

# SCANDINAVIA AND THE NEW EUROPE

**First Term Seminar 2004 -- # FTS 100-306**

**Room: Confer 124**

**Time: 9:00-9:50 MTWF**

**Instructor: Roland Thorstensson (Confer 229)**

**Office Hours MTW: 2:30-3:30; Th: 10:30; F: 8:00 (additional office hours by appointment)**

**Telephone:**

**Home: 934-2345**

**Office: 933-7423**

**E-mail: [rollo@gac.edu](mailto:rollo@gac.edu)**

**Class alias: f-fts-100-306@gac.edu**

## Course description:

### SCANDINAVIA AND THE NEW EUROPE

This seminar introduces first-time college students to critical thinking and a discussion of values, and develops oral and written communication skills, through an investigation of the history, literature, art, and ways of life of the Scandinavian people. Are there really *five* different Scandinavian countries? What have they contributed to European culture? What are their roles in the New Europe? Is there a reason why Scandinavians often make names for themselves as peacekeepers and mediators in world conflicts? Students will examine major developments and issues in Scandinavian culture from the Middle Ages to the present day and read works of fiction that reflect life and thinking in contemporary Scandinavia. We will meet Viking kings and Icelandic explorers; we will acquaint ourselves with Gustavus II Adolphus, Carl von Linné (Linnaeus) and Alfred Nobel; we will examine emigration and immigration, the evolution of the Scandinavian welfare state, and Scandinavia and the European Union; and we will also look contemporary Nordic "youth culture," looking, for instance, at popular music for clues to an understanding of this culture.

### GENERAL OBJECTIVES, GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS

Like all First Term Seminars, this course has two basic objectives: It will introduce you to the active life of the mind (critical thinking, discussion of values, effective oral and written communication). Like all other First Term seminars, it also has a more defined topic. Ours deals with Scandinavia and its place in Europe. The two objectives are not separate, of course. You will apply critical thinking and receive the tools for doing so while reading, writing and talking about different "sources" on Scandinavia.

We express ourselves in different ways. The way we express ourselves is most often related to cultural conditioning; economic, social, political and religious factors help to form our identity and value system. In this course, we will think, talk and write about the distinctiveness and values of the Nordic people. To do that meaningfully, we will learn to identify, describe, justify or question different values and value systems—including our own--and aspire to understand all these values and value systems in their proper cultural and temporal context.

Below are some questions that you will be asked to explore and answer. They involve evaluation of sources (primary/secondary/hearsay) and placing specific facts (about Scandinavia) in a larger and relative context (European/international) and help you establish criteria for comparing

cultures.

- How does one define culture?
- What are we looking for when we try to establish what typifies a particular culture?
- What are reliable/less reliable/not reliable sources of information about a given culture? How do we test the reliability of a source?
- Is there a common Nordic culture or is it perhaps more correct to talk about several Nordic cultures?
- What will happen to Nordic identity, as the different Nordic countries become integral parts of a European Union?
- And what about national stereotypes: Why do the Finns think the Swedes are so “gregarious and loud”? Why do the Swedes find the Norwegians so “insufferably nationalistic” and the Danes so “sloppy and carefree”? Why do the Danes find the Swedes so “officious and humorless.”? Why do many Scandinavians find Americans “so loud, proud and self-sufficient”? What are stereotypes based on? Do they serve any purpose whatsoever?

**An ultimate goal for each one of us** is to learn how to take responsibility for our own learning and not expect that knowledge is something we buy or something simply given to us. Ultimately, being educated may mean that we have learned, accepted and like the fact that we have a lot more to learn. From others and together with others.

## **OTHER IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT THE COURSE AND SOME PROCEDURAL MATTERS:**

### **Required texts**

(listed alphabetically by author's last name)

Claes Britton, *Sweden & Swedes*  
Marianne Fredriksson, *Simon's Family*  
Andrea Lunsford, *The Everyday Writer*  
Magnus Magnusson/Hermann Pálsson (transl.), *The Vinland Sagas*  
Liza Marklund, *The Bomber*  
Vilhelm Moberg, *Unto A Good land*  
Mikael Niemi, *Popular Music from Vittula*  
Coursepack (referred to as CP in your weekly schedule)  
and some short stories, poems, and articles handed out to you.

