ISMFU0307 Icelandic Society, History and Culture

**SAG0176** Roman Law \*\*Taught every other year

<b>N.B.</b>	<b>BUSINESS &amp; SCIENCE</b>
	<b>EDUCATION</b>
	<b>LAW</b>
	<b>PSYCHOLOGY</b>
	<b>SOCIAL SCIENCES</b>

\* Pre-requisites may apply.

\*\* Additional remarks.

**SMA0176** History of Psychology  
**PJR0178** Public International Law **\*\*Taught every other year**  
VLD0176 Media History **\*\*Taught every other year**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Year SPRING TERM**

*3 Core courses:*

**AFB0176** Ideology and History of Modern Times  
**HEI0176/RFB0176** Intro. to philosophy / From the Roman Empire to the French Revolution  
**MHU0276** Modern Studies Seminar II

*2 Electives from this list:*

ÁLG0176 Current Issues in Policing  
DRF0176 Local and Global Media **\*FJÖ0176 Intro. to Media Studies (Guðbjörg). \*\*Taught every other year**  
HAG0176 Economic Analysis I **\*PJF0176 Intro. to Soc. Th. or teacher's approval**  
INJFU0603 Icelandic nature  
ISLFU3030 Icelandic as a foreign language  
**KEN0176** Legal Theory **\*\*4 ECTS**  
**KTU0156** Teaching foreign languages  
NMI0176 Digital communication: Internet and social media **\*FJÖ0176 In. to Media S.**  
NOR0176 Introduction to the Circumpolar World **\*PJF0176 or teacher's approval**  
**RÉT0276** Human Rights Law **\*90% of 1<sup>st</sup>-year c. or permission by the Faculty + PJR \*\*Taught every other year**  
**SLE0176** European Legal Traditions  
**TÖL0176** Foundations of Statistical Methods **\*VIN0176 Practical Skills (Sigurður)**  
VLD0276 Media Theory **\*\*Taught every other year**  
**PSÁ0156** Developmental psychology

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Year FALL TERM**

*3 Core courses:*

**MHU0376** Modern Studies Seminar III **\*MHU0176**  
**NTH0176/PKP0176** The concept of modernity / Nation, race and nationalism  
**STJ0276** International Relations **\*PJF0176 Introduction to Social Theory**

*2 Electives from this list:*

**ENS0156** English  
**HSL0176** The Brain, Disease and Drugs **\*TÖL0176 & VIN0176**  
ISLFU3030 Icelandic as a foreign language  
ISMFU0307 Icelandic Society, History and Culture  
**MNG0176** Theories of Personality **\*AÐF0376, TÖL0176 & VIN0176**  
**NSS0356** Educational Psychology **\*PSÁ0156**  
**SAG0176** Roman Law **\*\*Taught every other year**  
**SMA0176** History of Psychology  
**PJR0178** Public International Law **\*\*Taught every other year**  
VLD0176 Media History **\*\*Taught every other year**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Year SPRING TERM**

*3 Core courses:*

**FJR0276** Media Critique II **\*FJR0176 FJÖ176 \*\* New name as of Fall 2023**  
**HEI0176/RFB0176** Intro. to philosophy / From the Roman Empire to the French Revolution  
**MHU0476** Modern Studies Seminar IV **\*MHU0276**

*2 Electives from this list:*

ÁLG0176 Current Issues in Policing  
APV2106 International Business  
DRF0176 Local and Global Media **\*FJÖ0176 Intro. to Media Studies. Taught every other year**  
**FSÁ0176** Social Psychology **\*VIN0176 Practical Skills**  
HAG0176 Economic Analysis I **\*PJF0176 Intro. to Soc. Th. or teacher's approval**  
**HUG0176** Cognitive Psychology **\*TÖL0176 & VIN0176**  
INJFU0603 Icelandic nature  
ISLFU3030 Icelandic as a foreign language

**KEN0176** Legal Theory **\*\*4 ECTS**  
**KTU0156** Teaching foreign languages  
NMI0176 Digital communication: Internet and social media **\*FJÖ0176 In. to Media S.**  
NOR0176 Introduction to the Circumpolar World  
**RÉT0276** Human Rights Law **\*90% of 1<sup>st</sup>-year c. or permission by the Faculty + ÞJR. **\*\*Taught every other year****  
**SLE0176** European Legal Traditions  
**TÖL0176** Foundations of Statistical Methods **\*VIN0176 Practical Skills**  
VLD0276 Media Theory **\*\*Taught every other year**  
VRK0176 Research Design in Social Science **\*TÖL0176 & VIN0176**

### **3rd Year FALL TERM**

*X Core courses:*

The students must consult with the teachers of the following courses, which other MS students take in their 1<sup>st</sup> year: **IBH0176** (Industrialisation and Globalisation), **ÍSM0176** (Icelandic Language), **RÝN0176** (Critical Thinking) **VIN0176** (Practical Skills in the Humanities and Social Sciences) and **ÞJF0176** (Introduction to Social Theory). With each teacher's permission, they may follow these Icelandic-taught courses, finding compromises as to the readings and/or assessment. That failing, they must then seek viable substitutes, e.g., (1) attending courses at another Icelandic university; (2) enrolling in online courses offered by other Nordic and/or EU-based universities; (3) spending a semester abroad *via* Easmus+ or Nord+ (hence checking with UNAK's International Office); or (4) using the electives below:

