History of Sweden in Europe and the World

Semester: Spring 2017
Credits: 3
Location: Stockholm
Major Disciplines: History
Faculty Member: Madeleine Hurd
Time: Tuesdays & Fridays, 14:50 – 16:10 unless otherwise noted
Location: 1D-508 unless otherwise noted

Instructor:
Dr. Phil. Madeleine Hurd, Ph. D. Harvard University (Modern European History), Adjunct at Harvard, New York and City Universities, Assistant Professor University of Pittsburgh. Associate Professor Södertörn University. With DIS since 2015.

Description of course:
The course focuses on Sweden's historical relationships to the Baltic Region, Europe and the US. We will look at the Great Power Era, the poverty and mass emigration of the 19th century, the internationally famous inter-war Middle Way; we will then consider Sweden’s role in World War Two and the Cold War, as well as the current impact of neoliberalism and globalization. Our focus, throughout, will be on
Sweden's international profile and power, and the influence of this, in turn, on Sweden's national identity and future.

The course approaches history from three perspectives: political, economic, and cultural. We have chosen three or four key eras. The course starts in the 1600s, when Sweden transformed the Baltic into a Swedish lake: the "Lion of the North" was a European great power. Short-lived, however: by the 19th century, poverty-stricken Sweden was sending much of its population to the US, establishing Swedes' long-lived love for America. Fortunes improved in the twentieth century. Sweden's prosperous, social-democratic welfare state and war-time neutrality awarded Sweden international moral authority. How did these strands come together during the Cold War; and how, today, have changes inherent in immigration and economic globalization influenced Sweden's international position and self-perception?

Learning objectives:

• Acquire an overview of the most important events and processes in early-modern and modern Swedish history
• Provide insight into European and global international relations
• Develop an understanding of Swedish economic and political developments
• Provide students with a sense of Swedish cultural development, including the creation of Swedish self-identity
• Introduce students to samples of Swedish literature, as a means of illuminating past eras and mentalities

Field studies:

• Friday Feb. 3: A visit to Stockholm’s Museum of War (during class).
• Wednesday March 29, morning: Skansen and Nordiska museum. These are a nation’s classic attempts to recreate and celebrate its own “folk’s” past – increasingly, however, under the supervision of professional historians. For a preview, see http://www.nordiskamuseet.se/en and http://www.skansen.se/en/kategori/english.
• Wednesday April 26: Field-trip in Copenhagen, destination will be announced.

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

• Engagement in seminar discussion and field studies: 10%
• Three 2-page papers: 10% each, 30% (6 pp total)
• Midterm (take-home): 25%
• Final (take-home): 35% (7-8 pp)

“Engagement” is your responsibility! Be well-prepared by thorough reading before each seminar (usually, discussion is most intense during Part II of a theme). Be ready to summarize an argument, answer leading questions, and comment on what others have said. Come out from behind your computer, put your phone away! Above all, don’t miss classes. You will find them a very great help in completing class assignments.

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.
Three two-page papers. 30% of the grade.
At intervals during the course, you will be asked to hand in two pages in which you give your thoughts on, analyze and discuss the previous two weeks’ themes. These are relatively informal, but must show that you have read and thought about the literature and class discussion. Remember to give these short pieces a title!

Take-Home Midterm (about half through the course). 30% of the grade.
The take-home midterm will cover the articles and books we have read and what we have learned through class lectures and discussions (the subjects discussed in the two-page papers will be included). The midterm will consist of a choice of essay questions.

