**Course title: Nordic Noir  
Semester and Year:** Fall and Spring

**Semester/Year This Course Starts**: Spring 2017

**Location:** Copenhagen

**Home academic program:** European Humanities **Credits: 3**

**Major Disciplines:**

**Faculty Member:** Janis Granger

**Description of course:**

Why are the TV series, movies and crime fiction of Scandinavia so appealing? Is it the Nordic landscape, the city panorama, the terse language of the novels? Is it that the protagonists are anti-heroes, feminists, and outsiders? In the novels and on the screen, secrets are exposed and the postcard perfection of the Scandinavian Welfare States is revealed to have a dark side. We will study novels, films and TV series to encircle the phenomenon of Nordic Noir and discuss how these mirror Scandinavian society of today.

**Learning objectives of the course:**

* Identify and distinguish themes, types, styles and influences in Nordic Noir
* Acquire a vocabulary for analysis of crime fiction and Nordic Noir in particular, including literary as well as cultural terms
* Develop critical skills: to think analytically, to voice criticism through argumentation
* Gain an understanding of Scandinavian society today as mirrored in crime fiction, movies and TV series

**Required texts:**

Bergman, Kerstin, “Swedish Crime Fiction,” Mimesis International, 2014

Forshaw, Barry, “Nordic Noir,” Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2013

Indridason, Arnaldur, “Jar City,” Vintage Books, translated by Bernard Scudder, 2010

Journal of Scandinavian Cinema (2010- )

Larsson, Stieg, “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo,” Maclehose Press, London, translated by Reg Keeland, 2008

Messent, Peter, “The Crime Fiction Handbook,” London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013

Nesbø, Jo, “The Snowman,” London: Vintage, translated by Don Bartlett, 2010

Nestingen, Andrew and Paula Arvas (eds), “Scandinavian Crime Fiction,” University of Wales Press, 2011

Nestingen, Andrew and Trevor Elkington (eds), “Transnational Cinema in a Global North, Wayne State University Press, 2005

Sjöwall, Maj & Wahlöö, Per, “The Laughing Policeman,” HarperCollins Publishers, 2011

Tytti, Soila (ed), “The Cinema of Scandinavia,” Wallflower, 2005

**Expectations of the student:**

I expect you to have done the reading for each class and to come with notes and questions for discussions. You should refer to the texts and readings, whenever possible, to support your queries and ideas. If you are shy about speaking up in class, you are welcome to email me your questions and comments. I expect students to be engaged as much as possible. You cannot be engaged if you have not read the novels/articles or seen the movies.

**Approach to Teaching:**

I am enthusiastic about crime fiction, Nordic Noir and Scandinavia. I bring this enthusiasm to class. Even though there will be some lecturing to give you background information, I hope that we can explore the realm of Nordic Noir together. I want to learn from you, too. I would like to explore ideas – as I hope you will also bring your concepts into the discussions and ask questions. Except for the introductory lectures to the genre and to the different Nordic countries, I hope to create a good atmosphere where students feel comfortable about contributing and discussing openly, respecting each other’s point of view.

**Field studies:**

Walking Tour of Copenhagen. We will explore the underbelly of the city and see sites relevant to the novels we read and the TV series we watch.

Some of the film showings will be in class; others will be during a field study session (for longer movies). We will be viewing “The Laughing Policeman” (1978); “Jar City” (2005), “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo” (Swedish and American versions) and Danish TV series such as “The Killing” and “The Bridge.”

**Evaluation:**

In order to receive a passing grade, you must complete all the assignments.

* Engagement 15%
* Short Answer Test 15%
* Short Analysis I 20%
* Short Analysis II 20%
* Final Paper 30%

Engagement is your responsibility and thereby you help determine your grade. You should consider how often you join in class discussion, make comments or ask questions. How many absences do you have over the course of the semester? Do you complete all the assigned readings on time? If you expect an “A” for the engagement grade, you should be making comments and asking questions in almost every class.

**Description of Assignments**

Written assignments should have **a title**, be double-spaced, 12 font with approximately 300 words per page. Students may refer to “Writing Papers at DIS,” “The MLA Handbook,” or a writing manual from their home universities. Just be consistent when using citations, footnoting, etc.

**Short Analysis I:**

Students will write a short analysis on a topic or theme we have discussed. The analysis should be 3 to 4 pages in length, 12 font and approximately 300 words per page with one-inch margins. Remember to give your analysis a title! You pick an issue or theme that interests you and pursue it. You can also write on one the books we have read – but be sure you have a thesis. Please do not just give a plot summary! You do NOT have to use outside sources for this paper.

Your analysis should include the following:

1. Introduction: presentation of the topic to be investigated and a brief overview of what you will be doing in your paper (i.e. exploring a specific theme or using of specific theory for example the “10 Commandments” or exploring one of the keywords in relation to the novel(s), movies or TV series.
2. Analysis: comments, discussions, comparisons
3. Summary & conclusion

**Short Answer Test:**

The test will cover the articles and books we have read during the first half of the semester, the keywords we have learned and class lectures. The test will consist of multiple-choice questions (of keywords, concepts, terminology relevant to crime fiction and Nordic Noir); short answer questions to be answered in bullet points and two essay questions (you will be given several questions to choose from).

**Short Analysis II:**

Students will write a short analysis on a topic or theme we have discussed. The analysis should be 3 to 4 pages in length, 12 font and approximately 300 words per page with one-inch margins. See details (above) under Short Analysis I.

**Final Paper:** **Due last class**

For this paper, you may choose to do one of the following:

* An academic paper (7-8 pages) on a theme of your choice (for example, applying one of the keywords/concepts to novels we have read and/or movies we have seen; using one or two of the 10 Commandments of Scandinavian crime fiction – exploring the murderer as a victim; the impact of the Social Welfare State; portrayal of female detectives; gender-roles/feminism; use of crime fiction formula, etc.) Other suggestions for paper topics will be provided. Follow the outline above. Your paper MUST have a title! 300 words per page, one-inch margins, 12 font. One outside source.
* A re-writing of Analysis II, expanding on the original topic, taking into account comments given on the original paper or I. Must be 8-9 pages in length.

If you choose this option, you can extend your original paper by revising your thesis, broadening your comparisons and further qualifying your arguments by using one outside source.

For both options, follow the outline under the Short Analysis I but be sure to list your sources either in a separate bibliography or in footnotes.

**The Course**

1) Introduction to the Course. Brief History of the Genre

2) Golden Age of Crime Fiction; The Crime Fiction Formula

3) Nordic Noir: Background; Viewing of Danish Noir TV Series

4) Sweden & Swedish Crime Fiction & Swedish Cinema

5) Maj Sjöwall & Per Wahlöö “The Laughing Policeman”

**Core Course Week February 6-February 11**

6) “The Laughing Policeman” cont’d

7) “The Laughing Policeman” summation; First Analysis due!

8) Stieg Larsson & The Millennium Series

9) “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo”

**Program Study Tours February 25-March 5**

10) “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo” cont’d

11) Test in class

12) “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo”

13) “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo”

**Program Study Tours March 18-March 26**

14) Iceland and Icelandic Crime Fiction

15) Arnaldur Idridason

16) “Jar City”

17) “Jar City” Second Analysis due!

18) “Jar City” summation

**Travel Break April 12 – April 17**

19) Norway and Norwegian Crime Fiction

20) Jo Nesbø: The Next Stieg Larsson?

21) “The Snowman”

22) “The Snowman”

23) “The Snowman” – Summation of the Course

Final Paper due!