COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title	Code
Scandinavian Political crises in the 21st Century XXI amžiaus politinės krizės Skandinavijoje	

Academic staff	Core academic unit(s)
Coordinating: Kristian Nikolaj Rasmussen	Faculty of Philology Centre for Scandinavian Studies

Study cycle	Type of the course unit
First	Optional

Mode of delivery	Semester or period when it is delivered	Language of instruction
Classroom-based	Autumn or Spring	English

Requisites	
Prerequisites: B2 level of English	**Co-requisites (if relevant):** None

Number of ECTS credits allocated	Student's workload (total)	Contact hours	Individual work
5	130	32	98

Purpose of the course unit
This course provides an exploration of major Scandinavian political crises of the 21st century—from the 2005 Mohammed cartoons and Denmark's COVID-era mink cull to Sweden's struggles with gang violence, along with several other cases listed below. Using a set of influential theoretical perspectives—Lakoff's framing theory, Ulrich Beck's Risk Society, Putnam's Social Capital, and Boin & Paul 'T Hart's Crisis Approach—the course investigates how the Nordic governments frame crises, how we can understand our modern society as a risk society, what role social capital plays when governments response in times of crisis, and how crises can be systematically understood and conceptualized.

Learning outcomes of the course unit (module)	- Teaching and learning methods	- Assessment methods
Having completed the course, students will be able: - To account for the most important political crises in Scandinavia in the 21st century - Understand and apply different theoretical frameworks in understanding crises and defend their theoretical choice - To analyze cases of crises using various relevant theoretical frameworks - To be able to communicate their findings in a coherent and interesting way. We will thus work with presentation techniques as a part of the course	- The course employs a combination of close readings of relevant theories and cases. They will be the basis of our analyses and discussions. - Students will actively participate in seminars, present and facilitate discussions - Students will choose which framework(s) to use in analyzing crises in Scandinavia	- 50% active participation and presentation - 50% written exam

Content	Contact hours							Individual work: time and assignments	
	Lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Workshops	Laboratory work	Internship	**Contact hours, total**	**Individual work**	**Tasks for individual work**
1. Introduction to the course and the study plan. What do the students know about Scandinavian politics and its crises?			2				**2**	**8**	Be ready to share your motives for selecting the course, and your expectations for it.
2. Denmark, Greenland and Trump's threats The historical background of Denmark's relationship with Greenland. Definition of the Crisis Approach Discussion: what constitutes a crisis?			2				**2**	**6**	Read Arjen Boin Paul T Hart – The Crisis Approach (2006)
3. Case study: The Climate Crisis			2				**2**	**6**	Ulrich Beck – The Risk Society (1992) Background information: the Fosen conflict
4. Sum up of the risk society and the crisis approach and its application to indigenous communities									Student presentation

5. Jyllands-Posten's Muhammad cartoons Controversy How did the Danish government react to the Mohammed drawings? Analysis using the Crisis Approach. Discussion of the governments approach and the limits to freedom of speech			2				**2**	**6**	Background information: The Mohamed Cartoons
6. Guest lecturer: Mads Julius Elf Will talk about the Mohammed cartoons			2				**2**	**6**	Think of questions you want to ask the speaker
7. The 2015 refugee crisis Analysis and discussion using framing theory. How did Scandinavian governments frame their messaging? Why were there different responses across countries and what are the ramifications today?			2				**2**	**6**	Background information: The 2015 refugee crisis George Lakoff – The Framing of Immigration (2006)
8. The Danish "Ghetto Law" of 2018 The Danish "ghetto law" of 2018 aims at break up segregated neighborhoods and that is by many seen as racist and illegal. Analysis using theory of choice			2				**2**	**6**	Background information: The Danish "Ghetto Law" of 2018 Student presentation
9. Swedish government's challenges with gang crime Analysis of the Swedish government's response to the increase in gang violence using relevant theory			2				**2**	**6**	Background information: Swedish government's challenges with gang crime Student presentation
10. Students choose their own case and present it			2				**2**	**6**	Student presentation
11. Covid: The Danish Mink disaster We will analyze and discuss the Danish government's response to the Covid pandemic through the Mink disaster through the lens of Ulrich Beckøs Risk theory and animal welfare considerations			2				**2**	**6**	Background information: Covid: The Danish Mink disaster Student presentation
12. The Case of Anders Behring Breivik Analysis of the Norwegian response of more democracy and openness after the Breivik terror			2				**2**	**6**	Background information: The Case of Anders Behring Breivik Robert Putnam – Theory of Social Capital (1994)
13. Scandal in the Norwegian Royal Family How did the Norwegian Royal family respond to recent scandals involving the			2				**2**	**6**	Background information: Scandal in the Norwegian Royal Family

Epstein files and a rape case and what was the public response?									Student presentation
14. The financial crisis in Scandinavia and Iceland We will analyse and discuss how the Scandinavian and Iceland governments reacted to the financial crisis of 2008			2				**2**	**6**	Background information: The financial crisis in Scandinavia and Iceland
15. Students choose their own case and present it			2						Present your own case
16. Conclusion			2				**2**	**6**	
Total			**32**				**32**	**98**	

Assessment strategy	Weight %	Deadline	Assessment criteria
Active participation and presentation	50%		50% of the grade is based on active participation in class discussion, reading of the assigned homework and of the quality of the their presentation. Assesed on a 0-10 point scale:
Written exam	50%		Assesed on a 0-10 point scale: 50% of the grade is based on the students' ability to summarize the discussions we had in class in a written exam without access to the internet
Attendance	Compulsory for passing the		To pass the class a minimum of 75% of classes must be attended
AI may be used for additional explanations, practice examples, and task ideas, but must not replace students' own grammatical analysis, critical thinking, or creativity. Use of AI during tests is prohibited. Any use of AI in submitted work must be acknowledged. Students are responsible for checking AI-generated content and ensuring ethical use in accordance with the Faculty of Philology's recommendations and VU regulations.			

Author (-s)	Publishing year	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication	Publishing house or web link
Required reading				
Arjen Boin and Paul 'T Hart	2006	The Crisis Approach	Handbook of Disaster Research	
George Lakoff	2006	The Framing of Immigration		UC Berkely – Rockridge Institute
Ulrich Beck	1992	Risk Society Towards a New Modernity		University of Munich, Germany
Robert D. Putnam	1994	Social Capital and Public Affairs	Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Vol. 47, No. 8 (May, 1994), pp. 5-19 (15 pages)	
Recommended reading				

Last updated: 19-11-2026