



THE DEPARTMENT OF SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES

HEJ OCH VÄLKOMNA!

AUTUMN 2012

Visiting Faculty

The Department welcomes Visiting Assistant Professor Carl Olsen for the coming academic year. He will teach three classes in the Swedish language and two Scandinavian area studies courses.

Carl completed his doctorate at the University of California, Berkeley, on the Viking Age “shield poems” as ekphrases. He has taught courses on Old Norse language and literature, Viking and Medieval Scandinavia, Scandinavian folklore, and Norse mythology.

Carl will teach a January Term course on Norse mythology, and in the spring will teach a special topics course on “Other Worlds” in Scandinavian literature, from the ancient to the contemporary.

- To find us on Facebook search: “Gustavus Adolphus College Scandinavian Studies”
- Follow us on the departmental blog at: <http://scandinavian.blog.gustavus.edu>
- Join us Saturday, October 13, 2012 (Homecoming) from 5:30-7:30 for our third annual department and alumni barbeque. For details, RSVP to dcomstoc@gustavus.edu.

Note from Incoming Chair Kjerstin Moody

As summer transitions in to fall here in St. Peter, I am reminded, as always, of what a beautiful place Gustavus is to be. The leaves on the trees are just beginning to change from green to orange, and the corn in the fields surrounding campus is slowly being harvested. These changes happen simultaneously with the students beginning to return to campus—and with the first-year students making their inaugural move to campus. It’s a time of a lot of excitement, energy, and heart.

As you read through this second annual Department of Scandinavian Studies’ newsletter you will see that the 2011-2012 year was a rich and busy one. Though there was much to highlight, what these pages can never fully convey is the amazing energy of the students, the faculty, the guest professors and lecturers, the alumni of the Department who return—this collection of people, learning and growing together, comprise the heart of the Department.

As we enter the 2012-2013 academic year, we find this same heart with a few transitions. The Department is happy to welcome visiting assistant professor Dr. Carl Olsen. We welcome him while wishing our wonderful colleague Dr. Helena Karlsson all the best as she begins a new position at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, Hungary. During the 2012-2013 academic year, the Department will conduct a tenure-track search to fill the position Helena held for five years. As her colleagues for three years and two years, respectively, Glenn and I are most grateful for her vision, energy, and collaborative spirit, and we wish her all the best.

In 2012-2013, the Department is also turning 30! (We were, as you likely know, a program for 11 years before becoming a Department.) We will kick off our 30th (and 41st!) birthday with our third annual alumni BBQ Homecoming Saturday, and through rich programming this academic year, including, among other things: new course offerings; co-sponsoring the “Beyond *The Girl*: Women Crime Writers from Scandinavia” event in October; a lecture by Lena Einhorn as part of the 2012 Strindberg Year; and a senior colloquium in the spring that will also invite alumni back to campus to talk about their experiences and education in Scandinavian Studies and what they are up to now. Alumni from the first graduates in 1977 to our most-recent graduates of 2012: We want to keep up with you! You are still a big part of the very heart of things around here—come back and visit, and keep in touch.



Circumpolar Region

This past year the Gustavus Global Insight Program focused on the Circumpolar Region, with a significant involvement from the Scandinavian Studies Department. In its fourth year, this interdisciplinary program previously focused on China, Mexico, and Food.

Throughout the academic year Alaska, Northern Canada, Russia, Finland, Greenland, Norway, and Sweden were featured. In addition the region's cuisine was featured in the Marketplace, and the library dedicated an area to books about our Arctic world. Topics ranged from issues of sustainability and climate change, indigenous peoples, business, literature, and the arts, highlighting Alaska, Greenland, and the northern portions of Russia, Finland, Sweden, and Norway.

Programming included a monthly film and on-campus lecture series, as well as various presentations, lectures, and panel discussions by Gustavus faculty and invited guests.

