



## Department of Central, Eastern and Northern European Studies

*Velkommen to the Nordic Program!*

### NORD 334: Nordic Contemporary Fiction (in English)

#### Acknowledgement

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) people. The land upon which it is situated has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

#### *Danish*

UBCs Point Grey Campus er placeret på Musqueam-folkets nedarvede, traditionsrige og ikke retsmæssigt afståede territorie. Området, hvorpå det er placeret, har altid fungeret som et rum for læring for Musqueam-folket, som i årtusinder har videregivet deres historie, kultur og traditioner fra én generation til den næste på dette sted.

#### *Swedish*

UBC Vancouver ligger på xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam)-folkets traditionella, nedärvda och icke överlåtna territorium. Det landområde campus är placerat på, har alltid varit en plats för lärande för Musqueam-folket, som i årtusenden har fört vidare sin kultur, historia och traditioner från en generation till nästa på denna mark.

#### COURSE INFORMATION

**Title:** Nordic Studies    **Code:** NORD 334    **Section:** 001    **Credit Value:** 3

**Meeting Times:** M W F, 11 am -12 pm

**UBC Schedule:** <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?page=deadlines>

**Meeting Locations:** Buchanan B313

#### CONTACTS

**Instructor:** Ann-Kathrine Havemose

**Contact:** Make sure to check Announcements on Canvas regularly. This will be our main tool to communicate but you can also email me at

[annkathrine.havemose@ubc.ca](mailto:annkathrine.havemose@ubc.ca) (disclaimer: I will not be answering mails on weekends)

**Office hours:** Mondays 2:30-3:30 in Buchanan Tower 905 or by appointment

**Fika** (the Swedish word for having coffee/tea together):

Drop-in every Wednesday (sept. 13 onwards) **3-4 pm** in the Cenes Lounge (910), 9<sup>th</sup> floor, Buchanan tower. <https://cenes.ubc.ca/events/event/fika-2/>

## DISCLAIMER

The material in this course includes content that might be offensive and upsetting to some readers, such as strong language, reference to and consumption of alcohol and drugs, violence, graphic and sexual imagery. Some also deal with sensitive issues, such as suicide, death, racism, and sexual abuse.

## COURSE STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITIES

In this course we will explore selected works of contemporary Nordic fiction, i.e. Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Icelandic and/or Finnish, through different literary and cultural scopes. The aim of this course is, in part, to give you an idea of contemporary Nordic culture and society through literature, as well as an understanding of Nordic literature in relation to themes, genres and ideas that is prevalent in most Western culture already, and thus build on or create a deeper understanding of the world around you.

Each work of literature will figure as the centrepiece in one of four modules, specifically Nature in Nordic Literature, a Nordic History of Anxiety, Death and Minimalism and Nordic Fantasy. Depending on the module, we will approach each work using different methods and theories used in literary and cultural studies.

### *Student presentations*

Each module will feature one or more student presentations on a topic given to you (instructions will be on canvas → people → group announcements). The presentations (and preparation) will be done in groups.

### *Assignments*

There will be two assignments and two short essays during the semester. Information about each assignment can be found on Canvas.

Over the course of the semester, students will write one **Assignment** (150-450 words) and a **Group Assignment** (750-1000 words per person) without peer-review, and two **Short Essays** of 750 to 1000 words (3-4 pages, double-spaced) with peer-review on select topics. Supported by discussions on writing practice, these short essays will encourage students to develop their critical thinking, writing, and peer review skills. At the end of the semester, students will select one of their two peer-

reviewed drafts to revise and expand into their **Final Essay**, a **Research-Based Revision** (2000 to 2500 words; 8-10 pages, double-spaced) of one of their earlier short essays.

**Handing in Homework:** I will only accept homework posted online or submitted through our course's Canvas site. Homework submitted by email or Google Drive will not be accepted unless previously discussed with me.

DEADLINE of final term paper: December 17th

*Late policies:*

Should you be unable to hand in a written assignment or Final Paper on the given deadline, you can get an extension if you notify your instructor **NO LESS THAN 48 HOURS BEFORE** the deadline. No questions asked.

Any and all extensions requested after this time will only be granted with proof of medical emergency, a valid accommodation letter from Arts Advising or similar.

