

**SCAND 360A/COMP LIT 315B**  
**Scandinavian Cinema**

Winter 2010

<http://faculty.washington.edu/akn/scand360.htm>

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**Course Information**

5 Credits

Room: Thompson 101

Screenings: M, W 1:30-3:50

Office Hours: W. 12:30-1:20, Th. 10:30-11:20

**Instructor**

Prof. Andrew Nestingen

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**1. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

SCAND 360/COMP LIT 315 surveys the cinema of the Nordic countries from the first film exhibitions in Scandinavia (1895) to the present. The course has two aims. First, it seeks to acquaint you with the key institutions, periods, film styles, and figures in Nordic cinema during the last one hundred ten years, including Mauritz Stiller, Carl Th. Dreyer, Ingmar Bergman, Lars von Trier, and Aki Kaurismäki. Second, it seeks to deepen your knowledge of film history and improve your skills in analyzing film.

**2. LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Toward these ends, there are three specific sub-aims for the course.

- a. Acquire a basic vocabulary of film analysis to guide your analysis and arguments about the films we watch.
- b. Organize your familiarity with the films we watch into historical and comparative categories. In other words, you should know which countries the films come from, who made them, what period they belong to, and what defines that period. On this basis, you should be able to compare the films among themselves, and with others outside Scandinavian cinema.
- c. You should be able to write accurately and thoughtfully about these films, and their histories, which you'll demonstrate through class assignments.

So what? What is the benefit of knowing about Scandinavian cinema? The course will help you succeed in other courses in Scandinavian studies. It will help you compare Scandinavian national cinemas and cultures among themselves, and with other cinemas and cultures. It may also help you better understand a part of your own or a friend's cultural heritage, or provide a sense of the culture of a country or city you may read about or visit. It will also provide you a framework and set of terms for studying and analyzing cinema. Since the average American annually watches scores of films on DVD, pay-per-view, or even the big screen (and we're addicted to television) understanding the moving image is a key component of cultural literacy. "Yeah, that was good," or "that sucked—it was boring" does not explain why we like a film, or why we hate one. So studying a different cinematic tradition helps us sharpen our skills in viewing by challenging many

of our assumptions about cinema. Scandinavian cinema does share some similarities with Hollywood—in fact, many Scandinavians have made prominent careers in Hollywood. But, because Scandinavian cinema also draws on different theatrical, cinematic, and cultural ideas and traditions, it also differs significantly from American cinema. By learning about the similarities and differences, we begin to understand Scandinavian cinema, and American. And, you can impress your friends with your knowledge of Ingmar Bergman.

### **3. TEXTS**

#### **Required**

Course Reader is available at the Ave. Copy Center, 4141 University Way NE. (206) 633-1837.

### **4. GRADES**

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

- Participation 10%
- Quizzes 20 %
- Study Questions 30 %
- Final Exam *or* Final Paper 40 %

### **5. ASSIGNMENTS**

**FILM VIEWING:** Films will be screened during class time on Mondays. You are encouraged to view films more than once. Please note that many of the films we are watching are distributed on European standard DVD and VHS, requiring special equipment to screen them. You'll find it most convenient to view the films during the screenings. Furthermore, by projecting them on a large screen, the quality of the image is better than when displayed at home. For these reasons, I urge you to watch the films during the screenings. However, I will also put the films on 2-hr reserve in the Odegaard Media Center, so that you can view them a second time at Odegaard. Some of the films are available for rental at Scarecrow Video (5030 Roosevelt Way NE). *The viewing material will be part of the quizzes and final.*

**READING:** It is essential that you complete all readings, so that you can understand the frame of reference for each lecture as well as be ready to discuss the films. You should have the reading completed by the day that it is listed in the syllabus, and be prepared to ask questions about and discuss the assigned texts. *The reading material will be part of the quizzes and final.*

**LECTURES:** Another key component in the course is the in-class lecture. The lectures provide explanations of the key terms in the course, which provide context for understanding the history of the films. An outline of each week's lectures will be posted as

a PDF file on the course website by Tuesday. You can use the posted notes as a guide to taking notes in class. *The lecture material will be part of the quizzes and final.*

**PARTICIPATION:** Participation is your responsibility, and so you contribute to deciding your participation grade. **Before the final exam, you must submit a self-evaluation of your participation made up of a narrative and a grade on the UW's 4.0 scale.** People participate in different ways, and so I trust that you can be the best judge of your participation. Remember, as well, that part of earning a university education is learning to **speak** to others about complex ideas with thoughtfulness, clarity, and at least apparent ease. I reserve the right to change your proposed participation grade, if I disagree with your self-evaluation. If you miss class routinely, do not give yourself a 4.0 participation.