Professors Glenn Kranking and Kjerstin Moody both taught courses focusing on Circumpolar Scandinavia. Professor Moody's special topic course, entitled "Picturing the North," focused on the interdisciplinary aspects of many of the issues facing this region, while Professor Kranking's First Term Seminar focused on "Nordic Explorers."

- Dawn Comstock, '13

Gustavus hosts Fulbright-Hildeman Scholar

In Fall 2011, the Scandinavian Studies Department and Gender and Women Studies were honored to host the Fulbright-Hildeman scholar, Professor Ulrika Dahl, from Södertörn University in Stockholm.

An expert in cultural anthropology specializing in postcolonial feminist ethnography as well as queer and feminist theories, she gave numerous talks to the campus, and taught one of the most challenging courses I have ever taken, "Gender and Sexuality in Scandinavia." The course examined the roles of gender and sexuality in contemporary society and especially focused on how/why society is structured the way it is today.

Centered on the Nordic region, some of the major themes of the course included the concepts of Modernity, normativity/social deviance, naturalization, and political entrepreneurs/policy windows.

The class taught me that Gender and Women Studies is a topic that

everyone should be familiar with. In the same way that learning History helps us understand the contemporary world and reminds us that it is constantly in sociopolitical flux, Gender Studies helps us understand that our ideas of gender and sexuality are unique to our time and place and have been constantly changing along with the rest of society and we have the power to effect this change and therefore the future.

- Rob Holder, '12



JANUARY INTERIM EXPERIENCE ON CAMPUS

During the January Term of 2012 the Department offered two Scandinavian Studies courses taught by visiting professors.

Hanna Outakoski from Umeå University taught the course The Sami People. It covered how the Sami's language and culture has been affected by oppression throughout their history, and what they are doing in modern times to strengthen and revitalize these aspects of their society. Students in the class even got to learn a bit of the Sami language. It also addressed how the Sami people are being affected by climate change,

globalization, and commercialization.

Professor Emeritus **Roger McKnight** taught a course on Hans Christian Andersen. The class came to understand how Andersen's tales are open to a variety of interpretations – from delightful fairy tales to stories filled with great social critique. The class studied Hans Christian Andersen's writing compared to other 19th-century Scandinavian literature and focused on such topics as Romantic sensibility, social class, and women's rights.

- Jill Rykken '12



Note from 2011-2012 Department Chair Helena Karlsson

The academic year of 2011-2012 has been an eventful year at the Department of Scandinavian Studies, to say the least. Here are some of its highlights.

As the first Scandinavian department at a liberal arts college to win the Fulbright-Hildeman Scholar Award from Stockholm, Sweden, we were fortunate to be able to invite Dr. Ulrika Dahl from the Department of Gender Studies at Södertörn University in Stockholm to Gustavus for the fall semester. Ulrika taught a 300-level special topics course, held a lecture at Gustavus on her book *Femmes of Power* and a presentation at the ASI in Minneapolis on her ethnographic work on northern Sweden. She also engaged with the Gustavus community's various activities since she lived on campus. Ulrika's presence energized department and campus activities. I think there are still traces of her sweet perfume in the halls of Confer.

Kjerstin and Glenn taught two First Term Seminars on Nordic Topics, "Scandinavia and the New Europe," and "Nordic Explorers," respectively. Kjerstin's course traced the development of the Social Welfare State in Scandinavia from 1945 on, while Glenn's course followed the spirit of exploration from the Vikings, to the polar explorers, to Karen Blixen.

Two additional new culture courses were also offered: the focus of my SCA-350 "Crime Fiction in Scandinavia" was the social critique found in contemporary Nordic crime fiction. Kjerstin's special topics SCA-344 "Picturing the North," tied to this year's Global Insight programming on the world's Circumpolar Region, and examined representations and realities in the northernmost Nordic region.

I also taught a January Term study abroad course called "Stockholm and Berlin: The Northern European Metropolis." Kjerstin and I spent an exciting month with 14 students exploring the two cities in all kinds of weather. The course was an introduction to the cities' histories and contemporary multiculturalisms.

