



## THE SWEDISH PROGRAM

LIBERAL ARTS @ STOCKHOLM SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

### SYLLABUS SWEDISH CRIME FICTION

**Fall 2023**

**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).

#### **Literature**

We will use Kerstin Bergman *Swedish Crime Fiction: The Making of Nordic Noir*, 2014, as our main course book. It will provide the necessary basic background knowledge on most of the literature we read on the course. Moreover, you are advised to read a number of research articles about the literary works at hand. These are meant to give an enriched insight into Swedish society, the conventions of the Swedish crime fiction genre and also present a set of different approaches of analyzing it. You will also be supplied with *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, by J. A. Cuddon (5 ed. rev. by M.A.R. Habib), Penguin, 2014. This compact volume is not meant to be read cover to cover, but to be used as a handbook – a tool for actualizing different terms of literary analysis that can qualify our seminar discussions (which entries are to be read in this will be told during the course).

#### **Class requirements**

This is a discussion-based course. Therefore, your regular attendance is required, and your active participation is expected. Please bring primary and secondary readings to class.

All classes take place 13.15 – 16.00 on Mondays at the Stockholm School of Economics. However, the classrooms will differ, so please check the exact classroom before each 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 23/10 (formal assignment specified on 25/9)
- a final exam, december 4, 13-16.

## PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

### I

28/8, 13.15-16.00

Room: A538

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
- Eva Erdmann, “Nationality International: Detective Fiction in the Late Twentieth Century” in *Questions of Identity in Contemporary International Crime Fiction* (Brill: Boston/Leiden, 2009), pp. 11–26
- Kerstin Bergman, *Swedish Crime Fiction: The Making of Nordic Noir* (2014), introduction and chapter 1, pp. 11–32

### II

4/9, 13.15-16.00

Room: Torsten

The Canon I: Sjöwall & Wahlöö. Seminar discussion.

- Maj Sjöwall & Per Wahlöö, *Den vedervärdige mannen från Säffle/The Abominable Man* (1967)
- Kerstin Bergman (2014), chapter 2, pp. 33–50
- 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 [you may freely skip pp. 67-80, which contains a background depiction of Sjöwall and Wahlöö’s careers before “The Story of a Crime”, that might be of only cursory interest.]

Presentation of:

Paul Cobley, “Realism” in *The Routledge Companion to Crime Fiction*, Routledge, 2020, pp. 202–210

### III

11/9, 13.15-16.00

Room: PC Lab 1

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

**18/9, 13.15-16.00**

**Room: A550**

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
- Yvonne Leffler, “Lisbeth Salander as Pippi Longstocking” *Post45* (2015)

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**

**25/9, 13.15-16.00**

**Room: 320**

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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., London & New York: Routledge, 2013, pp. 1–32 [orig. 2006]

**VI**

**2/10, 13.15-16.00**

**Room: 328**

The Return of the “Whodunit”: 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:

- Karl Berglund, “Genres at work: A holistic approach to genres in book publishing” in *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 2021, Vol. 24(3) 757–776

**VII**

**9/10, 13.15-16.00**

**Room: 320**

Crime and class: Malin Giolito Persson Seminar discussion.

- Malin Giolito Persson, *Quicksand/Störst av allt* (2016)

## VIII

16/10, 13.15-16.00

Room: Aula

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

- Kerstin Ekman, *Händelser vid vatten/Blackwater* (1993)

Presentation of:

- 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

23/10, 13.15-16.00 Course excursion. Deadline for midterm paper.

Place TBA

Bergman, s. 87 – 116

Excerpt from Jens Lapidus, *Easy Money/Snabba cash* (2006)

[Further specification about this class will be given in due time during the course.]

[Fall break]

## X

13/11, 13.15-16.00

Room: A536

On the Borders of the Genre II: John Ajvide Lindqvist. Seminar discussion.

John Ajvide Lindqvist, *Let the right one in*

Jesper Gulddal and Stewart King "Genre" in *The Routledge Companion to Crime Fiction*, Routledge, 2020, pp. 202–210

## XI

20/11, 13.15-16.00

Room: A536

The Genre in the Marketplace. Student presentations. Seminar discussion; concluding lecture.

- 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.

## XI

27/11, 13.15-16.00

Room: B310

Final class. Summary of course; student presentations; discussions of course material; course evaluation; instructions for the exam.

**XII**

**4/12, 13.00-16.00**

**Room: B336**

Final exam.