Nordic Noir
European Humanities 3-credit course
Semester: Spring 2017
Time: Mondays & Thursdays 14.50-16.10
Classroom: DIS Cinema, V23
Instructor: Janis Granger
Related Disciplines: Literature, Media Studies

Instructor: Janis Granger

Office Hours: by appointment or after class

DIS Contact
Matt Kelley, Program Assistant, European Humanities Department
Course Description:
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.

Course Format:
The course will consist of close readings, discussion and analysis of four Scandinavian crime novels/TV Series and movies. 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/TV series assigned/viewed for the day and chapters of the textbooks and articles assigned relating it/them to the themes of the course.

We will be reading four crime fiction novels representing four different Scandinavian/Nordic countries. There will be introductions to the genre of crime fiction, Nordic Noir and to the Scandinavian countries, the concept of the Welfare State as well as the themes of social identity and social realism, gender, nature, the environment, etc. As a class, we will read “Jar City,” Jo Nesbø’s “The Snowman” and Stieg Larsson’s “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo.” Students will pick their own novel and present it in class. There will be theoretical readings to enhance our understanding of the genre.

Learning Objectives:
- 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

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 engaged as much as possible. You can’t be engaged if you haven’t 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. I would like to explore ideas – as I hope you will also 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.
Final Syllabus

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 allowed in the DIS Film Room. Students are, of course, allowed to bring water, coffee or tea. 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 Academic Support Office at acadsupp@dis.dk to coordinate this. In order to receive accommodations, students should inform me of the 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 15%
- Short Analysis 20%
- Midterm 20%
- Presentation 15%
- Final Paper or Final Exam 30%

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.

The midterm on Monday, March 13 will cover the articles, novels, TV series and movies we have discussed during the first half of the semester, the keywords we have learned and class lectures.

For the short analysis and final paper option, I will provide you with guidelines as to what I expect, what is required and what is rewarded (see below). As long as you write clearly with good organization, support your ideas and thesis from the text(s) and/or reference material you will do well. If you don’t understand what is expected, please ask.
Description of Assignments & Due Dates
Written assignments (short analysis and final paper) should have a title, be double-spaced, 12 font with approximately 300 words per page. Students may refer to “The MLA Handbook,” “Chicago Manual of Style” or a writing manual from their home universities. Just be consistent when using citations, footnoting, etc. Please bring a printed version of the written assignments to class on the due dates.

Short Analysis: Due Thursday, February 23
Students will write a short analysis on a topic or theme we have discussed. The analysis should be 4 to 5 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 “Jar City,” “The Snowman,” or the TV series/movies 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 of 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

Midterm: In class, Monday, March 13 in classroom V23-201
The midterm will cover the articles, books, TV series and films we have discussed during the first half of the semester, the keywords we have learned, and class lectures. The midterm will consist of multiple choice questions (of keywords, concepts, terminology relevant to crime fiction/Nordic Noir, short answer questions to be answered in bullet points and one essay question (you will be given several questions to choose from).

Presentations: In class on either April 3, 6 or 10.
10 minute presentation of your Danish novel (or TV crime series – upon approval of instructor). Guidelines for this presentation will be provided. Schedule of presentations will be given on Monday, March 27.
Final Syllabus

Final Paper/Final Exam

Due Thursday, May 4

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) 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. One outside source.

- A re-writing of the first analysis expanding on the original topic, 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.

For the final exam, you will be required to answer two essay-type questions. There will be a choice of questions. Each of your essays should be at least 400 words, double spaced, 12 font. The Final exam will be made available on Friday, April 28 and is due at our last class meeting.
Field Studies

Wednesday, February 1, 13:00-16:00
We will meet in the DIS Film Room for a screening of the movie “Jar City.”
**Reading:** On Canvas: “A typical Icelandic Murder?”

Wednesday, April 5, 10:00-12:00
Walking tour of Copenhagen. We will see some of the sites used in the Danish TV series we have viewed. Details to be announced.

*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.*
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 don’t have to read “Transgressor Narratives”)
Please bring “The Crime Fiction Handbook” to class

2) Mon. Jan. 23  Introduction to Nordic Noir continued: The Golden Ages of crime fiction; different types of crime fiction; Popular Noir Films of the Golden Age
Keywords: The Welfare State, Social Democracy, police procedural, social criticism
Please bring “Scandinavian Crime Fiction” and “Swedish Crime Fiction” to class

Keywords: national identity, the detective, the victim
Readings:
Arnaldur Indridason “Jar City,” pages 3-109
From the textbook “Scandinavian Crime Fiction,” edited by Nestingen & Arvas:

Keywords: the formula, motive, Who’s your daddy?
Arnaldur Indridason “Jar City,” pages 110-237

Wednesday, Feb. 1, 13:00-16:00 Field Study
Iceland: Viewing of movie “Jar City” in DIS Film Room
Reading: “A typical Icelandic Murder?” B. Nordfjord,
Journal of Scandinavian Cinema, Volume 1, 2010, on Canvas

5) Thu. Feb. 2  Iceland: Old vs. New Arnaldur Indridason “Jar City,” pages 238-338
Summation of Icelandic crime fiction and Arnaldur Indridason’s “Jar City”
CORE COURSE WEEK: February 6-February 11