**QUIZZES:** There will be three in-class quizzes given on the films, readings, and lectures. Quizzes will begin at the beginning of class (so be on time!). Each quiz will be made up of twenty, multiple-choice questions. You will need to bring a blank piece of paper to write your answers to each quiz. You will have ten minutes for each quiz. *Be sure to put your name on your quiz, or you will not receive credit!*

**STUDY QUESTIONS:** You must respond to all four study questions listed in the syllabus. Please answer each question with a one-page answer (typed, one-inch margins, and at least every 1.5 or 2 lines). Study-question responses are due on the Wednesday of the week they are listed in the syllabus by the end of class. I will not accept electronic submissions. If you cannot be in class on the Wednesday questions are due you must turn in your study questions early. *I grade study questions on a pass/no-credit basis. When responses are poor or careless (<2.6), I routinely award no-credit. To earn a 4.0 for the study questions, you must successfully submit all four, three submitted equal a 3.0, and so forth.*

**FINAL EXAM OR FINAL PAPER:** You must complete either a final exam or a final paper, which is worth forty percent of your course grade.

**FINAL EXAM:** The final exam will be comprehensive for the entire course. It will be structured in four parts. The first section will be a text-recognition and discussion section. Here, you will be asked to identify four of five film excerpts from films screened in the course, and to identify the film and director of the excerpts you choose. You will also be asked to explain why the film is significant, and how this particular excerpt exemplifies its significance. The second part of the exam will feature thirty multiple-choice questions, like the ones you answer on the quizzes. The third section will include a list of ten keywords from the course, of which you will be asked to define seven in two or three sentences. In the third part of the exam, you will answer two of four mini-essay questions about the films in the course. This will require knowing the films, readings, and lectures. I will distribute a study guide at least a week before the final, which will help guide your preparation. The exams will be graded on the accuracy, thoroughness, and thoughtfulness of your responses. The final will be held in our usual meeting room (**Thomson 101**) on **Monday, March 15, 2010, 230-420 pm.**

**FINAL PAPER:** The final paper will be an essay drawing on films and readings from the course, which I will evaluate by the criteria set out below. To receive credit it must be typed, double-spaced, 12 pt. font, with one inch margins, and at least seven but not more than nine pages in length (including bibliography). The paper will respond to **one** of several prompts I post on the course website by Monday March 8<sup>th</sup>. The paper will be due in my mailbox in Raitt Hall 318 by 5 PM on Monday, March 15<sup>th</sup>. If the office is locked, you may leave the paper in the “Papers” manila envelope on the departmental door.

**Criteria for Evaluation:** I will evaluate 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. Are the different paragraphs organized both internally and in relation to each other?
4. Does the paper analyze in detail at least two examples from the films and/or readings to support the argument?
5. Does the paper use citations from the readings assigned to support and qualify the analysis, and include a bibliography?
6. Does the paper employ key terms of film analysis in accurate and useful ways?
7. Does the writer display critical thinking and imagination?
8. Is the writing clear and error free?

## **6. COURSE POLICIES**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** The University of Washington is a community dedicated to learning. Ethical expectations of students belonging to the community are defined in the student conduct code (<http://www.washington.edu/students/handbook/conduct.html>). Plagiarism, cheating, and disruptive behavior in class violate the code, and harm your own and others’ learning. Any violations of the code in connection with the course will result in referral to the university administration for appropriate action. Learn more about how to avoid plagiarism, please consult the following resource page on academic honesty, (<http://depts.washington.edu/grading/issue1/honesty.htm>), or speak to me directly.

**GRADES GRIEVANCE POLICY:** If you disagree with the grade you have been awarded and wish to appeal your grade, 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 at least twenty-four hours, but no more than forty-eight hours from the time you receive the grade to deliver a written statement to my post-box in Raitt 318

- (Campus Mail Box 353420) explaining your complaint. (No emails or telephone calls accepted.)
- b. Include in your appeal a way of contacting you, so I can schedule an appointment with you to discuss your written complaint.
  - c. After meeting with you, I will indicate my final decision to you by telephone, email, or mail, your choice.
  - d. If you disagree with my decision, request a meeting with the Chair of the Scandinavian Department, Prof. Terje Leiren and me to come to a final solution.
  - e. In cases involving academic integrity, you may also appeal to the Committee on Academic integrity administered by the college.

**Course Schedule****Week 1: From the Beginnings to a Golden Age (1895-1924)**

M.	1/4	Course Introduction <i>The Lion Hunt (Løvejagten på Elleore, DK, 1907)*</i> 10 min. Nordisk <i>Sir Arne's Treasure (Herr Arnes pengar, 1918, Mauritz Stiller)</i> 106 min. Svensk filmindustri
W.	1/6	Lecture 1: Into The Golden Age of Scandinavian Cinema Read: "Reading a Film Sequence" and "Glossary of Terms for Film Analysis"; Tytti Soila et al. <i>Nordic National Cinemas</i> excerpts 1-6, 146-163; and Tom Gunning, "The Aesthetic of Attractions"

