



COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title	Code
Nordic Cinema and Film Theory	

Academic staff	Core academic unit(s)
Coordinating: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Atėnė Mendelytė Other:	Institute for the Languages and Cultures of the Baltic, Center of Scandinavian Studies

Study cycle	Type of the course unit
MA	Elective/optional

Mode of delivery	Semester or period when it is delivered	Language of instruction
Seminars, individual study	Autumn semester	English

Requisites	
Prerequisites: English (B2)	Co-requisites (if relevant): N/A

Number of ECTS credits allocated	Student's workload (total)	Contact hours	Individual work
5	101	24	77

Purpose of the course unit

This course offers an in-depth exploration of Nordic cinema and television through key frameworks in film theory. It introduces students to the major aesthetic, philosophical, and sociocultural debates that shape the study of Nordic audiovisual culture. Emphasis is placed on understanding how concepts such as national cinema, minor cinema, auteurism, genre, identity, and affect intersect with the historical and cultural specificities of the Nordic region. Students will develop foundational skills in film analysis and learn to apply theoretical perspectives to a range of Nordic film and television texts. By the end of the course, students will be able to critically interpret Nordic cinema within broader European and global theoretical contexts.

Learning outcomes of the course unit	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods
After completing the course, students will be able to identify and contextualize major movements, genres, and figures in Nordic cinema and television within relevant theoretical debates as well as to compare Nordic cinema with other European and global film traditions through theoretical and conceptual lenses;	Lectures, readings, discussions, presentations, essay writing, close analysis of film sequences	Presentation, essay, participation in class discussions
Apply film studies terminology and conduct basic formal and stylistic analysis of audiovisual works;	Lectures, readings, discussions, presentations, essay writing, close analysis of film sequences	Presentation, essay, participation in class discussions
Use theoretical frameworks (e.g., national cinema theory, minor cinema, auteur theory, feminist/queer media theory, affect theory) to analyze Nordic film and television as well as evaluate how cultural, historical, and institutional	Lectures, readings, discussions, presentations, essay writing, close analysis of film sequences	Presentation, essay, participation in class discussions

conditions shape Nordic cinematic aesthetics and thematic concerns;		
Produce independent analytical work that integrates close reading/viewing, theoretical argumentation, sociocultural contextualization and scholarly research.	Lectures, readings, discussions, presentations, essay writing, close analysis of film sequences	Presentation, essay, participation in class discussions

Content	Contact hours							Individual work: time and assignments	
	Lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Workshops	Laboratory work	Internship	Contact hours, total	Individual work	Tasks for individual work
<p>1. Screen as Culture: Introduction to Nordic Cinema and Film Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key concepts in film theory • Historical foundations of Nordic cinema • Methods of close reading and formal analysis. 	1						1	2	Readings, discussions
<p>2. Rethinking National, Transnational, and (Inter/Supra)national Cinema</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debates on Hollywood, European, and world cinema • Theoretical redefinitions of national cinema • Nordic cinema in global theoretical frameworks. 			2				2	6	Readings, discussions
<p>3. The European/Nordic Auteur and Transcendental Cinema</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auteur theory and its critiques • Bergman, Dreyer, and the construction of the Nordic cinematic auteur • Paul Schrader's definition of transcendental style. 	2		3				5	10	Readings, discussions, film screenings and discussions, preparing a presentation
<p>4. Theorizing Nordic Specificity: Minor Cinema and Small-Nation Frameworks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional and cultural conditions of Nordic cinema • Deleuze & Guattari's concept of minor literature/cinema • Dogma 95 as aesthetic and philosophical intervention. 	1		3				4	7	Readings, discussions, film screenings and discussions, preparing a presentation
<p>5. Nordic Noir: Aesthetic, Cultural, and Philosophical Dimensions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noir as a theoretical category 	1		2				3	15	Readings, discussions, film screenings and discussions,

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Melancholy, landscape, and affect in crime series Nordic noir as a cultural and aesthetic formation. 									preparing a presentation
6. Hybridity in Nordic Popular Cinema <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between realism and fiction Genre blending and aesthetic experimentation Theoretical approaches to melodrama and affect. 	1		2				3	9	Readings, discussions, film screenings and discussions, preparing a presentation
7. Nordic Documentary Traditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentary theory Welfare-state ideology and its documentary critique Representations of social reality. 	1		1				2	6	Readings, discussions, film screenings and discussions, preparing a presentation
8. Minoritarian Aesthetics and Countercultures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sami cinema Queer and feminist film and television Diversification and decolonial perspectives in Nordic media. 	1		3				4	15	Readings, discussions, film screenings and discussions, preparing a presentation
Total	8		16				24	77	

