

SCAND 340***Kalevala***

Spring 2003

<http://faculty.washington.edu/akn/scand340.htm>**Course Information**

5 Credits

T., Th. 11:30-1:20

Savery 162

Office Hours: Th. 1:30-3:20

Graduate associate:

Evan Wright (epwright@uw.edu)

Office Hrs. M.,W. 1:30-2:30

Raitt 108C

Instructor

Prof. Andrew Nestingen

Raitt 305P

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akn@uw.edu**1. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In 1835, Elias Lönnrot (1802-1884) published what would become the epic of the Finnish people, the *Kalevala*. A prominent intellectual of the day responded, “Finally, I have a history!” The *Kalevala* became a hugely influential example of a rediscovered epic tradition, inspiring interest in Finnish folklore and in other indigenous folklore traditions. *Kalevala* seeks to reconstruct the history and culture of Finland through by reconstructing many folksongs into an epic story. It exemplifies how intellectuals used peasants’ folklore and singing traditions to construct a Finnish national identity. In the course, we will read and reflect upon the *Kalevala* as a folkloric text, as a literary or aesthetic text, and as a cultural text. In considering it as folklore, we will ask what myths are a part of it, and what do they tell us about the ancient Finnish people. Aesthetically, we will study how *Kalevala* is put together, who are its characters, what are they like? Culturally, we will look at how *Kalevala* was created and how it was used to create the Finnish nation. Finally, we will explore the legacy of *Kalevala* in Finland and the contemporary Nordic region, viewing the film *Pathfinder* (1987), learning about the Baltic singing revolution, and reading Johanna Sinisalo’s *Troll* (2000).

2. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

There are two chief components to the course: to increase your knowledge of Finno-Ugric poetic traditions in their national contexts, and to deepen your skills in acquiring, processing critically, and understanding culture—a knowledge component and a skill component. On this basis, there are three specific aims for the course.

- a. Become familiar with *Kalevala* by reading and discussing the text, and reading important commentary about *Kalevala*
- b. Learn twenty keywords that will help you analyze *Kalevala* and its cultural history
- c. Write an analytical paper about the *Kalevala* drawing on class readings, discussion, and your own analysis

What, you might ask, is the benefit of knowing about esoteric topic of the Finnish epic? What's the takeaway for you, to put it bluntly? Learning about the *Kalevala* will help you complete other courses in Scandinavian and Baltic Studies, giving you knowledge to compare Finnish culture and other cultures. It might also perhaps help to understand better your own cultural heritage. More importantly than what you learn, though, is broadening and deepening your skill in learning about culture. In the course, folklore, literature, and nationalism are prominent ideas; understanding the ties that bind these within the history of the Finno-Ugric peoples helps you practice thinking critically about the way people imagine culture and identity, and how these ideas are used politically. The course helps you learn how to think critically about the connection between a society's stories about itself and its beliefs about what it is as a nation.

3. GRADES

The scheme I'll use for calculating your final grade will be the following:

- Participation 10%
- Response Papers 30%
- Mid-Term 20%
- Final Paper 40%

Grades will be assigned based on the UW's suggested percentages. For more information, contact me by email.

4. COURSE ACTIVITIES & REQUIRMENTS

READING: It is essential that you complete all readings, so that you can understand the frame of reference for the lectures and are prepared for discussion. As a 300-level humanities course, you can expect to spend a good part of the out-of class homework reading in preparation for discussion. *You should have the reading completed by the day that it is listed in the syllabus, and be prepared to discuss the assigned texts.*

LECTURE AND DISCUSSION: A key component of the course is the in-class lectures and discussions. The lectures provide explanations of the key terms in the course, which provide context for deepening your understanding of the readings through discussion.

Each week's lectures and discussion questions will be posted on the course website by Monday of that week. You can use the posted notes as a guide to taking notes in course, and rely on the lectures as a guide to the key issues in the course. Use the website actively, as a guide and source to the course materials.

PARTICIPATION: Participation is your responsibility, and so you participate in deciding your participation grade. Before taking the mid-term and final examination, email me a statement with your name, the grade you assign yourself, and a brief statement explaining your goals for participation, and why you've awarded yourself the grade. I will reply to your statement with a brief response and your participation grade. I

give the final participation grade after the conclusion of the course. If you show improvement over the quarter, I count that in your favor.