I also strongly recommend that you buy a good dictionary.  
Let it become your intimate friend!

### **Satisfaction of Area Requirements**

This course satisfies the General Education Distributional Requirements in three areas:

Humanities (Meaning and Value, the Historical Process, the Use of Language)  
Foreign Cultures  
Writing

As a **Humanities** course, *Scandinavia and the New Europe* focuses on reading and analyzing both fiction and non-fiction, and attempts to address the following questions: What specific subject matter(s) do our writers present? How can we, while reading a particular work, establish when it was written? Why, for what purpose (or artistic intention), is the particular work written?

How (form, bias) is it presented?

As a **Foreign Cultures** course, *Scandinavia and the New Europe* looks at foreign cultures from different angles. We will learn about the foreign region called Scandinavia and its place in the European Union, and also hear what the Scandinavians have found to be foreign about the U.S.

The writing component (**WRIT**) of the course will be met through several different types of writing assignment and exercises. Here are the more formal ones:

### **The Journal**

Everyone keeps a journal of thoughts and reflections provoked by the course and activities related to it.

The journal is not your notebook. You need a separate notebook for class notes, research notes and other quick entries. In your journal you write brief summaries of class discussions, ideas that you find particularly noteworthy, and questions from your readings that you would like to raise in class (or explore on your own) Your journal entries should be typed, double-spaced and placed in a ring binder. Add page numbers for me to refer to when I make comments about specific entries.

You should feel encouraged to experiment with different kinds of written expression. There will be days when you feel inspired to write a lot and days when you have no inspiration whatsoever. Even though you have a great deal of freedom as to what you write in your journal, there are some minimum requirements:

After every class period you write something which describes or incorporates, as you see it,

- the most important idea presented during the class
- the most important questions raised (whether they were answered or not) or
- the question you wish you would have raised if you had been more accustomed to asking questions in class (or perhaps the question that came to you after class).

In your coursepack (CP VIII, after Grading Criteria for Papers)), you will find some help in developing a "good" journal. It deals with Rubrics (Journal Rubrics, Rubrics for a Reflective Journal, Rubrics for a Synthesis Journal). Look at the questions posed on these pages and let them guide you.

A final minimum requirement is that your entries--long or short--should bear evidence of your having tried to articulate your idea(s) and question(s) in the clearest and most literate way. Incomplete sentences will not suffice (unless you are experimenting with poetry or writing a prose poem).

Bring your journal to class every day. Sometimes you will be asked to share entries, summaries, thoughts, and questions with one another. You will also hand in your journal together with your midterm. It will be returned to you with my comments after the midsemester Reading Days/ Fall Break.

During the last two weeks of classes, you will each give an **oral class presentation**: a summary of the contents of your journal will comprise a large part of each presentation (approximately 10 minutes per student).

**And on Monday, December 13** (the official Lucia Day), you hand in your

journal. It should by then have been edited a final time--if necessary--and include a section which discusses whether you feel that we as a class and you as an individual have achieved the goals implicit in the General Objectives listed at the beginning of this syllabus (pp. 1-2). If you think the objectives have been achieved, how were they achieved? If you think we didn't achieve our goals, what could we have done better? Did you achieve your own personal goals?

**Other writing assignments (all must be typed except for the first one):**

- **Images of Scandinavia and the Scandinavians (in class)** - assigned Wednesday, Week I, (hearsay information, preconceptions, and facts)
- Summary of *Deflating Hoaxes: The Curse of the Runestone* Assigned Week II (assignment in full is in CP II)
- **People on the Move** (see schedule for Week IV for more details)  
This paper, 6-8 pages in length, is due on Wednesday, December 1. A prospectus (or complete first draft) is due on Friday, October 22 Also see *Criteria for Grading Papers* and *Rubrics for Research Papers* (CP VIII) for more ideas as to what is expected.
- **"Cultural /Generational Clashes"** (you will come up with appropriate title) – group project on *Show Me Love* and *Cold Fever* (see Schedule for Week X for more details).  
Class presentations on Friday, November 12 and Monday, November 15. The written versions are due those days as well.

