

HONORS 213 Syllabus: Swedish Rebels and Icons

"If an exploration of a particular culture will lead to a heightened understanding of a work of literature produced within that culture, so too a careful reading of a work of literature will lead to a heightened understanding of the culture within which it was produced." --Stephen Greenblatt

Modules:

- Tranströmer, Memory and Nobel visit
- National Museum and National Memory, Skansen and National Museum visit
- Habel and Swedish Exceptionalism, guest lecture and Uppsala visit
- Taikon, Roma and Civil Rights, guest lecture with Mohtadi
- Larsson and Always Ambivalent, reflections on sense of place
- Bergman and Film History, guest lecture at Filmstaden
- Khemiri, final project: literary tourism

Film links can ONLY be accessed when you are logged in as a UW student.

Pre-departure and Tranströmer modules have assignments due prior to the start of the program. Most readings are provided as pdf links, but you will need to purchase a copy of Jonas Khemiri's "Everything I Don't Remember" to have with you on the program, and check out or buy Stieg Larsson's "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo"

This course will introduce students to Swedish authors and filmmakers whose work has reached beyond the Nordic borders. Students will visit works by Stieg Larsson, Selma Lagerlöf, August Strindberg, Ingmar Bergman, Jonas Khemiri, Katarina Taikon, Lawen Mohtadi, Thomas Tranströmer among others. Students will begin to examine the relationship of these artists' works to Sweden's approach to activism and rights broadly.

Selected works will be contextualized through site visits and excursions in Stockholm and the surrounding areas. Learning will be enhanced through guest lectures by academics and artists. Students will reflect on the literature's power to contribute to social movements and the conversation of rights. Drawing on ideas in the field of cultural studies, students will consider cultural norms portrayed in the films, novels, and poetry that may or may not mirror reality; and discuss how those norms affect the characters and the readers.

Students will be encouraged to reflect on their overall study abroad experience and how their interaction with Swedish film and literature impacts their understanding of Swedish culture; to consider how cultural preconceptions and learning can confront and (re)shape the way one responds to place.

Grading:

- 50% creative/reflective/response papers on selected films, readings (approx. 2 pages each)
- 40% participation in all discussions/read alouds/guest lectures/field trips
- 10% [collaborative project creating a literary tour of Khemiri's novel](#)

Pre-departure Readings/Viewings:

Given the short duration and intensity of the program, it is recommended that you read, view, and begin to respond to the readings and films in advance of the program; most are accessible in course files, the first few readings will give lens/context/theories that will help your reflective thinking about the literature. See the Pre-departure Readings Module to begin, then visit each module for links to the films and other readings.

“Culture shapes the way we think; it tells us what “makes sense.” It holds people together by providing us with a shared set of customs, values, ideas, and beliefs, as well as a common language. We live enmeshed in this cultural web; it influences the way we relate to others, the way we look, our tastes, our habits; it enters our dreams and desires. But as culture binds us together it also selectively blinds us. As we grow up, we accept ways of looking at the world, ways of thinking and being that might best be characterized as cultural frames of reference or cultural myths. These myths help us to understand our place in the world—our place as prescribed by our culture. They define our relationships to friends and lovers, to the past and future, to nature, to power, and to nation. Becoming a critical thinker means learning how to look beyond these [socially constructed] cultural myths and the assumptions embedded in them.”

--Gary Colombo, Robert Cullen, Bonnie Lisle, Rereading America: Cultural Contexts for Critical Thinking and Writing

Post script:

[STUDENT WORK: Final Project](#)