Throughout the entire year, Kjerstin and I co-chaired Gustavus's Global Insight Program, which focused on the world's Arctic region. The program is an interdisciplinary, campus-wide initiative designed to increase cultural and international awareness. Three major events featured Dr. Troy Storfjell from Pacific Lutheran University and the University of Tromsø,

Norway, Dr. Jason Smerdon from Columbia University, and Dr. Nicholas Breyfogle from the Ohio State University. Their talks focused on storytelling and Sami methodology, climate change in Greenland, and Russia and Arctic oil reserves, respectively. Kudos to Kjerstin for being the organizing force behind the entire program.

The annual MAYDAY! conference had the topic Multicultural Sweden and the faculty of the Scandinavian Department were all on the steering committee for the event. We invited the Kurdish-Swedish journalist and entrepreneur Dilsa Demirbag-Sten, and the author and playwright Jonas Hassen Khemiri to be the two keynote speakers. While Demirbag-Sten presented some provocative insights into contemporary Sweden and into the dangers of today's multicultural policy cementing differences rather than overcoming them, Khemiri's talk on the meanings of words brought forth some real stories of discrimination and racism in Sweden today as well as the creative, humorous counter-stories that Khemiri is so famous for. The afternoon featured a panel discussion about Multicultural Scandinavia with Helena, Kjerstin, and Glenn, which touched on a variety of topics, historical as well as contemporary, sociological/political as well as literary/philosophical.

Jonas Hassen Khemiri was also our Out of Scandinavia writer in residence. He visited classes, engaged with students, and talked about writing and translation with his translator and Gustavus and Scandinavian Studies alum Rachel Willson-Broyles ('02). Jonas and Rachel were also invited to a reading of *Montecore*, his latest novel (translated by Rachel) organized by theater professor Henry MacCarthy and featuring four alums, among others Robert Berdahl from the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis.

Now that I am leaving the U.S. for a position in Europe, I want to thank my two wonderful colleagues Kjerstin and Glenn for the interesting years we had together exploring Scandinavian issues. I will also greatly miss the students in the program. I will think of you all as I sit on the banks of the Danube in Budapest reminiscing about my Minnesota experience. And I will look forward to being on the other end of these newsletters in the future and marvel at all the interesting and important things that you will do.

Vi ses!



January Term Class on Stockholm and Berlin

When I signed up for the Stockholm and Berlin January Term, I envisioned myself exploring ancient crooks and crannies, touring majestic palaces, and breaking out my fur-lined parka every time I stepped outside. The class – and the weather – fulfilled all of these expectations and more.

We began our trip in Stockholm where we stayed in a snug hostel located in the heart of the city. Each day brought new surprises as we toured the best of Sweden's museums and cultural life from the Vasa Museum to a modern ballet at the Royal Theatre. Our classwork focused on the history, art and architecture, and socioeconomic realities of the city, and each day's expedition reinforced the morning's readings. One of my favorite memories from Stockholm is when we took a boat cruise out to Skärgården. I thoroughly relished eating a warm lunch inside a toasty galley while peering out at beautiful red cabins nestled in groves of evergreens lining the shores of snow-blanketed islands.

Our departure from Stockholm was a little melancholy as we had quickly grown to love the city and its people. Berlin, however, soon charmed us with its cosmopolitan culture and mysterious atmosphere. The focus of our

studies was much darker than in Sweden; we concentrated primarily on the Holocaust and Berlin Wall. We tearfully confronted the grim realities of Sachsenhausen concentration camp and visited stretches of the Berlin Wall where many Germans were senselessly killed. But we also had our fair share of upbeat fun exploring the city after classes; my classmates and I discovered the delights of Turkish cuisine and quickly befriended a Turkish immigrant who owned a kebab shop next to our hostel. Another carefree highlight from Berlin was surveying the city landscape from the 669 ft. high observation deck of the Fernsehturm tower, an experience and view unlike any other.

