

**UCLA – University of California in Los Angeles**  
**Department of European Languages & Transcultural Studies**

**Undergraduate Course in Scandinavian Crime Literature**

**Course Description**

How does the “nonfiction” *true crime* genre inform the traditional crime “fiction” narrative and vice versa? Why is it that stories of violence, murder and torn bodies top the best-seller lists? Why are graphic, voyeuristic forensic detection and true crime dramas seemingly broadcast at all hours of the day or night on several television networks? And why do crowd sourced web sleuths inject their virtual investigations into open criminal case investigations? Do these accounts of crimes of power and crimes of desire reveal anything about culture, identity and ideology?

This course will address these questions from a Scandinavian perspective, exploring recent crime narratives from Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the American Midwest. Bridging the gap between social vs. psychological accountings for narrative spectacles of violence, we will examine how these texts articulate, distort and/or mediate modern and contemporary Western culture.

**Required Readings**

The following primary texts are available for purchase at the ASUCLA bookstore in the Ackerman Student Union:

Bouroncle, *It Came to Me on a Whim: The Story of Ingeborg Andersson, Child Murderess*

Capote, *In Cold Blood*

Christie, *Death in the Clouds*

Indridason, *Jar City*

Lesy & van Sheik, *Wisconsin Death Trip*

Mankell, *Faceless Killers*

Seierstad, *One of Us*

Sjöwall & Wahlöö, *The Locked Room*

The following films will be available for review on the course website:

Fassino & Zuccalà, *Velkommen til Halden Fengsel*

Marsh, James, *Wisconsin Death Trip*

Skjoldbjærg, *Insomnia*

Wilder, *Double Indemnity*

The following documentary series requires purchase online (iTunes, AmazonPrime, etc.), or it can be viewed for free with a trial membership to SundanceNow:

Wevang & Lykke, *The Oslo Killing*

The following secondary texts are available on the course website in the “Secondary Readings” folder under “Files”:

Acocella, *Queen of Crime*

Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (excerpts)

Christie, *The Nemean Lion*

Conan Doyle, *A Case of Identity; The Speckled Band*

Cowell, *After Black Teenager is Slain, Norway Peers Into a Mirror*

Evans, *Jack the Ripper: Letters from Hell*

Foucault, *Generalized Punishment*

Gilman, *The Jewish Murderer: Jack the Ripper, Race and Gender*

Grann, *Mysterious Circumstances; True Crime*

Halttunen, *Murder Most Foul* (excerpts)

Lacan, *Motives of Paranoiaque Crime: The Crime of the Papin Sisters*

Lang & Rubenking, *Captivated and Gossed Out: An Examination of Processing Core and Sociomoral Disgusts in Entertainment Media*

Lepore, *The Long Blue Line: Inventing the Police*

Michaelis, *Scandinavian Crime Novels*

Nelson & Avery, *Art Where You Least Expect It*

Odell, *Murder Facts File 1888; Case Closed?*

Poe, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue; The Mystery of Marie Rôget; The Purloined Letter*

Rubenking & Lang, *Captivated and Grossed Out*

Scaggs, *Crime Fiction* (excerpts)

Seltzer, *Serial Killing for Beginners; The Scene of the Crime; Murder/Media/Modernity; The Conventions of True Crime*

Siegel, *Pure Evil: Jo Nesbø and the Rise of Scandinavian crime fiction*

Thorsen, *Do We Need Norwegian Crime Fiction?*

Walsh, *Murder in Old New York*

Wilson, Edmund, *Mr. Holmes, They Were the Footprints of a Gigantic Hound--Why Do People Read Detective Stories?*