*And/or X Electives from this list:*

**ENS0156** English  
HAG0276 Development Economics **\*HAG0176, IBH0176 & ÞJF0176**  
**HSL0176** The Brain, Disease and Drugs **\*TÖL0176 & VIN0176**  
ISLFU3030 Icelandic as a foreign language  
ISMFU0307 Icelandic Society, History and Culture  
**MNG0176** Theories of Personality **\*AÐF0376, TÖL0176 & VIN0176**  
**NSS0356** Educational Psychology **\*ÞSÁ0156**  
**SAG0176** Roman Law **\*\*Taught every other year**  
**SMA0176** History of Psychology  
VLD0176 Media History **\*\*Taught every other year**  
VRK0276 Social Science Research **\*TÖL0176, VIN0176, VRK176**  
**ÞJR0178** Public International Law **\*\*Taught every other year**

### **3rd Year SPRING TERM**

*2 Core courses:*

**LOK0142** (12 ECTS = 2 courses)

*3 Electives from this list:*

ÁLG0176 Current Issues in Policing  
AÞV2106 International Business  
DRF0176 Local and Global Media **\*FJÖ0176 Intro. to Media Studies . Taught every other year**  
**FSÁ0176** Social Psychology **\*VIN0176 Practical Skills**  
HAG0176 Economic Analysis I **\*ÞJF0176 Intro. to Soc. Th. or teacher's approval**  
**HUG0176** Cognitive Psychology **\*TÖL0176 & VIN0176**  
INJFU0603 Icelandic nature  
ISLFU3030 Icelandic as a foreign language  
**KEN0176** Legal Theory **\*\*4 ECTS**  
**KTU0156** Teaching foreign languages  
**MSE0176** The European Convention of Human Rights  
NMI0176 Digital communication: Internet and social media **\*FJÖ0176 In. to Media S.**  
NOR0176 Introduction to the Circumpolar World  
**RÉT0276** Human Rights Law **\*90% of 1<sup>st</sup>-year c. or permission by the Faculty + ÞJR. **\*\*Taught every other year****  
**SLE0176** European Legal Traditions  
**TÖL0176** Foundations of Statistical Methods **\*VIN0176 Practical Skills**  
VLD0276 Media Theory **\*\*Taught every other year**  
VRK0176 Research Design in Social Science **\*TÖL0176 & VIN0176**

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

**Knowledge:** Upon completion of the degree in Modern Studies, emphasis area “Challenges of Modernity”, the student should have acquired:

- General knowledge of prevalent theories and methods in the humanities and social sciences, particularly with respect to philosophy, history and modern studies.
- Profound knowledge of the main contemporary issues of social concern in Western nations, as identified and studied by pivotal sub-disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, e.g., comparative literature, political philosophy, contemporary history and social psychology.

**Skills:** Upon completion of the degree in Modern Studies, emphasis area “Challenges of Modernity”, the student should be able to apply the acquired methods in an interdisciplinary context. The student should:

- Have acquired critical thinking.
- Have developed the necessary broad-minded perspectives and intellectual flexibility to be able to utilise knowledge from diverse academic disciplines to gain an improved understanding of modernity.
- Be able to assimilate theoretical and practical information and criticise it both logically and rhetorically, for example by spotting logical forms and fallacies, concealed argumentation, inconsistencies, inadequate references to sources and research, hidden premises and rhetorical devices.
- Be able to write an academic essay in English *qua lingua franca* of today’s science and scholarship, and carry out independent research on an academic subject in the humanities and social sciences.
- Have familiarised themselves with some of the main theories and concepts which relate to the modernisation process, e.g. secularisation, the industrial revolution, the advance of ideas of freedom, globalisation and the progress of democracy, especially in their contemporary manifestations, life-enabling (e.g., the emancipation of minorities) as well as life-disabling (e.g., Earth’s environmental crisis).
- Be able to use systematically the main information providers and databases within the fields of modern studies and be able to evaluate the reliability of information based on its origin.

**Competences:** Upon completion of the degree in Modern Studies, emphasis area “Challenges of Modernity”, the student will be able to apply the knowledge and skills acquired, for work and/or further study, especially in English *qua lingua franca* of today’s science and scholarship. The student should:

- Have developed the necessary academic abilities and independent modes of work to undertake further studies in the humanities and social sciences.
- Be able to communicate their theoretical knowledge to adolescents and adults in an independent, clear and interesting manner.
- Be able to take active part in cooperation that requires collective responsibility, the reciprocal mediation of ideas and knowledge, and the conscious application of each participant’s ability.
- Be able to actively participate in the democratic society of our times.
- Be able to apply critical thought processes to situations in their lives and work, where decisions have to be made or strategies formulated in the light of diverse kinds of information and interests.
- Be able to work independently and in an organised manner on tasks in their lives and work that require the ability to integrate diverse fields of knowledge and ways of thinking.
- Be able to set themselves realistic aims in their lives and work, formulate a comprehensive work plan and follow it through.
- Be able to utilise their knowledge and understanding of Modern Studies in academic work and in the solution of a variety of tasks in their lives and work, where a solid understanding of oneself is

required, together with the ability to analyse constantly changing circumstances and place them in a cultural, historical, ideological or social context.