Scandinavian Crime Fiction

European Humanities 3-credit course
Semester: Summer 2018, Session 1
Time: Mondays-Fridays
Film/TV Series Showings (see syllabus for which days)
Instructor: Anna Cavallin
Major Discipline: Literature

Instructor: Anna Cavallin

E-mail: Anna.Cavallin@gender.su.se
Cell Phone: +46 702318010
Office Hours: by appointment

DIS Contact
Anna Söderquist, Assistant Program Director, European Humanities Department,
anna.soederquist@dis.dk

Course Description
In Scandinavian crime fiction, the most fantastic murders take place, families fall apart, their dark secrets are exposed, and the validity of the Scandinavian countries' welfare
system is being questioned – all of this described in a distinctly Scandinavian tone and style.

Is this why Scandinavian crime fiction is so popular? What is it with the terse language, the Nordic landscape, and the protagonists as anti-heroes, feminists, or outsiders that make these crime novels so appealing?

**Course Format**

The course will consist of close readings, discussion and written analysis of three Scandinavian crime novels. We will view movies based on crime fiction novels as well as see examples of popular Scandinavian TV crime series.

Class meetings will be, for the most part, divided into two sections. The first part of each class will be of lecture format where keywords and concepts are introduced. During the second part, we will discuss and analyze the novel assigned for the day (and when relevant, chapters of the textbooks assigned) relating it/them to the themes of the course.

We will be reading three crime fiction novels representing at least three different Scandinavian/Nordic countries. There will be introductions to the genre of crime fiction and to aspects of sub-genres and/or genre-hybrids, to the Scandinavian countries and the concept of the Welfare State as well as the themes of Scandinavian crime fiction (social identity and social realism, gender, nature, the environment, etc.). As a class, we will read Stieg Larsson’s “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo,” and Sissel-Jo Gazans ”The Dinosaur Feather.” Additionally, students will be asked to choose another Scandinavian crime fiction novel of their own choice (from the DIS Library). There will be theoretical readings to enhance our understanding of the genre.

**Learning Objectives**

This course aims at increasing the students’ abilities to think and work analytically. This includes developing the ability to read and analyze literary and non-literary texts, to voice criticism through coherent argumentation, to reason by analogy, to pose interesting questions and to communicate in written and oral form.

In this course, the students will become more perceptive readers of crime fiction and criticism. We will explore concepts such as national identity, the environment, gender, etc. in the context of modern Scandinavian crime fiction.

At the end of the course, the students will be able to:

- Identify and distinguish themes, genres, styles, and influences in Scandinavian crime fiction
- Acquire a vocabulary for analysis of crime fiction, and Scandinavian crime fiction in particular, including literary as well as cultural terms
• Gain an understanding of today’s Scandinavian society as mirrored in crime fiction
• Develop critical skills: to think analytically, to voice criticism through argumentation
• Improve writing skills

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. I expect students to be engaging as much as possible. You cannot engage if you have not read the novels/articles.

Approach to Teaching
I am enthusiastic about crime fiction and 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 Scandinavian crime fiction together. I want to learn from you too, and I hope you will bring your concepts into the discussions and ask questions. I hope to create a good atmosphere where students feel comfortable about contributing and discussing openly, respecting each other’s point of view.

Practical Matters/Classroom Policies
Students are expected to be on time to class. If students miss multiple classes, it will affect their engagement grade. Allowances, of course, will be made in case of illness, but missing too many classes without cause may result in the student being referred to Director of Teaching & Learning and/or Director of Student Affairs.

Laptops may be used for note taking. Please wait until the break or time before and after class to check email, Facebook, and check and send text messages. If surfing the internet or text messaging becomes a problem, laptops and cell phones will be banned from the classroom.

No eating in the classroom. Students are, of course, allowed to bring water, coffee or tea but eating of meals during class is not allowed. Students may consume lunch or a snack in the break. Bathroom visits should also be limited to before or after class, or during the break.

Disability and Accommodations
Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Academic Support (acadsupp@dis.dk) to coordinate this. In order to receive accommodations, students should inform the instructor of approved DIS accommodations within the first two weeks of classes.
Evaluation
In order to receive a passing grade, you must complete all the assignments.

- Engagement                  25%
- Short Answer Test            15%
- Short Analysis               20%
- Final Paper                  40%

Engagement is your responsibility. 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.

A short answer 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.

For the written assignments, I will provide you with guidelines as to what I expect, what is required and what is rewarded (see below). You do not have to be an English major to write well. As long as you write clearly, support your ideas and thesis from the text(s) and/or reference material you will do well. If you do not understand what is expected, please ask.

