

History of Modern Scandinavian Art and Architecture

Spring 2026

Instructor: Peder Fallenius

Email: peder.fallenius@swedishprogram.org

Class Hours Fridays 1:15 - 4:15 PM

Course Description:

The course addresses modernism and the idea of the modernist Swedish art and architecture from the late nineteenth century to present day. Some focus is placed on the role of the landscape and urban environment in art and architecture as affected by Sweden's development from agricultural society to urban welfare state. Although centred on artistic and architectural development and practises in Sweden the course aims to give an introduction to modernist and contemporary art and architecture in general. The course includes visits to some of the major art collections and some of the architectural landmarks of Stockholm.

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to

- Identify and describe the different characteristics of the many stylistic approaches to art and architecture of the 20th century
- Discuss and contextualize the changing approaches in the art and architecture of the 20th century

Participation

Students are expected to attend all classes, you have to come to classes and study visits to pass the class. Furthermore, students are expected to read texts for consultation in class and to prepare presentations for the study visits. Active participation in class discussions of texts

(manifestos) and pictures (attributions) is essential. You should prepare for each class by writing down the questions you have about the text and its relation to the course content. Unexcused absence will lower your grade.

Examination

Students will be given a midterm and final exam, each comprised of two essay questions to take home. Exams that are submitted after the deadline and without prior agreement will be marked down. The late penalty will be progressively more severe the later the assignment is submitted.

Presentations

Each student will be responsible for nine presentations during the semester. Depending on the size of the class the presentations are carried out individually, in pairs or in groups. The presentations are given during the scheduled study visits and are expected to be a 5-10 minute talk in front of the class.

Grading

The final grade will be a weighing together of the results during the semester.

Your grade will be calculated according to the following breakdown:

<i>Attendance and participation:</i>	20%
<i>Presentations and consultations:</i>	20%
<i>Midterm</i>	25%
<i>Final</i>	35%

Academic dishonesty: Any form of academic dishonesty is a violation of our code of conduct and will result in disciplinary actions. Plagiarism or other forms of cheating will result in an automatic F for the assignment, and may also result in an immediate F for the course as a whole, based on the assessment of the Director of Studies and the Executive Director. If you want to use AI to assist your writing, you must adhere to the following guidelines: AI-assisted writing is permissible as long as its use is properly documented and does not substitute for students' doing the actual writing work. For all written take-home assignments, students who have used AI to assist them are required to submit a summary describing how they have used AI to help them complete the assignment (producing text, proofreading, finding citations, etc).

In addition, students also have to clearly indicate which passages have been produced or assisted by AI, for example in a footnote that details how AI was used in that particular instance. Failure to acknowledge one's use of AI to complete an assignment will count as academic dishonesty and be subject to the same penalties as outright plagiarism or other forms of cheating.

Course material

Modern Architecture

Alan Colquhoun

Oxford History of Art

Additional reading:

Utopia & reality: modernity in Sweden 1900-1960: [Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design and Culture, New York, March 14 - June 16, 2002] / [editor: Cecilia Widenheim ; translators Henning Koch, Sylvester Mazzarella, David McDuff]

New Haven : Yale University Press, cop. 2002

Additional reading as preparation for presentations.

Additional texts for consultation in class.

Detailed Schedule:

- Jan 23** A short introduction Swedish art and architecture during the 20th century
- Jan 30** Architecture and town planning: from the turn of the century to the 1920s
Reading: Louis Sullivan *The tall office building artistically considered* 1896
Topics covered: Classicist traditions in architecture, neo-classicism (Swedish Grace), Art nouveau. Using town planning and architecture in central Stockholm.
- Feb 6** Art of the turn of the century: *Waldemarsudde*
Reading: Reactions to the first impressionist exhibition 1874 (excerpts)
Topics covered: impressionism and symbolism. Using the art collection exhibited at Waldemarsudde
- Feb 13** Art of the early 20th century at Moderna museet
Reading: F. T Marinetti *Futurist manifesto* 1909
Topics covered: fauvism, cubism, futurism and early abstraction. Using the art collection exhibited at Moderna museet.
- Feb 27** 1:15 PM – 5:15 PM Architecture and town planning: *City and Suburbia*
Reading: Le Corbusier *Towards a new architecture* 1923 (excerpt)
Topics covered: architecture and planning ideas of the mid 20th century. Using town planning and architecture in central Stockholm and suburban Vällingby.
- March 6** Art of the mid 20th century at Moderna museet
Reading: André Breton *Surrealist manifesto* 1924
Topics covered: surrealism, dadaism, informal art. Using the art collection exhibited at Moderna museet.
(Midterm posted)

March 13 Public art

Reading: depending on the current debate.

Topics covered: public art as an integral part of public building projects in Sweden in the period from the 1940 until now. Using examples in the central parts of Stockholm.

March 20 Architecture and town planning: Karlaplan and beyond

Reading: Camillo Sitte *Town planning according to artistic principles* 1889 (excerpt)

Topics covered: ideas about planning and architecture from the late 19th century through the 20th century using a part of Stockholm rich in examples from the entire period.

(Midterm exam due)

SPRING BREAK March 24- April 6

April 10 1:15 PM – 5:15 PM Architecture and town planning: *Housing*

Reading: Ebenezer Howard *Garden cities of tomorrow* 1898 (excerpt)

Topics covered: ideas and examples of housing from the 1920s up to current projects using areas of housing in Hammarbyhöjden, Hammarby Sjöstad and at Södermalm.

April 17 Art of the late 20th century art and contemporary art

(Final exam posted on April 18)

April 24 1:15 PM – 5:15 PM Architecture and town planning: Ceremonial sites: *The Woodland Cemetery*

Topics covered: a visit to the cemetery on the UN World Heritage Lists summing up the themes covered during the semester.

(Final exam due May 1)

Email: peder.fallenius@swedishprogram.org