

SCANDIA

PENĪSVLAQVĀ PLINIV? LI:4: CĀ:13: ALTER
ORBĒ: VOCAT ꝀCOPIVSSVBNOĪE TVLF.
ASSERIT DECIESMAIOREM TOTABRTĀN LA
ĒTXII REGNA IN SE CONTINERE



Swedish History of Ideas
(IH1340)

Course guide, Spring 2020

Department of Culture and Aesthetics



Stockholm
University

IH1340 Swedish History of Ideas Spring 2020

7,5 credits

The purpose of this course is to provide an orientation in Swedish history of ideas from the early modern period to the modern day, through the study of a selection of individual themes. The course will both introduce basic methods of the discipline of history of ideas and give an overview of Swedish intellectual history.

The theme uniting the selected themes is the historical construction of a Swedish national identity, or the creation of Sweden as an 'imagined community'. In other words, we will be embarking on a historical journey from the early confessional and dynastic ideologies of the 17th and 18th centuries through 'classic' romantic nationalism and the rise of liberal democracy of the 19th century, before finally arriving at 20th century conceptions of the 'people's home'. All the while we will be reflecting on the relationship between these historical conceptions of Sweden as a religious, national, social and political community and current views on Sweden as a nation and a democratic society.

Course content

Required reading and theoretical framework for the course as a whole is: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London 2006 (1st ed. 1986). This title is available in digital form through the university library: <http://libris.kb.se/bib/21920496> (please note that you need to be logged in to Stockholm University Library (SUB) to access this book).

Please note that there are further required reading materials for each lecture (see below)!

Lecture plan

1. Course introduction. January 21st, 13.00-15.00, Manne Siegbahn building library.

Teacher: Andreas Hellerstedt

This lecture will introduce the course, explaining its purpose, scope and format as well as its examination. I will also give a short introduction to the history of Ideas as an academic subject and provide a very short outline of the history of Sweden, with a particular focus on the development of national identity, as a background to the following lectures.

Reading

Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, chapters 1 & 2

Biörn Tjällén, *Church and Nation: The Discourse on Authority in Ericus Olai's Chronica Regni Gothorum* (Stockholm, 2007), pp. 133–142 (Conclusion). Available through the university library: <http://libris.kb.se/bib/10598340> (please note that you need to be logged in to SUB to access this book)

Jonas Nordin, *Ett fattigt men fritt folk* (Stockholm, 2000), pp. 455–469 (English summary). This title will be available through Athena.

2. Carl Linnaeus. January 28th, 13.00–15.00, room 144.

Teacher: Andreas Hellerstedt

Portrayed as Sweden's greatest scientist of all time, Carl Linnaeus is famed for his biological classification system. From a historical point of view however, Linnaeus' life and work was clearly formed by the times and society in which he lived. His scientific work was motivated by economic interests and by Linnaeus' political connections. He was a notorious careerist, who managed to make his son succeed him as professor at Uppsala University when his health prevented him from carrying out his duties. Furthermore, Linnaeus put his system of classification to work on mankind. In doing so, he was one of the first scientists to divide human beings into 'races', or 'varieties' as he called them. This lesson will consider Linnaeus both as a product of the Swedish 18th century (the so-called 'Age of Liberty') and the image of Linnaeus as a scientific hero and national icon in the following centuries.



Reading

Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, chapter 8

Lisbeth Koerner, *Linnaeus: Nature and Nation* (Cambridge, 1999 or 2001), chapters 1–4, 6–7. Available at Stockholm University Library (course literature section) or Amazon etc.

3. Women's rights in 19th century Sweden. February 4th, 13.00–15.00, room 119.

Teacher: Elisabeth Mansén

Sweden is supposed to be a progressive country regarding women's rights. This seminar puts that opinion in perspective, using controversial texts by widely read authors. The Swedish discussion on women's rights was intense in the middle of the 19th century. It was present in politics as well as in popular fiction, and resulted in changes in thought and attitude as well as major changes in society and law. Both men and women were active. But even if women had some right to vote already in the 1720's, the final decision was taken in 1921, putting Sweden years behind the other Nordic countries.

Reading

Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, chapters 3 & 4

Fredrika Bremer, "Hertha's dream", a chapter from the novel *Hertha* (1856), 85–109. Available online* at Google Books.

Carl Jonas Love Almqvist, *Sara; Sara Videbeck* or *Why not?* (different translations and/or editions of the original work in Swedish: *Det går an* (1839). Available online* at archive.org (search for "Sara Videbeck").

- a. Read the two texts and choose a quotation from each of them.
 - b. Motivate your choice of quotation – from the perspective of the theoretical framework for the course (Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities*) and/or from the perspective of the subject of the lecture.
 - c. Send your choice of quotations and your motivations 24 hours in advance to elisabeth.mansen@idehist.su.se
- * You can also buy the books at Amazon.co.uk – but remember to allow time for shipment.