MID-TERM: The mid-term will be held in class from 11:30 AM-1:20 PM on Tues. Nov. 9th. You must be present for the mid-term. *I will make no exceptions without a documented excuse, submitted to me at least one day before the mid-term.*

The mid-term will be cumulative for the quarter, and will consist of three textual identifications, eight keyword definitions, and one essay question. The textual identifications will be based on prominent passages in *Kalevala*, whose significance you will explain briefly. You will be expected to explain each keyword in three sentences, and use examples from class to define it. The essay question will ask you to synthesize the course's overarching themes. You will need an exam booklet for the final, available in the University Bookstore in the HUB.

RESPONSE PAPERS: You will submit two response papers during the course. Each one should be 2-3 pages. The paper must be typed and double-spaced, with one-inch margins. Each response paper will count equally toward the total 30% of the response paper grade. *By the beginning of class on the day the paper is due, you must turn in the paper in the designated Catalyst "Collect It" Dropbox. It will be linked on the website.* I will return the papers as soon after I receive them as possible. I will post response paper questions on the website a week before the paper is due, and your paper should develop an argument in response to one of the questions posted.

FINAL PAPER: You are required to submit a typed, double-spaced, 12-point font thesis paper of 6-8 pages as Word or PDF file to a Catalyst Drop Box which will be placed on the website. Your paper must be submitted by 4:30 PM on Thurs. Dec. 16th. Like the response papers, your final paper will develop an argument that draws on course readings and discussions to respond to one of the prompts posted on the website for the final paper. If you are interested in receiving a W for the course, you will need to talk to me about writing a longer paper.

The final paper will comprise 40 % of your final grade for the course. It will be marked down .5 of a grade on the UW system for every day that it is late. (That is, if you earn a 3.7 on the paper, but turn it in one day late or less, I will award you a 3.2 grade)

If you cite significant amount of material for your paper, please follow MLA style.

- A helpful "style sheet" of MLA rules is available at the following website: <http://www.hecs.cc.tx.us/system/library/TipSheets/MLA.html>
- If you don't know how to use citations or what the MLA style is, please ask me for help.

WRITING EVALUATION: I will evaluate response-paper and final-writing assignments according to the following questions. You can use this as a checklist to guide your drafting, proofreading, and revision:

1. Is a clear and rich thesis the basis for the paper's argument?
2. Does the argument address the prompt in response to which the paper is written?
3. Does the paper include and analyze at least three examples from the readings to support and qualify its argument?
4. Does the paper employ key terms from the course accurately?
5. Does the writer display critical thinking and imagination?
6. Are the different paragraphs organized both internally and in relation to each other?
7. Is the writing clear and error free?

5. COURSE POLICIES

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: The University of Washington is a community dedicated to learning. The student conduct code defines expectations for students who belong to this community (<http://www.washington.edu/students/handbook/conduct.html>). Plagiarism, cheating, and disruptive behavior in class violate the code, and harm yours and others' learning. Any violations of the code in connection with this class will result in automatic failure of the course. If you want to learn more about how to avoid plagiarism, please consult the following resource page on academic honesty, or speak to me directly (<http://depts.washington.edu/grading/issue1/honesty.htm>).

GRADES GRIEVANCE POLICY: If you disagree with the grade you have been awarded and wish to appeal it, you must follow the policy outlined below. I will make no exceptions to this policy, and I reserve the right to refrain from considering your complaint if you do not follow the policy.

- a. Wait twenty-four hours from the time you receive the grade.
- b. Deliver a written statement to my post-box in Raitt 318 (Campus Mail Box 353420) explaining your complaint. (No emails or telephone calls accepted)
- c. Make an appointment with me to discuss your written complaint (email is fine for making the appointment).
- d. I will indicate my final decision to you by email after our meeting.
- e. If you disagree with my final decision, request a meeting with the Chair of the Scandinavian Department, Prof. Jan Sjøvik, to discuss the matter further.

6. ASSIGNED TEXTS

The Kalevala, or Poems of the Kalevala District. Comp. Elias Lönnrot. Trans. Francis Peabody Magoun. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963.
 Sinisalo, Johanna. *Troll: A Love Story.* New York: Grove Press, 2004.
 Other readings available by PDF on course website.