We will discuss all papers, some in class, some in individual conferences. Papers are due on the dates listed. Expect to get most of them back for at least partial revisions. You are also allowed to rewrite a paper with which you (or I) are not satisfied. Your final grade will be an average of grades of first and final copy.

In addition to the help with writing that I provide, **The Writing Center** is well equipped and well staffed to help you overcome "normal problems" (writer's block, deciphering writing assignments, uncertainty about writing mechanics). Here are some messages directly from the Writing Center:

**The W Course**

FTS serves as one of your three required **WRIT** (writing intensive) or "W" courses at Gustavus. As such, you can expect to write often, formally and informally, and to revise your formal work before a final grade is assigned to it. Peer response is a major component, and you'll consider the comments of peers *and* professor when you revise. All work should be documented according to MLA [fill in your style of choice here!] style as discussed in Andrea Lunsford's *Everyday Writer*, our required handbook.

**The Writing Center**

At the Writing Center, you'll work with a peer tutor one-on-one: you can talk frankly about your writing concerns and receive on-the-spot feedback. The Writing Center is not a proofreading service; rather, it is a peer teaching facility that helps you to clarify your thinking, structure your papers, develop evidence, hone your style, and practice self-editing skills. Please call x6027 for hours; see also <http://www.gac.edu/oncampus/writingcenter/>.

Learn to view **FBL -- Folke Bernadotte Library** -- as the center of learning on this campus. Get to know the collections and how to access them as quickly as you can; learn how to access information from other libraries and data bases; and get to know the librarians who will help you navigate and teach you how to navigate by yourself.

## **Collaborative Learning, Attendance, Testing, Assessing, and Grading**

We learn from each other. Our premise should be that we all have equally much to contribute to the class. And contributions are not just letting others know how much knowledge we possess but equally much our demonstrating a willingness to share opinions, and, above all, a readiness to ask questions. In order to contribute you have to be in class. Absences are tantamount to letting your classmates down at the same time as you limit your own chances to let us all know what you know or want to know. In fact, presence in class of your mind and body will be one of the factors taken into account when I give you your final course grades. Factors used for determining the final grade are:

Papers	30%
Oral presentations and journal	30%
Midterm	15%
In-class work	25%

I will not require a portfolio, but we will discuss in class the value of keeping one.

## **Other information**

### **Mission Statement for the Department of Scandinavian Studies**

The mission of the Department of Scandinavian Studies is to provide opportunities for students to learn about the Scandinavian countries' cultural contributions, their place in history, as well as their varied roles in today's world. Toward those ends, the department offers courses, taught in English and intended for both majors and the general student, in Nordic literature, Nordic history--including emigration/immigration history--and interdisciplinary courses on Nordic culture. All students, majors and non-majors, are viewed as prospective world citizens, whose success will be enhanced by their having good communications skills and an ability to discern and respect cultural differences. The department believes strongly that a true understanding of a given culture can not be gained without knowledge of the language or languages spoken within that culture. The department's mission, therefore, includes teaching student majors to become competent in at least one of the Nordic languages. Majors and minors are also strongly encouraged to spend at least one semester in the Nordic country whose language they study to further hone their language skills and develop a deeper understanding of Scandinavian Studies as an academic discipline.

### **Department Outcomes**

#### **Applicable to majors and minors:**

1. Students will have a basic knowledge of the development of the Nordic countries and the distinctiveness of Nordic culture as reflected in history, literature and the arts.
2. Students will be aware of important issues and concerns in the Nordic countries today.
3. Students will learn to appreciate the Nordic area as a multicultural and multiethnic area and recognize its links with the rest of the world.
4. Students, while acquiring good reading, writing and speaking skills in Swedish (in exceptional cases another Nordic language), will learn to understand that foreign language study, *per se*, is a cornerstone of a liberal

- arts education.
5. Students, through campus courses, internships and experiences in a Nordic country, will receive a base for comparative value judgments about social systems, the use of environment, public and private morality, and religious traditions in a broader, international context.
  6. Students, in the department's many courses which focus on critical thinking and on improving writing and communication skills, will become prepared for graduate school in Scandinavian Studies or related fields.

