



THE SWEDISH PROGRAM

LIBERAL ARTS @ STOCKHOLM SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

SYLLABUS SWEDISH CRIME FICTION

Fall 2022

Instructor: Tim Berndtsson

The purpose of the course is to provide students with basic knowledge of the tradition of Swedish crime fiction and to stimulate interest and critical reflection in this subject. The genre has been commercially successful worldwide in the 2000s, and this course offers an overview of this success story. A selection of acclaimed Swedish crime novels provides the main material of the course, but the students will also get acquainted with selected film adaptations as well as an ongoing discussion of the crime genre in the marketplace.

The course takes its starting point in the influential author duo Maj Sjöwall & Per Wahlöö, creators of emblematic character Martin Beck. We will take this work as the catalyst for the success of Swedish crime fiction and the inspiration for the use many Swedish authors make of crime fiction as a genre to highlight societal problems and political issues. While we will discuss the genre Swedish crime fiction from several points of view, our primary point of departure will be the relationship of literature to society (e.g. issues concerning class, gender, ethnicity, and power and the (re)presentation of Sweden as a society and Swedes as a nation in these texts).

Class requirements

This is a discussion-based course. Therefore, your regular attendance is required, and your active participation is expected. All classes take place in room A975a. Please bring primary and secondary readings to class.

An unexcused absence may negatively affect your final grade. Your grade will not be affected if you miss a class due to illness or in the case of a (documented) emergency situation. If you have a personal or family event that conflicts with a class, and cannot be re-scheduled, you may ask your instructor for an excused absence. Such a request should be made at least one week prior to the class in question. Please complete all readings by the date noted in the syllabus, and come to class prepared to engage fully with the materials. You are more than welcome to bring in additional materials of interest to the class.

Grades are based upon the following criteria:

- active participation in class and preparatory reading-journal entries (quality and timely submission)
- a midterm essay due 9/3 (formal assignment specified on 23/2)
- a final paper due 4/4

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

I

31/8, 10.00-13.00

Room: A975a

Introducing class. Introduction to course and course material; introducing lecture, group work and seminar discussion.

- Tzvetan Todorov, “The Typology of Crime Fiction”, *The Poetics of Prose*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977, pp. 42–52 [fr. orig. 1971]
- Kerstin Bergman, *Swedish Crime Fiction: The Making of Nordic Noir* (2014), introduction and chapter 1, pp. 11–32

II

7/9, 10.00-13.00

Room: A975a

The Canon I: Sjöwall & Wahlöö. Seminar discussion.

- Maj Sjöwall & Per Wahlöö, *Den vedervärdige mannen från Säffle/The Abominable Man* (1967)
- John Scaggs, “The Police Procedural”, *Crime Fiction*, London & New York: Routledge, 2005, pp. 85–104
- Kerstin Bergman (2014), chapter 2, pp. 33–50

Presentation of:

- Michael Tapper, “The 1960s and 1970s: Sjöwall and Wahlöö”, *Swedish Cops: From Sjöwall and Wahlöö to Stieg Larsson*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014, pp. 61–106

III

14/9, 10.00-13.00

Room: A975a

The Canon II: Henning Mankell. Seminar discussion.

- Henning Mankell, *Mördare utan ansikte/Faceless Killers* (1991)
- Kerstin Bergman (2014), chapter 3, pp. 51–68
- Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen, “Foreigners in the Welfare State: Henning Mankell’s *Faceless Killers*”, *Scandinavian Crime Fiction*, London: Bloomsbury, 2017, pp. 89–100

Presentation of:

- Andrew Nestingen, “The Burned-Out Policeman: Henning Mankell’s Transnational Police Procedural”, *Crime and Fantasy in Scandinavia: Fiction, Film, and Social Change*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008, pp. 223–254

IV

21/9, 10.00-13.00

Room: A975a

The Canon III: Stieg Larsson. Seminar discussion.

