

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
WINTER 2020
SCANDINAVIAN 512

**INSTITUTIONS IN SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES:
CINEMA, MUSEUM, AND *THE SQUARE* (Ruben Östlund, 2017)**

Instructor: Amanda Doxtater
doxtater@uw.edu
305-N Raitt Hall

Office Hour: W 3-4 or by appointment
Meetings: M, W 12:30-2:20
Location: Raitt Hall 314

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course takes Nordic film institutes as general models of public humanities spaces and as focused case studies in the role that public cultural institutions and cinema play in shaping publics. This course brings the Nordic region into conversation with cinema traditions in the United States and around the world. Inspired by the recent critical success of Ruben Östlund's film, *The Square* (2017), a scathing cinematic interrogation of the museum and the public sphere, and the recent opening of new National Nordic Museum (NATNO) in Ballard, *Cinema and the Public Institution* focuses on the intersection of cinema, museum, and publics both theoretically, through a series of film screenings, accompanying critical texts, and class discussion, and practically, through coordinating with NATNO in curating a potential film series to be hosted by NATNO. Östlund's films investigate the deterioration of trust among people who inhabit the imagined spaces of the Nordic welfare state, as well of the institutions that seek to manage its resources, in this case, the art museum. This course will delve into this discourse of deterioration and critique, while also exploring the potential to inspire new publics at the intersection of the museum, cinema, and the university.

For most scholars working in cinema traditions outside Hollywood, the link between public institutions and cinema is an obvious one. Nordic national cinemas (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden) have historically been enmeshed with public institutions. State-funded national film institutes in the Nordic countries were established at the height of welfare state expansions in the 1960s, and illustrate how integral cinema is to discourses about art, public good, citizenship, and the public sphere in the region. This course will also consider more recent iterations of this model of public film support and scholarship in the form of the International Sámi Film Centre AS that was founded in 2007 and later reorganized as the International Sámi Film Institute (ISFI) in 2014. International in scope, the support of indigenous filmmaking under the auspices of ISFI retains certain connections to Norwegian funding schemes. Much like the museum, the physical and virtual spaces facilitated by these institutions blend public outreach with academic research, production, and preservation. They house: offices of film officials who distribute government resources in the production of film, research archives, exhibition and lecture facilities, libraries, spaces for educational outreach,

restaurants, and movies theaters for screenings, and preservation facilities. This course considers how the institutional spaces of NATNO in Ballard and the Department of Scandinavian Studies at University of Washington might learn from or approximate the Nordic Film Institutes model of combining academic research with public outreach, to better understand how cinema informs discourses about art, public good, and the public sphere.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Gain familiarity with Nordic cinema institutions as modeling a form of public scholarship and community building, both physically and virtually, as gathering spaces for a variety of publics
- Explore how the **Swedish and Danish Film Institutes** engage with the idea of publics and cinema as a public, educational good
- Describe how film culture(s) in the Nordic region have come to be seen as contributing to the public sphere (preservation and cultivation of a shared cultural heritage, distribution of educational materials, implementation of film policy in relation to gender policy)
- Question / Interrogate whether and how notions of “institution” can inform the close reading and analysis of individual film texts, i.e. as a method for reading a film or expanding what we mean by film to include film production as a project
- Develop professional experience in designing, pitching, and running a curated film series for the general public, in coordination with a public institution, as a form of public humanities scholarship
- Gain practical experience writing a short introductory presentation for one film screened at the Nordic Lights Film Festival, February 2020, curated by NATNO Educational and Cultural Programs Manager, Stina Cowen
- Facilitate professional connections between the Nordic Museum, the UW Scandinavian Department, and the two institutions’ broader constituencies, including students, artists, and general publics of Seattle

PREREQUISITES:

None (all readings and films will be in English or subtitled). Previous experience taking film courses will be helpful, but there are no prerequisites for this course.