Reading: article from “The Guardian,” On Canvas

7) Thu. Feb. 16  Norway: Introduction to Norway and Norwegian crime fiction – Skis, Mountains and Serial Killers
Keywords: Norway, Norway’s Loss of Innocence, criminal, victim, guilt,
Readings: Nesbø’s “The Snowman,” pp. 3-115;

Keywords: Detective/Investigator, family, gender, hard-boiled crime fiction
Readings: Nesbø’s “The Snowman,” pp. 119-294;
Selection of YOUR Scandinavian Crime Fiction novel from the DIS Library (We will go next door to the library and I will help you pick a crime fiction novel)

Short Analysis Due
Keywords: genetics, sins of mothers, “The 10 Commandments of Scandinavian Crime Fiction”
“The 10 Commandments of Scandinavian Crime Fiction” by Michaëlis (on Canvas)

STUDY TOURS/BREAK February 25-March 5

10) Mon. Mar. 6  Summation of the second part of the course and “The Snowman” – Viewing of excerpts from Nesbø’s “Headhunters”
Please bring questions and observations with relevant page references to class.

11) Thu. Mar. 9  Norway: Viewing of Nesbø’s TV Series “Occupied”

12) Mon. Mar.13  Midterm in Classroom V23-201
13) Thu. Mar. 16  
**Denmark: Danish TV Crime Series Introduction**  

14) Mon. Mar. 27  
**Denmark: “The Killing”**  
**Reading:** “Danish Postmodern,” article by Lauren Collin, The New Yorker, January 2013, posted on Canvas

15) Thu. Mar. 30  
**Denmark: “The Bridge”**  
**Reading:** “Nordic Noir Production Value: From The Killing to The Bridge,” A. Waade, Academic Quarter, Vol. 7, Fall 2013, posted On Canvas

16) Mon. Apr. 3  
**Denmark: Student Presentations of Novel**  
Please bring questions and observations with relevant page references to class.

17) Thu. Apr. 6  
**Denmark: Student Presentations of Novel**

18) Mon. Apr. 10  
**Denmark: Student Presentations of Novel/ Summation of third part of the course**

19) Thu. Apr. 20  
**Sweden: Introduction to Sweden and Swedish crime fiction – Ikea, Volvo and Stieg Larsson**  
**Keywords:** Sweden, Swedish crime fiction/crime fiction in Sweden  

20) Mon. Apr. 24  
**Sweden: Stieg Larsson’s Recipe for Success**  
**Keywords:** Genre, Characters, Corruption, Violence  
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thu. Apr. 27</td>
<td><strong>Sweden: Swedish Masculinity &amp; Scandinavian Feminism</strong></td>
<td>Larsson’s “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo,” pages 343-554; From “Swedish Crime Fiction” by Bergman: “Women Authors and Detectives,” pp. 69-86</td>
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<td>Mon. May 1</td>
<td><strong>Sweden: Viewing of first ½ of US Version “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo”</strong></td>
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<td>Thu. May 4</td>
<td><strong>Sweden: Viewing of second ½ of US Version “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo” &amp; Summation of the Course</strong></td>
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**Final Paper or Final Exam Due**
Primary Texts:

**Textbook and Novels:**

Articles posted on Canvas

**These are just a few of Scandinavian Crime Fiction Novels in the DIS Library. There is also a shelf with relevant scholarly books on reserve in the DIS Library.**

**Denmark:**
Adler-Olsen, Jussi, “Disgrace,” “Redemption”
Blaedel, Sara, “Call Me Princess,” “Blue Blood,”
Davidsen, Leif, “The Woman from Bratislava”
Heeg, Peter, “Miss Smilla’s Feeling for Snow”
Jungersen, Christen, “The Exception”

**Sweden:**
Ekman, Kerstin, “Blackwater”
Jungstedt, Mari “The Double Silence”
Kepler, Lars, “The Hypnotist”
Larsson, Åsa, “The Savage Altar”
Mankell, Henning, “Faceless Killers,” “Firewall,”
Nesser, Håkan, “The Woman with the Birthmark”
Sjöwall, Maj & Wahlöö, Per, “The Laughing Policeman”

**Norway:**
Fossum, Karin, “Don’t Look Back,” “Calling Out for You,” “He Who Fears the Wolf,”
Holt, Anne, “1222”
Nesbø, Jo, “The Bat,” “Nemesis,” “Red Breast,” “The Devil’s Star,” “The Headhunter,”

**Iceland:**
“Hypothermia,” “Outrage,” “Black Skies”
Sigurdardóttir, Yrsa, “Last Rituals,” “My Soul to Take,” “I Remember You,”

**Finland:**
Matti, Joensuu, “To Steal Her Love”
Reference Reading (these books are on reserve in the DIS Library)

Munt, Sally Rowena, Murder by the Book: Feminism and the Crime Novel, London: Routledge, 1994
Nordisk Litteratur/Nordic Literature (2001) bilingual articles on development of crime fiction in the Nordic Countries
Articles in English about specific Scandinavian Crime Fiction novels and the genre in general can been found in the journal “Scandinavian Studies” (published by Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Studies) which can be accessed online