I will remember my trip to Stockholm and Berlin very fondly. It shaped and nuanced my conceptions of northern European culture and provided me with unique opportunities to explore the enigmas of identity in modern Sweden and Germany. Professor Helena Karlsson's and Professor Kjerstin Moody's immaculately planned and led class delivered on all of my expectations and more. I highly recommend it to anyone looking for fun and adventure!

- Zach Blinkinsop, '14





The Scandinavian Studies Senior Symposium highlighted the work of our seniors, and ended with a celebration of Helena Karlsson.

Congratulations to our most recent graduates

- Peder Beckstrand: My experience in Scandinavian Studies happened by accident. I had tried to study Swedish language and culture on my own since high school but never received the full effect. I realized I needed 2 years of a foreign language so I decided to give Swedish 101 a try. Luckily I had some great professors such as Roland and Roger to start me off, but it was Helena, Glenn, and Kjerstin who kept me in the program (a lot of the credit goes to Glenn who pushed me from Minor to Major). I am just starting as a Surgical Orthopedic Consultant for a company called Biomet in Bloomington, MN.
- Ethan Bjelland: I entered the Scandinavian Studies Department with proficiency in Norwegian. I, (albeit reluctantly), fell in love with Swedish language and culture as well, and lived in the Swedish House for two years. I graduated with a double major in Scandinavian Studies and Honors Theater, which culminated with my translation and directing of Jonas Hassen Khemiri's *Five Times God (Fem Gånger Gud)*. I currently work at the Commonweal Theatre Company in Lanesboro, the only company in North America committed to annually producing the works of Henrik Ibsen.
- Robert Holder: In high school I studied abroad in Sweden, where I fell in love with the language and realized the value of an international education.

Ultimately this led me to Gustavus and Scandinavian Studies. This fall I start working on my M.S. in Geology at UCSB, where I hope to be able to build a bridge between science's objective mindset and the humanities' more personal sociopolitical focus.

- Steven Olson: I graduated this May with majors in History and Scandinavian Studies. At Gustavus, I specialized in American dissent history and also embarked on a seven-month Scandinavian adventure in Sweden, Denmark, and Norway in 2011. With the advice of one of my professors and by taking Swedish 101, I realized History and Scandinavian Studies were what I truly enjoyed. Currently, I am interning with the Office of AI Franken in Washington, D.C. The experience has been overwhelming, fascinating, exhausting, challenging, revealing, and most importantly, rewarding.
- Catherine Keith: I graduated from Gustavus with an individualized major in Justice and Peace Studies. Though not a major, I had a strong connection with the Scandinavian Studies Department through working as a department tutor all four years and speaking Swedish proficiently. I greatly appreciated the Department's willingness to take me under their wing, since I didn't have a department of my own! At the end of August, I moved to Zhuhai, China, to work at an English-speaking liberal arts university.



Celebrating 30 Years as a Department at Gustavus

As Gustavus wraps up the Sesquicentennial celebrations, the Scandinavian Studies Department is kicking off its 30th anniversary. While Swedish language courses have been part of the college curriculum since 1862, the Scandinavian Studies Department was formally established in 1982.

Swedish-language courses were offered through the department of Foreign Languages. However, all courses in this department needed to be taught in the foreign language. Beginning in 1971, courses focusing on culture and literature from Scandinavia (taught in English) were non-departmental, and administered by the Dean's Office.

We would like to commemorate the 30th anniversary throughout the coming year, and we want your help. We would love to highlight some of your favorite, most lasting moments from your Scandinavian Studies courses, as well as learn and share what Scandinavian Studies has meant for you in your post-Gustavus years. We hope to highlight these stories throughout the year through the department's blog and Facebook page. To submit a story, email Glenn Kranking at kranking@gustavus.edu.



2012 Out of Scandinavia Writer in Residence Jonas Hassen Khemiri and his English-language translator Rachel Willson-Broyles ('02). Her translation of Khemiri's novel *Montecore* was published in 2011, and her translation of his play *INVASION!* won an OBIE Award for best off-Broadway play.

150 AND COUNTING

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