

Spring 2009 Course Spotlight...

Scandinavia: Past & Present

EURS 511 - SCAN 560

Instructor: Stefan Bergstrom Tuesdays/Thursdays 11:00am-12:15pm, JRP 201

Course Description

This survey of Scandinavian civilization includes Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The course takes an introductory look at Scandinavia in a comparative framework whenever such an approach is feasible while analyzing the similarities and differences between the Scandinavian nations. Through a series of lectures, discussions and films, we explore geography, history, culture, languages, arts, literature, music, economy, and politics of the Scandinavian countries. The goal of the course is to provide a broad introduction to the Nordic area as a region playing a significant role in the past history and contemporary culture of the world. A list of domestic and Pan-Scandinavian topics, ranging chronologically from the Viking Age to the 21st century, include the following: the role of geography in the formation of the Scandinavian societies, socioeconomic structural changes, cultural and ideological developments, popular movements, interest organizations, the nature and functioning of popular representation and the party systems, the modern Nordic economies and the construction of the contemporary Scandinavian welfare states. The survey also touches upon other subjects as diverse as ethnic and linguistic transformations, environmental issues, as well as popular culture.



The course also explores the role of the Nordic states in international relations both as active agents in their own right and as objects of the policies of other powers. It emphasizes their role in the major issues and conflicts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, their security policies and their participation in international organizations, such as NATO. Nordic cooperative efforts such as "Scandinavianism" and the Nordic Council receive special attention. This survey also stresses Scandinavia's part in European integration as reflected in organizations such as EFTA, EEC and later in the EU. In addition, the course briefly addresses the Nordic world's relationship with the developing countries outside Europe.

The course includes a map exercise/test, a midterm, a final exam, and a 4-6 page research paper about a topic chosen by the student. Some of the reading material is analyzed in the form of small group discussions. There are no special prerequisites. The course is open to all interested KU students.