4. The nation that never was: Scandinavianism. Monday, February 17th, 10.00–13.00, room 144.

Teacher: Andreas Hellerstedt

In the middle of the 19th century 'Scandinavianism' was a highly influential cultural and political movement in the Nordic countries. It had older roots and built on the strong sense of shared values and heritage common to the Scandinavian and Nordic countries. 'Scandinavianism', and later, 'Nordism' offers an alternative form of nationalism, an alternative form of imagined community. But the goal of Scandinavianism – a fully-fledged nation-state – was never realized, and some would argue that the idea of Scandinavia was never a serious competitor to the individual nations as we know them today.

Reading

Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, chapters 5–7

Kari Haarder Ekman, *The Boundaries of My Home Expanded* (Göteborg, 2010), Summary, pp. 267–271. pdf on Athena.

Uffe Østergård, "The Geopolitics of Nordic Identity: From Composite States to Nation-States", in *The Cultural Construction of Norden*, ed. by Øystein Sørensen & Bo Stråth (Oslo, 1997), pp. 29–48. pdf on Athena.

The national anthems of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland.

5. The patriotism of migrating birds: Sweden viewed from above. February 25th, 13.00–15.00, room 144.

Teacher: Karin Dirke

The lecture deals with the changing zoology in Sweden during the 19th century and its representation in nationalistic literature such as Selma Lagerlöf's *The wonderful adventures of Nils* (1906–7). The migrating geese in the book provide a view of the Swedish nation from above and at the same time represent didactic patriotism. Lagerlöf's book is also seen as a result of the new zoology of the 19th century which linked the Swedish fauna with the nation's geography.

Reading

Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, chapters 9 & 10

Selma Lagerlöf, *The wonderful adventures of Nils* (1906–7) the following chapters are to be read: “The boy”, “Akka from Kebnekaise”, “Westbottom and Lapland”, “Homeward bound!”, “The parting with the wild geese”. Available online from archive.org.

Björn Sundmark, “Of Nils and nation: Selma Lagerlöf's *The Wonderful adventures of Nils*” in *International research in childrens literature* vol 1 (2008):2, pp. 168–186.

6. The ”people's home” (folkhem). March 3rd, 13.00–15.00, room 144.

Teacher: Martin Wiklund

Sweden is often associated with the ”people's home” and modernity, or at least used to be. The lecture traces some of the currents of ideas that were important for the people's home and the widespread self-understanding in Sweden of being ”modern”. How is the vision of the people's home related to ”modernity” as self-understanding? To what extent are the ideas of modernity and the people's home still part of Swedish self-understanding?

Reading instructions: The text by Tilton points to some important aspects of the ideology of the people's home, related to his analysis of social democratic ideology. Frykman's article draws attention to a certain modernist culture in the 1930s and how one learned to become ”modern” through bodily activities. The text by Magnusson provides some background to the so called ”Swedish model”, a model of economy (read for background).

Arne Ruth's article serves both as an interpretation in its own right of the culture and self-understanding of the People's home, but it also serves as a witness to the changes in self-understanding in Sweden during the 1970s and 1980s. Jenny Andersson's overview stretches the perspective further in time and points to the continuing significance of the self-understanding in Sweden of being "modern". These latter texts will be used to historicize and problematize the self-understanding related to the ideas of the People's home and modernity.

- Read the selected pages from the manifesto *Acceptera* (1931). What vision for the future is expressed? How is progress defined? What ideas about Sweden and Swedish culture are expressed?

Reading

Lars Magnusson, *An Economic History of Sweden*, London, 2000, chapter 9, "The Swedish Model", pp. 232-256.

Jonas Frykman, "On the Move: The Struggle for the Body in Sweden in the 1930s", in *The Senses Still – Perception and Memory as Material Culture in Modernity*, Boulder, 1994, ed. by C. N. Seremetakis.

Tim Tilton, *The Political Theory of Swedish Social Democracy: Through the Welfare State to Socialism*, Oxford, 1990, chapter 6: "Per Albin Hansson: Socialism as the 'People's Home'", pp. 125-144.

Jenny Andersson, "NORDIC NOSTALGIA AND NORDIC LIGHT. The Swedish model as Utopia 1930–2007", *Scandinavian Journal of History*, Vol. 34, No. 3. September 2009, pp. 229–245.

Ruth, Arne, "The Second New Nation. The Mythology of Modern Sweden", *Daedalus*, Vol. 113, No. 2, Nordic Voices (Spring, 1984), 53-96.

Acceptera [1931], transl. in Creagh, Kåberg & Miller Lane (Eds), *Modern Swedish Design – Three Founding Texts*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2008 (selections).

Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, chapters 11 & 12

7. Conclusion, essay preparation. March 17th, 13.00–15.00, room 144.

Teacher: Andreas Hellerstedt

Teachers, fall semester 2019

Associate professor Karin Dirke
karin.dirke@idehist.su.se

Ph. d. Andreas Hellerstedt
andreas.hellerstedt@idehist.su.se

Professor Elisabeth Mansén
elisabeth.mansen@idehist.su.se

Associate professor Martin Wiklund
martin.wiklund@idehist.su.se

Images: detail from *Carta Marina* (1539) by Olaus Magnus (cover); Carl Linnaeus, wash drawing (ca 1750) by Jean-Eric Rehn (p. 4); Fredrika Bremer, oil painting (1843) by Johan Gustaf Sandberg (p. 4); *Acceptera*, book cover (1931) (back cover).