Continuous tardiness (in-class attendance or assignments) without sufficient explanation will result in lower marks.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course (i.e. with active attendance and participation, completion of reading and writing assignments, and exams) students will be individually and cooperatively able to:

- **Describe** cultural tendencies in Nordic literature and culture from the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and **asses** their impact on cultural and intellectual life.
- **Define** important concepts and ideas currently present in the Nordic cultures and **identify** their relevance in context to Western culture as a whole.
- **Recognize** aspects of belonging and 'otherness', social standing and Nordic social politics in the periods and cultural products discussed.
- **Analyse** texts in context (i.e. to genre, topic, media etc.) and **compare** their content and cultural contexts with other cultural products.
- **Respond** to thematic questions in clear and concise form.
- **Navigate** group settings and other professional interactions in a mature manner that shows respect of your peers' time and presence.
- **Write** and **structure** academic papers and arguments and **analyse** primary texts contextually (i.e. to genre, topic, media etc.) and comparatively.
- **Prepare** and **present** academic research in an organized and effective way.

## LEARNING MATERIALS

**Texts (required, available at UBC Bookstore):**

Aidt, Naja Marie (2019). *When Death Takes Something From You Give it Back*, Coffee House Press

Backman, Fredrik (2019). *Anxious People*, Atria Books (physical book)

Backman, Fredrik (2019). *Anxious People*, narrated by Marin Ireland, Simon and Schuster Audio (audio book – we will be working with both)

Kaaberbøl, Lene (2019). *The Shamer's Daughter*, Pushkin Children's

### **Texts (recommended):**

Kjældgaard, L.H., Møller, L., & Ringgaard, D.Simonsen, P. (2017). *Literature: An Introduction to Theory and Analysis*. London: Bloomsbury Academic. (also available through UBC library and LOCR)

Lundgren, Andrea (2021). *Nordic Fauna*, Peirene Press (selected short stories will be available on canvas)

### **SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND CLASSES (subject to change)**

There will **always be secondary reading**, but this will be posted directly on Canvas rather than written into this syllabus, so **remember to check canvas before every lesson**.

#### **Week 1: Introduction**

Wednesday 09.07: **Syllabus, course structure, assignments and final term paper**

Friday 09.09: **The Nordic countries today**

Assignment #1 due on September 10<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Module 1: Nature in Nordic literature**

##### **Week 2: The natural heritage**

Monday 09.11: **Reading nature**

*Reading:* Hennig, Reinhard et al. (2018). "Introduction" in *Nordic Narratives of Nature and Environment: Ecocritical approaches to Northern European Literatures and Cultures*, Lexington Books, p. 1-9

Hansen, Inger Elisabeth (2003). "A wanderer wanders here" from *Trask, forflytninger i tidas skitne fylde*, trans. May-Brit Akerholt (2012), Poetry International

Wednesday 09.13: **Nature in Norse Mythology**

*Reading:* Larrington, Carolyn. (2014). "The Seeress' Prophecy" *The Poetic Edda*, Oxford University Press (available on canvas)

Friday 09.15: **Romantic and modernist nature**

*Reading:* Nyberg, Julia (1828). *Vårvindar Friska*

Edith Södergran (1984). *Complete Poems*, trans. David McDuff, Bloodaxe Books (selected poems, available on Canvas)

**Week 3: Andrea Lundgren: Nordic Fauna**

Monday 09.18: **Introduction to Nordic Fauna**

*Reading:* Lundgren, Andrea (2021). "The Cat" *Nordic Fauna*, Peirene Press (available on Canvas)

*Student Presentation:* Wolfgang Iser's theory of Blanks

Wednesday 09.20: **Eco-feminism**

*Reading:* Lundgren, Andrea (2021). "The Cat" *Nordic Fauna*, Peirene Press (available on Canvas)

Friday 09.22: **Discourses of Nature**

*Reading:* Lundgren, Andrea (2021). "The Cat" *Nordic Fauna*, Peirene Press (available on Canvas)

**Week 4: Eco-criticism, excerpts from *End of the Ocean***

Monday 09.25: **What is eco-criticism?**

*Reading:* Garrard, Greg and John Dradakis (2011). "Beginnings" in *Ecocriticism*, Routledge (LOCR)

Lunde, Maja (2020). *The End of the Ocean*, trans. Diane Oatley, HarperVia (excerpts)