ATTENDANCE:

Attendance is recommended at all seminar meetings. I expect each person to participate in a quarter-long, on-going discussion of class material.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION:

Percentages	Assignment Title	Description
20%	Seminar participation	Students are expected to prepare for class and participate actively during seminar discussions
10%	Short reflection paper: "The Square and..." (2-3 pages)	Drawing from readings and discussion on how the Nordic Film Institutes imagine and cultivate publics, analyze the representation of publics or the public sphere in Ruben Östlund's film <i>The Square</i> . Students are also welcome to integrate another geographical area of expertise into their response paper.
10%	Introduce a film at Nordic Lights Film Festival	Each student will be asked to write and deliver a 5-minute oral introduction to a film of their choice included in the Nordic Lights Film Festival at the Uptown Theater. [i.e. information about the film's director, production history, and reception.] This will involve submitting a draft ahead of time, receiving and incorporating feedback, and also performing a dry-run for fellow students in the course.
25%	Final Project	This is a course-long group project designing and planning either a film festival/series or a site-specific museum installation engaging with cinema, the museum (and potentially also the university) as institutional and public spaces.
35%	Course Portfolio	Portfolio will be comprised of 10-12 film series/installation related artefacts. Artefacts may include: annotated lesson plans, pieces of videographic criticism, short reflections about museum exhibitions you went to or films that you watched, poems, the text you wrote for introducing your film at the Nordic Lights Film Festival, etc. The portfolio will also include an intellectual reflection paper. This paper should create a narrative about your course participation and annotate the artefacts you have chosen. (10 - 12 pages)

COURSE SCHEDULE

*****Readings and screenings are should be completed before class on the day they are listed.*****

THEME/MODULE	MONDAY	WED
<p>WEEK 1</p> <p>Introduction to The Public Humanities</p>	<p>1/6</p> <p>Introduction to the course</p>	<p>1/8</p> <p>What are the public humanities? Michael Warner, "Styles of Intellectual Publics"</p> <p>Kathleen Woodward, "The Future of the Humanities"</p> <p>Miriam Bartha and Bruce Burgett, "Why Public Scholarship Matters for Graduate Education"</p>
<p>WEEK 2</p> <p><i>The Square</i></p> <p>Intro to Nordic Film Institutions</p>	<p>1/13</p> <p>Watch: <i>The Square</i> (Östlund, 2017)</p> <p>Read: -Eve Sedgwick, "Interlude, Pedagogic" -Mette Hjort, Ursula Lindqvist, "States of cinema: Nordic film policy" -Olof Hedling, "Cinema in the welfare state: notes on public support, regional film funds, and Swedish film policy"</p>	<p>1/15</p> <p>Watch: <i>Songs from the Second Floor</i> (Roy Andersson, 2000)</p> <p>Read: -Ursula Lindqvist, "The Art of Not Telling Stories in Nordic Fiction Films" -Tommy Gustafsson, Pietari Kääpä, "Introduction: Nordic genre film and institutional history"</p>
<p>WEEK 3</p> <p>Introduction to the National Nordic Museum, Seattle publics?</p>	<p>1/20</p> <p>ML KING DAY</p>	<p>1/22</p> <p>Guest Presentation: Leslie Anderson Director of Collections, Exhibitions, and Programs, NATNO</p> <p>-Acland and Wasson, <i>Useful Cinema</i> Introduction -Wasson, "Film and Art Museum"</p>