Take-Home Final. (30% of the grade.)
Students will answer a question that essentially involves analysing a topic or theme covered by the course. The students will have a choice of 3 different themes/topics. The analysis should be 7 – 8 pages in length, 12 font, approximately 300 words per page with one-inch margins. You will want to choose a theme from the course, and amplify your understanding with about 50 pages taken from the recommended readings (or your own readings, once cleared with the teacher). You should refer to at least 2 outside sources; the teacher can recommend films, excursions, novels, newspaper and historical articles, which should be of use to you.
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. You might, e.g., explore a specific theme, over time (such as “Sweden and war”); you might, with the help of literature, look more deeply into a specific era (for instance, “Sweden’s era of emigration”); or examine and analyze a specific theory (e.g., “The Middle Way” “Swedish neutrality”, “Swedish identity”). Don’t forget to tell the reader what sources you are using!
2. Analysis: comments, discussions, comparisons
3. Conclusion
Be sure to list your sources in either a separate bibliography or in footnotes.

Teacher-student expectations
I love to teach – to share my enthusiasm and curiosity about my subject (how did Sweden become like it is today? What were Swedes like before? And what does the world think of Sweden?). I have lived in Sweden, on-and-off, for 20 years, and have watched it change even during that short time. I hope that I can make students as fascinated with this herring-loving, may-pole-dancing, pine-covered, Baltic Sea kingdom as I am; and will do all I can (in lectures, discussion, and feed-back on papers) to encourage all student efforts.

I expect students to join me! Do come to class prepared to learn new things, and question old assumptions. The readings are essential to the course; do think them through. I look forward to lively discussions. It’s perfectly all right if you are shy about speaking up in class: but do be ready to answer direct questions!
Final Syllabus

Reading list: (note: in several cases, students can choose between different readings).


- Bo Stråth, “Neutrality as self-awareness”, and
- Jane Lewis, “Gender and welfare state change”, *European Societies* (2002), volume 4, issue 4, pp.1 331-357.

**Detailed Syllabus:**

**Friday Jan. 19:** Welcome to the course!

Introductory discussion on teacher and students’ mutual expectations; the structure and goals of the course; and, a brief introductory lecture on “Sweden and the world: Basic patterns, birds’ eyes’ views, myths and realities.”

**Tuesday January 24: Creating a New State: Money, Power and Blood**

All nations must be “created”. In Sweden, the creation of the Sweden as a new Protestant nation is credited to Gustav Vasa, Sweden’s “Founding Father”. But is it obvious that Gustav Vasa’s kingdom will survive? The challenges of raising money and centralizing power in the face of hostile neighbors. Lecture and short discussion of readings.

- Watch Historieätarna: Vasatiden, with English subtitles. See Canvas for instructions. (A light and easy video, good to start with!)

**Friday January 27: Discussion of readings.**

How are states made? What role might church, taxes, army, high aristocracy have – or how might these impede the King’s attempt to create something stable (for his own family, that is)? A discussion of realpolitik: the Swedish example. Be prepared to discuss:

- Byron Nordstrom, The History of Sweden, chapters 1-3

**Tuesday January 31: The Rise of Sweden as a Great Power. How Could It Be Done?**

How did Sweden, a small, poor, recently-created state, manage to take the field so successfully in the Thirty Years’ War? What was warfare like in that era; what did the success bring Sweden; what did it cost? Lecture, brief discussion, two videos: Sabaton - The Lion From the North (lyrics distributed in class) and the comedy: The Treaty of Westphalia.
Friday February 3: Life on the Battle-Field.

Visit, with teacher, to Armémuseet (walking distance to DIS), where we will concentrate on one exhibit: “War and Peace 1500-1800”, with special emphasis on the 30 Years’ War and on the experiences of the common soldier. The “Trophies” exhibit will give you an idea of one good reason why Swedes were so ready to invade the Continent. The museum is open until 8 p.m. for those who would like to linger – and has a nice café.

To aid us in understanding state and war:

- Michael Howard, *War in European History* (OUP 1979), pp. 54-62: gives specifics on why Gustav II Adolf was able to raise the army he did (insights into the history of armies and war technology!). Scanned and available on Canvas.

There are few non-specialist English-language readings on the Great Power Era – but luckily, plenty of Youtube videos, which are more fun than readings anyway. We are interested in getting a grasp on two sets of wars: “The Thirty Years’ War”, which brought Sweden to greatness; and “The Great Northern War”, in which all was lost – except for the enthralling vision of two warrior Kings, Gustav Adolf and Karl XII.