Description of Assignments
Written assignments should have a title, be double-spaced, 12 font with approximately 300 words per page. Students may refer to “The MLA Handbook” or a writing manual from their home universities. Just be consistent when using citations, footnoting, etc. Please e-mail me the final version of the written assignments before class on the due dates.

Short Analysis:
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 “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo”– but be sure you have a thesis. Please do not 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 a specific theory, for example the “10 Commandments,” or exploring one of the keywords in relation to the novel(s))
2. Analysis: comments, discussions, comparisons
3. Summary & conclusion

**Short In-Class 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 Scandinavian crime fiction), short answer questions to be answered in bullet points, and one essay question (you will be given several questions to choose from).

**Final Paper:**
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 novel(s) that we have read, 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. You should use one outside source.

- A re-writing of your Short Analysis, expanding on the original topic, and taking into account comments given on the original paper. 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 but be sure to list your sources in either a separate bibliography or in footnotes.
Field Studies

Millennium Tour in Stockholm. We will have a guided tour on some of the most important locations in “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo.”

Movie Screening: “Män som hatar kvinnor” (2008, 2h 26 min, the ‘Swedish’ film version of “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo” with English subtitles). After the film, you will meet our Guest Lecturer, who will talk about the film and discuss it with you.

Guest Lecturer: TBA.

Primary Texts

Textbooks:


Novels:

Course Schedule

Please note: There can be some changes to the following lesson plan due to different arrangements and unforeseen problems with availability of texts/DVD’s/movies used for this course. I will inform you of changes.

Tue. May 22

Introduction to the course: What is crime fiction? Brief history of the genre of crime fiction; brief overview Scandinavian crime fiction and its popularity; crime fiction terminology. The Golden Ages of crime fiction; different types of crime fiction; what is Nordic Noir?

Keywords: genre, setting, whodunit, hardboiled

Readings: From “The Crime Fiction Handbook” by Messent: “Introduction” pp. 3-8, and “The Types of Crime Fiction,” pp. 27-50 (up until the first paragraph on page 50 (you do not have to read “Transgressor Narratives”)

Start reading Stieg Larsson’s “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo.” The reading will continue during the entire week!

Please bring “The Crime Fiction Handbook” to class

Wed. May 23

Sweden: Introduction to Sweden and Swedish crime fiction – Ikea, Volvo and Stieg Larsson

Keywords: Sweden, Swedish crime fiction/crime fiction in Sweden, the Welfare State, Social Democracy, police procedural, social criticism, Nordic Noir

Readings: Stieg Larsson’s “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo,” continued


From “Swedish Crime Fiction,” by Bergman: pp. 13-32

Please bring “Scandinavian Crime Fiction” and “Swedish Crime Fiction” to class
Thur. May 24  
**Sweden: Stieg Larsson’s Recipe for Success**  
**Keywords:** Genre, Characters, Corruption, Violence  
**Readings:** Larsson’s “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo,” continued  
*Selection of YOUR Scandinavian Crime Fiction novel from the DIS Library (we walk to the library together)*

Fri. May 25  
**Sweden: Swedish Masculinity & Scandinavian Feminism**  
**Keywords:** Gender, feminism, masculinity  
**Readings:** Larsson’s “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo,” continued  
From “Swedish Crime Fiction” by Bergman: “Women Authors and Detectives,” pp. 69-86  

Mon. May 28  
Guest lecture TBA.

Tue. May 29  
**Summation of the first part of the course and “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo”**  
*Please bring questions and observations with relevant page references to class*

Wed. May 30  
**Short Analysis due!**  
Screening of the film “The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo”

Thu. May 31  
**FIELD STUDY**  
Millennium walking tour. Meet at designated meeting point.  
Introducing Denmark as crime fiction location.  
**Readings:** Start reading of Sissel-Jo Gazan’s “The Dinosaur Feather.”
Fri. June 1

**Denmark:** The telling of the story, the scene of the crime
**Keywords:** Narrative, parallel stories; gender equality (or not), setting.

**Readings:** Sissel-Jo Gazan’s "The Dinosaur Feather."

Mon. June 4

**Denmark, continued. Keywords:** gender, detective, location.

**Male Scandinavian crime fiction detectives**
**Keywords:** “soft-boiled”, Danish social hierarchy, masculinity, detective characters

**Readings:** Reading of Gazan continued
“The 10 Commandments of Scandinavian Crime Fiction”, Michaëlis (on Canvas): discussion

Tue. June 5

**Short In-Class Answer Test**
Screening of first episode of “Bron” (The Bridge), Danish/Swedish Crime Fiction series.
**Keywords:** national stereotypes and differences, men and women detectives, plot, narration

**Readings:** Reading of Gazan continued

Wed. June 6

**Day off. National Day holiday.**
Thu. June 7  Presentation of crime novel of own choice.
Summary of Gazan-novel.

Fri. June 8  Final papers due!