WEEK 4	1/27 Kristina Hagström-Ståhl PARSE etc... Berkeley Arts Initiative In terms of Performance	1/29 Guest Presentation: Leigh Mercer Rigoberto Gutiérrez Piñón Watch: <i>Entre Nos</i> (Paola Mendoza and Gloria LaMorte, 2009)
WEEK 5 Intermingled Genealogies: Nordic Film and The Living Museum (Style/Ontology Voyeurism and Immersion)	2/3 Watch: <i>The Parson's Widow</i> (Carl Th. Dreyer, 1920) Read: @@Mark Sandberg, "Mastering the house: performative inhabitation in Carl Th. Dreyer's <i>The Parson's Widow</i> " Mark Sandberg, <i>Living pictures, missing persons: mannequins, museums, and modernity</i> -"The Idea of Effigy" (Ch. 1) -"Figure and Tableau" (Ch. 4)	2/5 Watch: <i>Thorvaldsen</i> (Carl Th. Dreyer, 1948) Read: Mark Sandberg, <i>Living pictures, missing persons: mannequins, museums, and modernity</i> -"Vanishing Culture" (Ch. 6) -"Material Mobility" (Ch. 10) Claire Thomson, "Education, enlightenment, and general propaganda: Dansk Kulturfilm and Carl Th. Dreyer's short films" **Presentation of preliminary thoughts on final project.**
WEEK 6 The Autonomous Child/ The Vulnerable Child (Film) Education and the Welfare State Institutions	2/10 Watch: <i>Elina as if I Wasn't There</i> (Claus Härö, 2002) Read: -Vikman, "Filmguide: Elina as if I wasn't there" -Berggren, Trädgårdh, "Pippi Longstocking, The Autonomous Child"	2/12 Watch: <i>The Reunion</i> (Anna Odell, 2013) Read: -Dancus, <i>Exposing Vulnerability</i> -Introduction, Chapter 3 "Bulling and the Act of Viewing," and Conclusion

	-SFI Film i Skolan	-Koivunen, Kyrölä, Ryberg "Vulnerability as a Political Language"
WEEK 7 Texture / Sex Negativity / Abjection	2/17 NO CLASS: PRESIDENT'S DAY	2/19 (RE) Watch: <i>The Square</i> (Östlund, 2017) Berlant and Edelman <i>Sex, or the Unbearable</i> -"Preface" -"Sex Without Optimism" Bora -"Outing Texture" Hennefeld and Sammond <i>Abjection Incorporated</i> -Introduction Lotringer "Politics of Abjection"
WEEK 8 International contexts revisited	2/24 Guest Speaker: Yomi Braester Professor Cinema Media Studies	2/26 Guest Speaker: Kristina Hagström-Ståhl **Dry run in class for Nordic Lights film introductions.**
WEEK 9 Local contexts revisited	3/2 Guest Speaker: Jasmine Mahmoud Professor of Arts Leadership, Seattle University	3/4 Guest Speaker: Stina Cowan – Public Programs Coordinator NATNO
WEEK 10 In-progress curation workshops + collective preparation for final project pitch	3/9 In-class workshopping	3/11 In-class workshopping

**FINAL PRESENTATION OF FILM SERIES PITCH AT NATIONAL NORDIC MUSEUM:
MARCH 13 (THURSDAY)**

WEB SOURCES:

International Sámi Film Institute: www.isfi.no/en/

Swedish Film Institute: www.sfi.se

Filmarkivet: www.filmarkivet.se/sv/English/

(Part of a cool project to digitalize small Swedish cinema heritage.)

Danish Film Institute: www.dfi.dk/English.aspx

Finnish Film Foundation: www.ses.fi/en/introduction.asp

Norwegian Film Institute: www.nfi.no/english/

Icelandic Film Centre: www.icelandicfilmcentre.is

Swedish Archive for Queer Moving Images [SAQMI, Anna Linder]:

<https://annalinder.se/sv/>

**Filmography [Museum Films and Public Humanities Seminar Films] not necessarily
screened in this class:**

Entre Nos (Paola Mendoza and Gloria LaMorte, 2009)

Songs from the Second Floor (Roy Andersson, 2000)

Museo (Alonso Ruizpalacios, 2018)

The Price of Everything (Nathaniel Kahn, 2018)

The Square (Ruben Östlund, 2017)

Sami Blood (Amanda Kernell, 2016)

Museum Hours (Jem Cohen, 2012)

The Final Member (Jonah Bekhor, Zach Math, 2012)

Russian Ark (Alexander Sokurov, 2002)

Elina: As I Wasn't There (Klaus Härö, 2002)

The Thomas Crown Affair (John McTiernan, 1999)

La Ville Louvre (Nicolas Philibert, 1990)

The Reunion (Anna Odell, 2013)

House of Wax (André De Toth, 1953)

Thorvaldsen (Carl Th. Dreyer, 1948)

Bringing Up Baby (Howard Hawks, 1938)

Blackmail (Alfred Hitchcock, 1929)

The Parson's Widow (Carl Th. Dreyer, 1920)