- For preparation, watch about two hours of academic-level Youtube videos.
  Go for these six videos, totally about 2 hours of viewing:
  a) “The Thirty Years’ War”, Tom Richey and “30 Years War / 3 Minute History”, Jabzy
  b) “Battle of Lützen - 1632 (English subtitles)”. This one is important, and will be discussed!
  c) “Great Northern War / 3 Minute History”, Jabzy and “The Great Northern War” (Peter the Great – AP Euro Review), Tom Richey.

  Then, for deeper understanding, choose one:
  d) Youtube: “AP Euro Video Lecture: The 30 Years’ War”, Keith Hannigan (40 minutes) or “Charles XII of Sweden Lecture”, UNHM Brown Bag Lunch Series, Michael Glaeser (55 minutes).

  These will be discussed, together with the Army Museum visit, on Tuesday!

Tuesday February 14: The End of an Era.

Sweden was not destined to make the Baltic a Swedish pond. Peter and Catherine the Great controlled a new Russia against whom Sweden could not contend. The loss of Finland to Russia was the final blow. Discussion of state and war, ending with a brief lecture on Sweden’s precipitate decline. Review Barton for the sequence of events. With Barton as context, be prepared to discuss these readings and these videos, as well as


**First 2-page paper due.**
Friday February 17: Decline – but not Fall. Whither Sweden?
How was Sweden to remake itself after the subsidence of its once-proud warrior aristocracy? Lecture, brief discussion.

Sweden was effectually re-founded during the 1800s. Norway was “acquired” as a sort of compensation for Finland; otherwise, the elites turned inward, seeking to develop the country’s economy and society. There was little to be done about Sweden’s poverty – but, given the loss of Norway, the nadir in international prestige, and the massive loss of population to the United States (among other places), a new Sweden had to be conceived. Lecture. (See lecture notes x)


Friday February 24: The Great Migration. Discussion
Why did people leave; what was the experience like? How do people, not least state and elites, react to being a country of emigration, rather than of immigration? What might it do to national self-identity; to international relations?


Tuesday March 7: Industrialization, Temperance and Social Democracy
Two visions of Swedish modernization: The employers’ and the workers’. These two narratives of “what is Sweden” have been competing since 1900.

- Assignment; Watch two history videos (in Swedish; but with teacher’s translation / voice-over). The websites will be posted on Canvas, as will sub-titles / voice over. How do their versions overlap; what is contested in the grand narrative of modern Swedish history? Be ready to discuss in class!

Friday March 10: Recreating Swedish Identity, or, Why all those peasants?
Elites, deeply worried about the effects of modernization on society and church; the state, interested in creating patriotic citizens; the liberals, fighting to quell, once and for all, the king-and-military vision of Swedish greatness. What kind of “Swedish identity” was invented during the late 1800s?

Tuesday March 13: The Social Democratic Vision – the Middle Way of the 1930s
The social democrats allied with Farmers’ Party in order to take political power in Scandinavia -- saving the peninsula from the political chaos that weakened so many Continental democracies. They immediately instituted pro-worker economic and social-welfare measures. Not Communist – and certainly not Fascist – the Swedes were proud to be known as those of the “middle way”, determined to bend, but not break, the capitalist system. Lecture.

- Marquis Childs, The Middle Way (1961 [1936]). Read: “Low Cost Housing”, “Liquor Control that Works”. 44-57, 79-90). Childs is an enthusiastic journalist. This book sold out immediately, to every-one’s surprise, and established Sweden on the world map as a source of inspiration – or deep dislike. It was, in part, in answer to this book that President Eisenhower’s administration promulgated the counter-image of Sweden as a degenerate land of alcoholism, suicide, and free sex. Here is the scanned book!