COURSE PLAN

Week 1 Introduction to Finnish Folk Poetry and the *Kalevala*

Th.	9/30	Syllabus Review and Course Introduction Discussion: Creation and the <i>Kalevala</i> -- “The Creation” and “The Great Oak”
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Week 2 *Kalevala* as Oral Poetry and Literature

Tue.	10/5	Lecture: How to Read Oral Poetry – Evan Wright Preface to 1834 proto- <i>Kalevala</i> and 1835 <i>Kalevala</i> (pp. 363-373); <i>Kalevala</i> Poem 1 (3-7); <i>How to Read an Oral Poem</i> excerpt, John Miles Foley; “The Cosmos: Introduction,” Lauri Honko Keywords: Cosmology, orality, repetition, alliteration
Th.	10/7	Lecture: What is <i>Kalevala</i> ? Reading: Preface to 1849 <i>Kalevala</i> (pp. 374-379); “The Storyteller,” Walter Benjamin Keywords: Elias Lönnrot, Finnish grand duchy (1809-1917), epic

Week 3 Väinämöinen and the Sampo

Tue.	10/12	Lecture: Väinämöinen and Aino Reading: <i>Kalevala</i> poems 2-6 (pp. 8-36) Keywords: Gender, Väinämöinen
Th.	10/14	Lecture: Väinämöinen and the Sampo Reading: <i>Kalevala</i> poems 7-10, 38-39, 42-43 (pp. 37-61, 260-270, 280-294) Keywords: Totem, Symbol

Week 4 Shamanism and Weddings

Tue.	10/19	Lecture: Väinämöinen the Shaman – Evan Wright Reading: <i>Kalevala</i> Poems 16-18, 40-41, 44-45 (pp. 96-122, 271-279, 295-304) Keywords: Shamanism, Animism, Singing
Th.	10/21	Lecture: Weddings Reading: <i>Kalevala</i> poems 19-25 (pp. 123-184) Keywords: Rite of passage, Marriage <i>Response Paper #1 Due</i>

Week 5 Kullervo and Lemminkäinen

Tue. 10/26	Lecture: Kullervo -- Evan Wright Reading: <i>Kalevala</i> Poems, 31-37 (pp. 223-259) Keywords: Sacrifice, tragedy
Th. 10/28	Lecture: Lemminkäinen Reading: <i>Kalevala</i> poems 11-15, 26-30 (pp. 62-95, 185-215) Keywords: Seducer, Love

Week 6 Kalevala's Trouble with Sex and Gender

Tue. 11/2	<i>Troublemaker's Mother</i> —Nick DiMartino In-class viewing and discussion with author
Th. 11/4	Lecture: <i>Kalevala</i> , Virgin Birth, and Väinämöinen's Departure Reading: <i>Kalevala</i> poems, 46-50 Keywords: Allegory, History

Week 7 Mid-Term Exam

Tue. 11/9	<i>Mid-Term Exam – Bring an exam booklet to class</i>
Th. 11/11	NO CLASS – Veterans' Day

Week 8 Folklore Traditions to Identity Construction

Tue. 11/16	Lecture: The <i>Kalevala</i> 's Legacy in The Arts: Finnish Neo-Romanticism Reading: "What are <i>Kalevala</i> Images Built From?" (PDF) Keywords: Neo-romanticism, nationalism
Th. 11/18	Lecture: Intro to the Sami View: <i>Pathfinder</i> (1987) Dir. Nils Gaup Keywords: Sami, Cultural Revitalization

Week 9 Pathfinders

Tue. 11/23	Discussion of <i>Pathfinder</i> Reading: "Folklore, Boundaries and Audience in <i>The Pathfinder</i> ." Thomas DuBois Keywords: Postcolonial, genre
Th. 11/25	NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 10 Troll: Choose-Your-Own Epic

Tue. 11/30	Eco-Literature and Finnish Folklore – Evan Writght Reading: Johanna Sinisalo <i>Troll</i> , (pp. 3-115) Keywords: Postmodernism, nature, eco-literature
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Th. 12/2	Lecture: Johanna Sinisalo and <i>Troll</i> – Special Guest, Sanna Karkulehto, University of Oulu, Rice University Reading: Johanna Sinisalo <i>Troll</i> (pp. 116-278)
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Week 11 From Epic to Singing Revolution

Tue. 12/7	Guntis Smidchens: The Baltic Singing Revolutions <i>The Singing Revolution</i> -excerpt
Th. 12/9	Brief presentation and discussion of final papers Course Evaluations <i>Response Paper #2 Due</i>

Have a Nice Holiday!