- Stieg Larsson, *Män som hatar kvinnor/The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2005)
- Kerstin Bergman (2014), chapter 7, pp. 121–136
- Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen (2017), “Financial Crisis and Trust Capital in Stieg Larsson’s *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*”, pp. 100–111

Presentation of:

- Anna Westerståhl Stenport & Cecilia Ovesdotter Alm, “Corporations, Crime, and Gender Construction in Stieg Larsson’s *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*: Exploring Twenty-first Century Neoliberalism in Swedish Culture”, *Scandinavian Studies*, 2009:2, pp. 157–178

V

28/9, 10.00-13.00

Room: A975a

Famous Adaptations. Group presentations and seminar discussion; **midterm essay handed out.**

- *Mannen på taket/Man on the Roof* (1976), director: Bo Widerberg
- *Wallander*, S02E01: “Faceless Killers” (2011), director: Hettie Macdonald
- *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2011), director: David Fincher
- Linda Hutcheon, “Beginning to Theorize Adaptation: What? Who? Why? Where? When?”, *A Theory of Adaptation* 2nd ed., London & New York: Routledge, 2013, pp. 1–32 [orig. 2006]

VI

2/3, 13.00-16.00

Room: A975a

Female Perspectives II: Camilla Läckberg. Seminar discussion.

- Camilla Läckberg, *Isprinsessan/The Ice Princess* (2003)
- Kerstin Bergman (2014), chapter 6, pp. 103–119
- Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen (2017), “Investigating the Family in the Welfare State”, pp. 171–177

Presentation of:

- Sara Kärrholm, “Swedish Queens of Crime: The Art of Self-Promotion and the Notion of Feminine Agency – Liza Marklund and Camilla Läckberg”, *Scandinavian Crime Fiction*, Andrew Nestingen & Paula Arvas (ed.), Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011, pp. 131–141

VII

5/10, 10.00-13.00

Room: A975a

Crime and class. Seminar discussion. **Deadline for midterm paper.**

- Excerpt I from Jens Lapidus, *Easy Money/Snabba cash* (2006)
- Malin Giolito, *Quicksand/Störs av allt* (2016)

VIII

12/10, 10.00-13.00

Room: A975a

On the Borders of the Genre I: Kerstin Ekman. Seminar discussion.

- Kerstin Ekman, *Händelser vid vatten/Blackwater* (1993)
- Helena Forsås-Scott, "Telling Tales Testing Boundaries: The Radicalism of Kerstin Ekman's Norrland", *Journal of Northern Studies* vol. 8, 2014:1, pp. 67-89

IX

20/10, 10.00-13.00

Room: A975a

Intertextuality and developments of the genre: Stockholm Noir. Seminar discussion.

- Excerpt II from Jens Lapidus, *Easy Money/Snabba cash* (2006)
- Karolina Ramqvist, *Den vita staden/The White City* (2017)

[Fall break 25/10 – 7/11]

X 9/11 Excursion – Literary city walk

Exact time and starting point will be announced later.

Ahead of this seminar read: Kerstin Bergman (2014), chapter 5, pp. 87-101

XI

16/11, 10.00-13.00

Room: A975a

On the Borders of the Genre II: John Ajvide Lindqvist. Seminar discussion. Comparison of Swedish and American Adaptations.

- John Ajvide Lindqvist, *Låt den rätte komma in/Let the Right One In* (2004)
- *Låt den rätte komma in/Let the Right One In*, dir. Thomas Alfredsson (2008)
- *Let Me In*, dir. Matt Reeves (2010)
- Jørgen Bruhn, Anne Gjelsvik, Henriette Thune, "Parallel worlds of possible meetings in Let The Right One In" *Word & image* (London. 1985), 03/2011, Vol. 27, 2-14

XII

23/11, 13.00-16.00

Room: A975a

The Genre in the Marketplace. Seminar discussion; concluding lecture. Instructions for final essay handed out.

- Claire Squires, “The Genre in the Marketplace”, *Marketing Literature: The Making of Contemporary Writing in Britain*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, pp. 70–101
- Karl Berglund, “Detectives in the Literary Market: Statistical Perspectives on the Boom in Swedish Crime Fiction”, *Scandinavica: An International Journal of Scandinavian Studies*, vol. 51, 2012:2, pp. 38–57
- Louise Nilsson, “A Cosmopolitan North in Nordic Noir: Turning Swedish crime fiction into world literature. In: Helgesson S, et al. (eds) *World Literatures: Exploring the Cosmopolitan vernacular Exchange*. Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018, pp.340–354.

XIII

30/11, 13.00-15.00

Room: A975a

Final class. Summary of course; discussions of course material; course evaluation; discussions of themes for final essays.

XIV

Exam period. Deadline final essay 4 may.