Assessment strategy	Weight %	Deadline	Assessment criteria
Oral Presentation	30	Semester	Assessed from 0 to 3 on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clarity and structure of argument integration of academic sources ability to synthesize and explain theoretical concepts analytical depth and originality
Participation and Discussions	30	Semester	Assessed from 0 to 3 on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> preparedness and engagement with readings ability to apply theoretical concepts to new examples contribution to collaborative discussion critical and creative thinking
Final Essay (Take-home)	40	Exam session	Assessed from 0 to 4 on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> originality and coherence of argument depth of theoretical engagement quality of close analysis effective use of scholarly sources adherence to academic writing standards

Author (-s)	Publishing year	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication	Publishing house or web link
Required reading				
Badley, L., Nestingen, A., Seppälä, J. (eds)	2020	<i>Nordic Noir, Adaptation, Appropriation</i>		Palgrave Macmillan
Crofts, S.	1993	“Reconceptualizing national cinema/s”	14(3)	Quarterly Review of Film and Video
Deleuze, G., Guattari, F., Polan, D. (trans.)	2003	<i>Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature</i>		University of Minnesota Press
Hansen, K. T., Waade, A. M.	2017	<i>Locating Nordic Noir: From Beck to The Bridge</i>		Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
Higson, A.	1989	“The Concept of National Cinema”	30(4)	Screen
Hjort, M., Lindqvist, U. (eds)	2016	<i>A Companion to Nordic Cinema</i>		Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell
Hjort, M., MacKenzie, S. (eds)	2000	<i>Cinema and Nation</i>		London, New York: Routledge
Koivunen, A., Kyrölä, K., Ryberg, I.	2018	<i>The Power of Vulnerability: Mobilizing Affect in Feminist, Queer and Anti-Racist Media Cultures</i>		Manchester: Manchester University Press
Nesting, A.	2008	<i>Crime and Fantasy in Scandinavia: Fiction, Film and Social Change</i>		University of Washington Press
Schrader, P.	2018	<i>Transcendental Style in Film: Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer</i>		University of California Press
Vitali, V., Willemsen, P. (eds)	2006	<i>Theorising National Cinema</i>		BFI Publishing
Recommended reading				
Bergman, I.	2007	<i>The Magic Lantern</i>		University of Chicago Press
Bergman, I.	1995	<i>Images: My Life in Film</i>		London: Arcade Publishing
Bordwell, D., Thompson, K., Smith, J.	2024	<i>Film Art: An Introduction</i>		McGraw Hill
Elsaesser, T.	2005	<i>European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood</i>		Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press
Gustafsson, T., Kääpä, P. (eds)	2015	<i>Nordic Genre Film: Small Nation Film Cultures in The Global Marketplace</i>		Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press
Hjort, M., Bondebjerg, I.	2001	<i>The Danish Directors: Dialogues on a Contemporary National Cinema</i>		Intellect Ltd.
Koskinen, M.	2010	<i>Ingmar Bergman's The Silence: Pictures in the Typewriter, Writings on the Screen</i>		University of Washington Press

Larsson, M., Marklund, A. (eds)	2010	<i>Swedish Film. An Introduction and Reader</i>		Lund: Nordic Academic Press
Martin-Jones, D.	2006	<i>Deleuze, Cinema and National Identity: Narrative Time in National Contexts</i>		Edinburgh University Press
Nagib, L.	2020	<i>Realist Cinema as World Cinema: Non-cinema, Intermedial Passages, Total Cinema</i>		Amsterdam University Press
Orr, J.	2014	<i>Demons of Modernity: Ingmar Bergman and European Cinema</i>		Berghahn Books
Ryberg, I., Kyrölä, K. Koivunen, A.	2021	“Nordic queer cinema”	25(3-4)	Lambda nordica
Westerståhl Stenport, A., MacKenzie, S. (eds)	2015	<i>Films on Ice: Cinemas of the Arctic</i>		Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press

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