**Applicable to the general student taking courses in the department:**

1. Students will learn to appreciate the Nordic area as a multicultural and multiethnic area and recognize its links with the rest of the world.
2. Students will be aware of important issues and concerns in the Nordic countries today.
3. Students will receive a base for comparative value judgments about social systems, the use of environment, public and private morality, and religious traditions in a broader, international context.
4. Students, in the department's many courses which focus on critical thinking and on improving writing and communication skills, will become prepared for a variety of occupational fields.
5. Students who are enrolled in the department's language courses will learn to understand that foreign language study, *per se*, is a cornerstone of a liberal arts education.

# **Academic Honesty**

## **HONOR CODE**

As a community of scholars, the faculty and students of Gustavus Adolphus College have formulated an academic honesty policy and honor code system, which is printed in the Academic Bulletin and the Gustavus Guide. As a student at Gustavus Adolphus College I agree to uphold the honor code. This means that I will abide by the academic honesty policy, and abide by decisions of the joint student/faculty Honor Board.

## **HONOR PLEDGE**

On my honor, I pledge that I have not given, received, or tolerated others' use of unauthorized aid in completing this work.

### **Charge**

If Carro can, we can - om carro kan så  
kan vi

# Weekly Schedule FTS 2004: Scandinavia and the New Europe

## Daily Topics and Important Information

<b>Week One</b>	<b>September 8-10</b>
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Wednesday, September 8

Introduction to course; procedures  
First writing assignment, due THIS HOUR: *Scandinavia, the Scandinavians, and I* (10 minutes of spontaneous writing)

Friday, September 10

Scandinavia and/or Norden; the people(s) of the European North; your (pre)conceptions of the Nordic area and its people (sample of journal entries)  
**Reading (for today):** *SWEDEN & THE SWEDES* (pp. 10-13 and 26-31) Read critically as a case study of “national profiling.”  
Objective information? Any bias? How complete a picture is presented? Any information, helpful to understand a given culture, that is missing?

<b>Week Two</b>	<b>September 13-17</b>
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Monday, September 13

More “Nordic concepts” introduced

**Reading (for today):** *SWEDEN AND THE SWEDES* (pp. 15-25) Also start reading *The Vinland Sagas*

Tuesday, September 14

Does it really matter who discovered America? The significance of Iceland and Icelandic culture; the Vikings  
**Reading (for today):** *The Vinland Sagas* (including the introduction);

**CP II**

Wednesday, September 15

Persisting images: Minnesota vikings

**Reading:** *Deflating Hoaxes: The Curse of the Runestone*, article by John Whittaker (handout); W-assignment (see CP II)

Friday, September 17

*The Things They Carried* by Tim O’Brien was last year’s common reading. Let’s talk about the things we carry, our own formative experiences...



## Week Three

September 20-24

- Monday, September 20  
The Nordic region today. Group work, reports and discussion of an article in *The Economist* (June 2003):  
5 groups with 3 members, each group reporting on one Nordic country. One group focuses on what keeps Norden together, what keeps it apart from the rest of Europe, and what seems to make each country “unique.”  
**Reading:** “*Dancing to a New Tune*” (handout)
- Tuesday, September 21  
**Late Registration Deadline Today**  
Reports and discussion continued (see yesterday)
- Wednesday, September 22  
How the Great Emigration affected the Nordic countries...and America  
**Reading:** *Unto a Good Land* by Vilhelm Moberg;  
CP III has some additional background material
- Wednesday, September, 22  
Julie Otsuka lecture in the evening: *When the Emperor Was Divine*
- Friday, September 24  
Reflections on Wednesday night’s lecture and more  
*Unto a Good Land*

## Week Four

September 27 – October 1

- Monday, September 27  
We'll meet in Folke Bernadotte Memorial Library  
**Paper writing** – assign a research paper: **People on the Move**. You may write about the Vikings, the people of the Great Emigration, Moberg’s emigrant novels, family history, and recent immigration to the Nordic countries. Consider questions like these: Why do people move from one place to another (push- and pull-factors)?; What do receiving nations gain from an influx of immigrants, what “worries” might some people have about an open immigration policy?; Why/should we strive for cultural diversity? (be sure to define clearly what you mean by cultural diversity)  
\*\* SEARCHES/PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES/HOW THE LIBRARY CAN HELP US\*\*  
  