Wednesday 09.27: **Norwegian Cli-fi**

*Reading:* Lunde, Maja (2020). *The End of the Ocean*, trans. Diane Oatley, HarperVia (excerpts)

Garrard, Greg and John Dradakis (2011). "Apocalypse" in *Ecocriticism*, Routledge (LOCR)

Friday 09.30: **Class discussion: uses of nature in Nordic literature**

*Student Presentation:* Re-cap of module 1

Short Essay #1 due October 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **Module 2: Anxiety in New Nordic Media**

### **Week 5: New Nordic Fiction**

Monday 10.02: STATUATORY HOLIDAY, NO CLASS

Wednesday 10.04: **Introduction to Fredrik Backman's *Anxious People***

*Reading:* Backman, Fredrik (2019). *Anxious People*, Atria Books

Friday 10.06: **Narrator and Characters**

*Reading:* Backman, Fredrik (2019). *Anxious People*, Atria Books

Alber, Jan (2017). "Narrator" in Kjældgaard et al. *Literature: an introduction to theory and analysis*, Bloomsbury Academic (LOCR)

Møller, Lis (2017). "Character" in Kjældgaard et al. *Literature: an introduction to theory and analysis*, Bloomsbury Academic (LOCR)

*Student Presentation:* Narrator in literature

### **Week 6: Anxiety in Nordic literature**

Monday 10.09: THANKSGIVING, NO CLASS

Wednesday 10.11: **Compact Literary History of Anxiety**

*Reading:* Jansson, Tove. "The Fillyjonk Who Believed in Disasters" *Tales from Moomin Valley*, trans. Thomas Warburton, Ernes Benn Limited Henry Z. Walck, inc. (available on Canvas)

Kristen, Tom (1967). "Anxiety" *Havoc*, trans. Børge Gedsø Madsen, University of Berkeley Press.

Thursday 10.12: **Kierkegaard's concept of Anxiety**

*Reading:* Kierkegaard, Søren. "§5 The Concept of Anxiety" in *The Concept of Anxiety: A Simple Psychological Orienting Deliberation on the Dogmatic Issue of Hereditary Sin*, Ed. Tomte, Reidar and Anderson, Albert. B., Princeton University Press (available on Canvas)

Friday 10.13: **Existential angst in *Anxious People***

*Reading:* Backman, Fredrik (2019). *Anxious People*, Atria Books

### **Week 7: Adaptations and translations**

Monday 10.16: **Audiobooks and storytelling**

*Reading:* Backman, Fredrik (2019). *Anxious People*, narrated by Marin Ireland, Simon and Schuster Audio

Have, Iben and Birgitte Stougaard Pedersen (2021). "Reading Audiobooks" in *Beyond Media Borders*, Vol. 1, Palgrave Macmillan, p.198-216 (available on Canvas)

Wednesday 10.18: **Adapting Scandinavia (Netflix)**

*Reading:* Herngren, Felix (2021). "Episode 3" *Anxious People*, Netflix (watch on Netflix)

*Recommended:* Herngren, Felix (2021). "Episode 4" *Anxious People*, Netflix (watch on Netflix)

*Student Presentation:* Character Analysis

Friday 10.20: **Class discussion: Anxiety across media**

*Student Presentation:* Re-cap of module 2

### **Week 8: Group work**

Monday 10.23: **Introduction to Assignment #2 and group work**

Wednesday 10.25: Work from home, Asynchronous class (information available on Canvas)

Friday 10.27: Group work, Asynchronous class (information available on Canvas)

### **Module 3: Death in Nordic literature**

#### **Week 9: Death in Nordic literature**

Monday 10.30: **Introduction to theme and texts**

*Reading:* TBD

Wednesday 11.01 **Death in Nordic children's literature**

*Reading:* Wildmark, Martin and Emilia Dzuibak (2018). *The House of Lost and Found*, Floris Books (excerpt) (available on Canvas)

Birkjær, Betina and Ana Margrethe Kjærgaard (2021). *Coffee Rabbit Snowdrop Lost*, Enchanted Lion Books (excerpt) (available on Canvas)

Nikolajeva, Maria (2017). "Chapter 6: Emotions and Ethics. Implications for Children's literature" in *Affect, Emotion, and Children's Literature*, Routledge (available on Canvas)