**Week 2: Carl Th. Dreyer (DK, Active Career 1919-1964)**

M.	1/11	<i>The Passion of Joan of Arc (La passion de Jeanne d'arc, 1928, F/DK Dreyer)</i> 110 min., Read: Carl Dreyer Interview
W.	1/13	Lecture 2: The Iconoclast, Carl Th. Dreyer Read: Bela Balazs "The Close Up" and "The Face of Man" (CR)

**Week 3: Practicing Film Analysis**

M.	1/18	<i>No Class Martin Luther King Jr. Day</i>
W.	1/20	<i>Quiz #1</i> Clip Analysis Review: "Reading a Film Sequence" and "Glossary of Terms for Film Analysis" Read: David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's "Style as a Formal System"

DK = Denmark (Danmark); I = Iceland (Ísland); N = Norway (Norge); S = Sweden (Sverige); SF = Finland (Suomi/Finland)

**Week 4: The Scandinavian Studio Film, 1930s-1950s**

M.	1/25	<i>A Woman's Face (Kvinnas ansikte, 1938 SF, Dir. Gustaf Molander)</i> Read: Tytti Soila, "A Woman's Face" ( <i>To be distributed electronically</i> )
W.	1/27	Lecture 3: The Scandinavian Studio Film Read: Susan Hayward, "Classic Hollywood Cinema," "Narrative," "Spatial and Temporal Contiguity"; Kristin Thompson, "Classical Technique"

***Study Question #1***

1. How does Bergman define film as an art form?

**Week 5: Ingmar Bergman (S, Active Career 1944-1982)**

M.	2/1	<i>The Seventh Seal (Det sjunde inseglet, 1966, S, Dir. Ingmar Bergman)</i> Read: Essay by Ingmar Bergman
W.	2/3	Lecture 4: Ingmar Bergman Read: Andrew Sarris "Notes on Auteur Theory, 1962" <b><i>Study Question #1 Due</i></b>

***Study Question #2***

1. Describe precisely two ways in which Bordwell and Elsaesser's arguments differ from one another.

**Week 6: Institution of The Scandinavian Art Film, 1960s-1980s**

M.	2/8	<i>%&amp;@# Off! Images of Finland (Perkele, kuvia Suomesta, 1971),</i> Read: David Bordwell, "The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice"
W.	2/10	Lecture 5: The Scandinavian Art Film Read: Thomas Elsaesser, "European Culture, National Cinema, The Auteur and Hollywood" <b><i>Study Question #2 Due</i></b>

**Study Question #3**

1. Drawing on Harvey and Hjort and readings and discussions of the art film, explain whether *Hamsun* is more an art film or heritage film.

**Week 7: The Heritage Film, 1980s-2000s**

M.	2/15	<i>President's Day Holiday No Meeting</i>  <i>TBA: Alternative Screening of Hamsun</i> (1996, N/DK/S, Dir. Jan Troell) 154 min., Nordisk. Or, view on your own. Read: Selections from <i>The Condition of Postmodernity</i> by David Harvey
W.	2/17	Lecture 6: The Heritage Film Read: Mette Hjort "From Epiphanic Culture to Circulation" <i>Study Questions #3 Due</i>

**Week 8: Auteurs: Aki Kaurismäki (Active Career 1983-)**

M.	2/22	<i>Quiz # 2</i>  <i>Drifting Clouds (Kauas pilvet karkaavat, 1996, SF, Dir. Aki Kaurismäki)</i> , 90 min., Sputnik Oy Read: Toiviainen, "The Kaurismäki Phenomenon"
W.	2/24	Lecture 9: The Aki Kaurismäki Stories Read: Romney, "The Kaurismäki Effect"

**Week 9: Auteurs: Lars von Trier (Active Career 1984- )**

M.	3/1	<i>The Kingdom Parts 1 &amp; 2 (Riget 1 &amp; 2, 1994, Dir. Lars von Trier)</i> , 120 min, Zentropa Productions Read: Stevenson, "The Kingdom"
W.	3/3	Lecture 8: Lars von Trier's Melodramatic Imagination Read: Von Trier Interview

**Study Question #4**

1. Drawing on Bordwell and Altman to support your argument, would you claim that *Let the Right One In* addresses viewers more as an art film or as a genre film?

**Week 10: Genre and New Nordic Cinema, 1990s-2000s**

M.	3/8	<i>Let the Right One In</i> (Låt den rätte komma in, 2007, S, Dir. Tomas Alfredson) 115 min., Co-Producers Chimney Pot, Ljudligan, Fido Film et al. Read: Altman, "What Role Do Genres Play in the Viewing Process"
W.	3/10	<b><i>Quiz #3</i></b> Lecture 7: Genre and the New Nordic Cinema No reading assigned <b><i>Study Question #4 Due</i></b>

**Submit participation grade by email to [akn@u.washington.edu](mailto:akn@u.washington.edu) before final**

**FINAL in Thomson 101 on Monday, March 15, 2010, 2:30-4:20 pm.**