**Your paper should be 6-8 pages long. First drafts are due Wednesday \*\*\*\*. Final drafts are due on Wednesday, November \*\*\*.**
- Tuesday, September 28  
Carl von Linné (Linnaeus) and his world – We’ll Meet at the Linnaeus Interpretive Center

Wednesday, September 29

Roland tells you about the other parts of Moberg's emigration tetralogy; Scenes from *The New Land* (film by Jan Troell) and music from *Kristina from Duvemåla* (musical by Björn Ulvæus and Benny Andersson)

**Reading:** explore Internet (search words: Moberg, *Kristina from Duvemåla*, Björn Ulvæus, Benny Andersson)

Discussion of *Unto a Good Land* continues.

**(Also see assignment for October 1 and 4 and start getting organized)**

Friday, October 1

Role-play (In Borgeson cabin): Imagine you are one of Moberg's emigrants. It's 1850 and you have just arrived in Minnesota. You are now an immigrant, cut off from your old homeland. Talk about yourself to an imagined audience (who you are, why you left your country of birth, what you expect to find in America)

#### HOMECOMING – FAMILY WEEKEND

<b>Week Five</b>	<b>October 4 – 8</b>
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Monday, October 4

Role-play continues (In Borgeson cabin)

#### NOBEL CONFERENCE OCTOBER 5-6

Tuesday, October 5

Alfred Nobel and his Prizes – Short class  
Assignment regarding Nobel Conference: EFFECTIVE OR AFFECTIVE note-taking

**Reading:** CP IV

Wednesday, October 6

No class – attend Nobel and get older

Friday, October 8

Only yesterday:  
The Evolution of the Welfare State—Nordic Socialism/Social Democracy/Nordic capitalism

**Reading:** CP V and separate handouts

**Reading:** CP V and separate handouts

<b>Week Six</b>	<b>October 11-15</b>
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Monday, October 11

The Nordic region and Europe - today and tomorrow.

**Reading:** CP V and separate handouts

Tuesday, October 12

Lingering aspects of the Welfare State:

**Reading:** CP V (Women and men in Scandinavia);  
"The Law of Jante/ The Jäntelaw;

Wednesday, October 13

***People on the move:***

From ethnic homogeneity to ethnic heterogeneity: How the Nordic area has become "the new land" to many immigrants and refugees. Cultural diversity, what does it really mean? Does it mean different things to different people? Benefits/ "problems" Diversity on this campus: Do we want a more diverse college? What do we mean when we say that? What is the opposite to diverse?

**Reading:** CP III and dictionaries

Friday, October 15

Visit to Career Center (Campus Center)

**FAMILY WEEKEND BEGINS**

<b>Week Seven</b>	<b>October 18-22</b>
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Monday, October 18

Invite International students.  
Discussion with European students about their feelings toward their own nations, the EU and USA  
Assignment: **Prepare questions for visitors. Sum up discussion in your journals.**

Tuesday, October 19

"The Americanization of the Global Village" (separate article by Steinar Bryn)

Wednesday, October 20

Midterm strategies; test-taking; review; Class discussion about writing in general and about your major writing assignment specifically. Perhaps visitor from Writing Center.

Friday, October 22

**Final Examinations for Half-Semester Courses; Midterm for us; Hand in journals AND prospectus of paper (bibliography, opening paragraphs, sections). A complete first draft of paper would of course be even better.**

**FALL BREAK/ READING DAYS**

**OCTOBER 23-26**

<b>Week Eight</b>	<b>October 25-29</b>
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Monday, October 25

READING DAY

**Reminder:** Start reading *Simon's Family* by Marianne Fredriksson

Tuesday, October 26

READING DAY

Wednesday, October 27

Classes resume

Discussion of journal and midterm;  
What is good writing?

We start discussing *Simon's Family*, novel by  
Marrienne Fredriksson

**(MIDTERM GRADES DUE)**

Friday, October 29

Why not study abroad: Discussion of different opportunities  
for study abroad. We invite representative from department of  
International Education and a few international students.  
Assignment: You prepare questions for them.

