

Legends, Folklore, and Fairytales

Content

We begin with an exploration of Scandinavia's Modern Breakthrough, a literary movement that used social realism to critique, among other issues, gender inequality and sexual freedom. We will then trace the trajectory of Sweden's progressive attitudes toward gender equality and sexuality by looking at changes in the home, media, the arts and government. We will also question our perceptions of Scandinavia as a sexually progressive region and how this informs our own understanding of sexuality.

Course objectives

The aims and objectives of this course are to gain factual knowledge about literary, historical and political events in Scandinavia that helped to shape today's ideas of gender and sexuality, and to gain a broader understanding and appreciation of issues affecting sex and gender equality.

Schedule

Week 1

Day	Topic	To read in advance
Monday	Course Introduction Scandinavian culture and folk belief	
Tuesday	Norse Mythology: Gods and Elves	Readings from <i>The Poetic Edda</i>
Wednesday	Heroes and the Volsungs	Readings from <i>The Poetic Edda</i> ; excerpts from <i>Saga of the Volsungs</i>
Thursday	Saga of the Volsungs	Excerpts from <i>Saga of the Volsungs</i>

Week 2

Day	Topic	To read in advance
Monday	Folktales of Sweden and Swedish-speaking Finland	Selected tales of Jakob Glader and Johann Bäckström
Tuesday	Folktales of Norway, Denmark, and Iceland	Selected tales of Olav Austad, Ane Hansen, Herdís Jónasdóttir
Wednesday	Folk belief, witchcraft, and magic	Handouts
Thursday	Scandinavian legends, stories, magic and beliefs	Selected stories from <i>Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend</i>

Week 3

Day	Topic	To read in advance
Monday	Introduction to Finnish Folk Poetry and Arctic Folklore	Excerpts from <i>A Trail for Singers</i>
Tuesday	Hans Christian Andersen	The Snow Queen, The Shadow
Wednesday	Andersen and the Fairytale imagination	The Little Mermaid, The Nightingale
Thursday	Modern folktales: Urban Legends and Twitter Stories	

Language of instruction

This course is offered in English.