Friday March 17: The Light and Dark Side of Modernity.
Although Swedes like to look at the increasing state concern for national health as purely positive, others argue that biopolitics can have drastic consequences. In the 1990s, Swedes were disturbed and shocked by being reminded of a very painful example. The public reaction did much to discredit the welfare state – unfairly, many felt. What do you think? (The lecture will be based on Karin Johannisson, Kroppens politik.) Note: those who miss this class in order to travel will be expected to write an additional 5-page paper discussing the Swedish social-democratic vision.

Monday March 27 8 a.m.: Midterm questions posted on Canvas.

Tuesday March 28: Discussion of readings and mid-term questions.
We will be discussing the following, in detail; and going through possible answers to the mid-term questions:

- Jonas Frykman, “Pure and rational: the hygienic vision. A study of the cultural transformation in the 1930s, the New Man.” In Ethnologica Scandinavica 1981, pp. 36-63. Scanned, on Canvas.

Wednesday March 29: Field-Trip. Skansen and Nordiska museet. This outdoor museum was created in the late 19th century in order to celebrate “Swedishness” – the essence of which, it was held (here as elsewhere), lay in “ever-unchanging” peasant culture. Although this view of Swedish culture has been modified since, many Swedes remain deeply nostalgic for what seems an ultra-Swedish, idyllic, Astrid-Lindgren-like country-side past. Come and experience the Swedish dream, schooled, here, by a very modern dedication to historical authenticity, at the out-door museum of Skansen. As it may be cold, we’ll make the visit short. We will then have time to visit Nordiska museet, which gives a wonderful in-door picture of Swedish every-day (and high) life through the centuries. Note: you will want to use two pictures of things or exhibits in your midterm. See Canvas for detailed instructions..

Midterm due midnight of Friday March 31st at 12 noon. Mail to madeleine.hurd@sh.se.
Friday March 31: Sweden during World War Two
Sweden was neutral during both World Wars — while Denmark on one side, and Norway on the other, were invaded — and Finland fought on the German side. Yet Sweden emerged from the war with its moral stance unimpaired — even strengthened. How was this possible?

Tuesday April 4: Neutrality, Peace, Humanity?
How does one judge the morality of neutrality? Upon what criteria; and why? Discussion of readings:

- Bo Stråth, “Neutrality as self-awareness”, and

Move to Denmark!

During the post-war era, Sweden became known internationally for its “third way” welfare state, its labor-market peace, its gender-equality, and its wealth. (In the United States, this positive view of a “socialist” country was countered by pointing to the country’s sexual immorality, suicide and alcoholism.) What kind of world had social democrats and capitalists put together?


And then, choose three of these articles, and be ready to discuss them! (On Canvas / in Compendium)


Third 2-page paper due!

In the 1980s, Sweden’s social-democratic complacency was shaken – for ever. Globalization hit Swedish industry hard; the welfare state came under attack. Swedish politicians reacted by embracing neo-liberal economic policies. Yet the population remains strongly attached to the welfare state. Meanwhile, Sweden’s proud, neutral “third way” lost much of its rationale with the 1989 Fall of the Wall. What international role could the country now assume?

• Additional informational videos will be recommended: posted on Canvas.

Watch one of two movies: Smala Sussi or Leva Äta Dö.

Tuesday April 25 (16:25 – 17:45). Is the bumblebee flying?
We will discuss the movies – you having watched either Smala Sussi or Leva Äta Dö - in the context of our readings and videos.

Wednesday April 26: Afternoon Field Study. Destination to be announced!

Much of Swedish prosperity had been built with immigrant labor. But now voters fear a darker future; they long for a lost, all-Swedish utopia; they feel that the government is powerless in the face of global powers. Might this – or do other factors? – explain the rise of right-wing xenophobic parties in Sweden, indeed throughout Europe?

• As this is a constantly changing topic, readings for this last session will be announced a few weeks in advance! Check Canvas!

Final take-home exam due very last day of Finals!

Congratulations on completed class!