<b>Week Nine</b>	<b>November 1-5</b>
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January Term and Spring Registration November 8-23

Monday, November 1

*Simon's family*

Tuesday, November 2

*Simon's family*

Wednesday, November 3

What Europe said about the election:

Friday, November 5

Gustavus Adolphus Day (tomorrow)

Who was this Gustav II Adolf, anyway? (His Day is  
November 6). We will listen to Max von Sydow's chapel  
presentation on him and discuss how different people and  
groups have viewed him over the years.

**Reading:** CP VII

<b>Week Ten</b>	<b>November 8-12</b>
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Monday, November 8

Clashes between old and new: *Show Me Love* (film by Lukas  
Moodyson) or *Cold Fever* (film by Fridrik Thor Fridriksson)  
We'll divide into two groups, each group watching one film.  
We will screen the films in the evening, using different rooms  
in Confer.

Preliminary discussions of films and written collaborative  
projects assigned. These include:

- a plot summary

- an analysis of the film’s messages including its bias
- preparation of a bibliography for someone wanting to write a critical paper on the film in question.
- preparation of a film announcement persuading the public to come and see it (using both marketing techniques and rational arguments)
- preparation of a letter to the editor from an irate viewer who condemns the film on some grounds

For this assignment, you will work in groups (2-3 students per group) and prepare a collaborative paper/presentation for Friday this week, and next Monday. You will receive more detailed handout on what is expected. This handout is reprinted in your course pack (CP VIII)

Tuesday, November 9

Nordic religiousness: the Old Gods; the devout Christians; the religious atheists; the atheists; the agnostics, the pantheists, the humanists

**Assignment:** Explore the meaning of the above terms and concepts

**Reading:** “Religion in Sweden” (CP VII)

Wednesday, November 10

From Simon to the Sami, an Indigenous People of the Scandinavian North -- Invite representative from Diversity Center

**Reading:** CP VI

Friday, November 12

Course Withdrawal Deadline

Presentation of group project on *Show Me Love*

<b>Week Eleven</b>	<b>November 15-19</b>
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Monday, November 15

Presentation on *Cold Fever*

Tuesday, November 16

Conferences about Research Paper  
(Stay tuned: separate schedule for these conferences, some on class time, others at other times)

Wednesday, November 17

Conferences about Research Paper

Friday, November 19

Discussion of paper writing in class: each student presents his/her thesis and gives a synopsis of paper.

<b>Week Twelve</b>	<b>November 22-26</b>
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Monday, November 22

Growing up north of the Arctic circle.  
Reading: *Popular Music from Vittula* by Mikael Nemi

Tuesday, November 23

More popular music

Wednesday, November 24

Popular music of all kinds

**THANKSGIVING BREAK NOVEMBER 25-28**

<b>Week Thirteen</b>	<b>November 29-</b>
<b>December 3</b>	

Monday, November 29

...and the Music plays on: From Jussi to Robyn, Cardigans  
Kent and the Hives DJs: Roland and...  
**(CP VIII)**

Tuesday, November 30

How do we assess, evaluate and grade?  
**Reading:** the pages on rubrics, assessment ,and grading that  
are part of **CP VIII**

Wednesday, December 1

A more violent society: Why?  
**Reading:** Liza Marklund, *The Bomber*

**Thank you for giving me the final draft of your Research Paper today!**

Friday, December 3

*The Bomber* continued

<b>Week Fourteen</b>	<b>December 6-10</b>
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Summary Presentations all week (see pages 3-4 and CP VIII)

<b>Week Fifteen</b>	<b>December 13 - 17</b>
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Monday, December 13

We finish our Summary Presentations and...

Tuesday, December 14

Who am I? Why am I here? What really matters? Where am I  
headed., and how can I make a difference in the world? Dr  
Chris Johnson, Director of the Center for Vocational  
reflection, will help us in a discussion of these important  
questions. We will then continue our discussion of these  
questions tomorrow...

Wednesday, December 15

...when we will narrow our focus: How have courses you  
have taken this semester, your FTS in particular, and  
experiences you have had since you came to Gustavus, helped  
you answer the questions above?

last day of classes

Thursday, December 16

## **Reading Day**

**FINAL EXAMINATIONS**

**...finns det några snälla barn...?**