*Student Presentation:* the Reader / Reader-Response Theory

Friday 11.03: **How do we talk about death?**

*Reading:* Jansson, Tove (1992). *Moominland Midwinter*, trans. Thomas Warburton, Farrar, Straus & Giroux (excerpt) (available on Canvas)

Aidt, Naja Marie (2019). *When Death Takes Something From You Give it Back*, Coffee House Press

#### **Week 10: Genres of death**

Monday 11.06: **Autobiography or memoir: why write about death?**

*Reading:* Aidt, Naja Marie (2019). *When Death Takes Something From You Give it Back*, Coffee House Press

Aurelius, Eva Hättner (2017). "Genre" in Kjældgaard et al. *Literature: an introduction to theory and analysis*, Bloomsbury Academic (LOCR)

Wednesday 11.08: Affective readings (and singing about death)

*Reading:* Aidt, Naja Marie (2019). *When Death Takes Something From You Give it Back*, Coffee House Press



Aidt, Naja Marie (2008). "163: Har døden taget noget fra dig, så giv det tilbage" in *Højskolesangbogens* 19th edition, mel. Janne Mark (2018) (available on Canvas)

Skov, Kira (2019). "Sorgen Sover" on *I Nat Blir Vi Gamle*, Stunt Records (available on Canvas)

Friday 11.10: **Class Discussion: how can we use literature to cope with death?**

*Student Presentation:* Re-cap of module 3

Assignment #2 (Group) due November 10<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Module 4: Nordic Fantasy**

**Week 11: Fantasy as a Genre**

Monday 11.13: MIDTERM BREAK

Wednesday 11.15: MIDTERM BREAK

Friday 11.17: Fantasy as a genre

*Reading:* Kaaberbøl, Lene (2019). *The Shamer's Daughter*, Pushkin Children's

Webb, Caroline (2014). "Introduction" *Fantasy and the Real World in British Children's Literature: The Power of Story*, Routledge (available on Canvas)

**Week 12: The Ethics of Worldbuilding**

Monday 11.20 Quest-Fantasies

*Reading:* Kaaberbøl, Lene (2019). *The Shamer's Daughter*, Pushkin Children's

Senior, W. (2012). Quest fantasies. In E. James & F. Mendlesohn (Eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature* (pp. 190-199). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (available through LOCR)

Wednesday 11.22 World Building

*Reading:* Kaaberbøl, Lene (2019). *The Shamer's Daughter*, Pushkin Children's

Swinfen, Ann (1984). "Secondary Worlds" *In Defence of Fantasy*, Routledge (available on Canvas)

Friday 11.24 Ethics in Fantasy for Children

*Reading:* Kaaberbøl, Lene (2019). *The Shamer's Daughter*, Pushkin Children's  
Guanio-Uluru, Lykke (2015). *Ethics and Form in Fantasy Literature: Tolkien, Rowling and Meyer*, p 145-158, Palgrave Macmillan (available on Canvas)

Short Essay #2 due November 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Week 13: Can Witches be Heroes?**

Monday 11.27 **Witchy heritage in Nordic Fantasy**

*Reading:* Kaaberbøl, Lene (2019). *The Shamer's Daughter*, Pushkin Children's  
Nikolajeva, Maria (2009). "Othering Gender: New Masculinities, New Femininities" in *Power, Voice and Subjectivity in Literature for Young Readers*, Routledge (available on Canvas)

Wednesday 11.29 **Comparing Heroes (Dina and Harry Potter)**

*Reading:* Kaaberbøl, Lene (2019). *The Shamer's Daughter*, Pushkin Children's  
Webb, Caroline (2014). "Harry Potter and Tiffany Aching", *Fantasy and the Real World in British Children's Literature: The Power of Story*, Routledge (available on Canvas)

Friday 12.01 **Comparing Heroes (Dina, Ronja and Siri)**

*Reading:* Nilsson, Frida (2017). *The Ice Sea Pirates*, Gecko Press (excerpt, available on Canvas)  
Lindgren, Astrid (1981/2018). *Ronja the Robber's Daughter*, Oxford University Press (excerpt, available on Canvas)  
Constanty, Veronica and Viviane M. Herberle (2021). "A Clever Paperback Princess, A Fearless Worst Princess and an Empowered Little Red" *A Multimodal Approach to Challenging Gender Stereotypes in Children's Picture Books*, Routledge (The introduction and the conclusion are the most important)

**Week 14 Last Week of Classes**

Monday 12.05 Class discussion: Nordic fantasy outside of Norden

*Student Presentation: Re-cap of module 4*

Wednesday 12.07: Wrapping up and asking questions

EXAM PERIOD START December 11

Final Term Paper (Research-Based Revision Essay) due December 17<sup>th</sup>.

EXAM PERIOD ENDS December 22

### **ASSESSMENT**

Participation	15%
• (In-class essays 5% ; other participation 10%)	
In-class presentations	15%
Assignment #1	10%
Assignment #2 (group)	15%
Short Essays	20% (10% each with peer review)
Term paper	25%

### **CONTRACT GRADING**

This class uses a grading contract for **some** of its assignments. This means that these assignments are graded based on whether they are handed in (complete) or not (in-complete).

These assignments include the following:

In-Class Essays	5%
Short Essay #1	10%
Short Essay #2	10%

Following the work of Jane Danielewicz and Peter Elbow (see “A Unilateral Grading Contract to Improve Learning and Teaching” for more information), I believe that a grading contract allows me to give more honest evaluative feedback, improves learning and teaching, and is a fuller representation of social-justice-oriented pedagogy in the classroom. Not all students have identical educational backgrounds, nor do they possess the same experience in scholarly writing in the Humanities. This is especially true for CENS and NORD courses, which draw students from diverse academic disciplines and training.

A grading contract, therefore, allows students to produce their best work (on their own terms) and learn from their mistakes and inexperience while striving to meet their own individual learning goals. Furthermore, considering every student in our class is experiencing the COVID-19 global pandemic differently and with different degrees of stress, changes in employment status, caregiving responsibilities, emotional labour and/or anxiety, I want all my students to feel like this course is prepared to meet them where they are at. I believe a grading contract is an inclusive pedagogical practice that more effectively supports the diversity of student experience we are facing today. This may be particularly true with regard to students with disabilities, international students, first-generation students, students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, and students self-isolating. To this end, every assignment with a grading contract will receive complete or in-complete – you either participate or you don't, you either complete the homework or you don't, you either submit your Short Essay and perform the Peer Review or you don't.

**Attendance and Participation:** In accordance with UBC Policies and Regulations, students are expected to attend class regularly. Furthermore, in accordance with CENES's Course Policies, **students may not miss more than 40% of the course's scheduled class sessions, regardless of whether their absences are avoidable or unavoidable.** In the event that a student misses 12 or more hours of class time, they may be considered unable to meet the "learning outcomes" of the course and may therefore be excluded from final examination. Those students who are unavoidably absent from in-person or online class or miss multiple class sessions and their associated in-class assignments must report their absence to me immediately or upon their return to participating in class in order to establish how they should proceed in catching up on missed material. Students may be granted a concession for their absence either by me or, in the case of an extended absence, by the Academic Advising Services of the Faculty of Arts.

**In-Class Essays (5%):** **During class, students will have 5-7 minutes of in-class time to write 150-350 words in response to a prompt.** These short essays offer students the opportunity to reflect on the course material prior to class or group discussion or consolidate their ideas at the conclusion of class or group discussion. Moreover, these short essays afford quieter students or students that don't feel comfortable participating in in-class discussion the opportunity to share their thoughts with me. This is especially important in larger classes, since it is difficult for every student to participate in in-class discussion in a way that I can monitor. **These short In-Class Essays will not be graded for grammar, spelling, punctuation, or syntax; instead, they will be graded for completion. They thereby function as a testament to students' engagement with the course material and proof of their participation in class as well as often form the foundation of in-class discussion and group work.**

However, since these In-Class essays will be assigned through Canvas and posted immediately before class along with the PDF-version of my PowerPoint lecture slides (which also function as lecture notes), these short essays can also be completed at home and, if necessary, outside of class time. This ensures that students don't feel compelled to come to class when sick just for participation marks since participation will be gauged through in-class writing that can be accomplished at home just as easily. **Students are still expected to attend class regularly when**

**able and multiple absences without accommodation will be reflected in their final grade. Regular attendance will account for 7.5% of their final grade.**

**All In-Class Essays will be due Sunday at midnight the week they were assigned. Extension requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, so please email your instructor if you become sick and require additional accommodation.**