

DANISH PERSPECTIVES

Semester: Fall 2022
Level: BA (10 ECTS) IV Elective
Day/Time: Friday / 12.00 - 16:00
Place: Building 5510 (INCUBA) / Room 104 (Lille Auditorium)
Address: Åbogade 15, 8200 Aarhus N

Lecturer: Nis Grøn, PhD (nisgr@cc.au.dk) & Guest Lecturers
Office: Wiener Building 5347, Room 242.
Helsingforsgade 14, 8200 Aarhus N

Overview of course content, purpose, objectives, assessment, exam see following link:
<https://kursuskatalog.au.dk/da/course/114075/Danish-Perspectives>

Course information & readings available on Brightspace.

Lesson structure:

12:15-14:00 Lecture by Nis Grøn or Guest lecturer
14:00-14:15 Break.
14:15-16:00 Group activities (e.g., group presentations, discussing the articles/topics, practicing analysis or interviews, screening, etc.)

The lesson structure is flexible and subject to change depending on topics. Changes in the lesson structure will be announced in writing through Brightspace announcements and emails.

WEEKLY STUDYPLAN

2. Sept.

1. Welcome to Denmark: A Land of Happiness?

In our first gathering the purpose, goals, and approaches of the course will be presented as well as other practical issues. Then we will dive into our investigation of Denmark, starting with you sharing ideas and understanding of the country. We will connect this to an exploration of the idea of *happiness* as an arguably contested marker of cultural identity.

Reading:

Michael Booth: "The Danish don't have the secret to happiness", *the Atlantic* (Jan 30, 2015).

Weiss, K. (2017). *Living with Vikings*. Gyldendal Business, 32-43 +104-129
Equality – and Jante's Law (+interview)
Denmark – The Golden Middle Way (+ interview)

Recommend further reading:

Levisen, Carsten. (2012). "Are Danes truly the happiest people on earth?" In *Cultural semantics and social cognition*. 197-228. De Gruyter Mouton.

9. Sept.

2. History & Nation Building (Guest lecture)

The course focuses on Denmark as a national community, a specific culture, and all the things that supposedly hold it together. We need a framework for understanding what a national culture is, how it has developed and is being displayed, upheld and negotiated. This week James Bulman-May will give a general overview of Danish history focusing on some of the formative events that resulted in our modern democracy. Following this, we will explore theories and methods that aim to explain the origins and continuation of national cultures with Denmark as our case.

Michael Billig (2010): *Banal Nationalism* (chapter 1)

Jenkins, Richard. "Inarticulate speech of the heart: Nation, flag and emotion in Denmark." *Flag, Nation and Symbolism in Europe and America*. Routledge, 2007. 129-149.

Recommend further reading:

Nielsen, Niels Kayser (2020), "Uses of Nordic History":
<https://nordics.info/show/artikel/uses-of-history>

16. Sept.

3. Danish Colonial History – Memories and Scar (Guest lecture)

This week we will focus on a topic that has surfaced in recent years as an unpleasant reminder of Denmark's historical past. Together with guest lecturer Mads Anders Baggers, we will look closer at Denmark as a colonizer.

Reading:

Andersen, A. N. (2013). "We Have Reconquered the Islands": Figurations in Public Memories of Slavery and Colonialism in Denmark 1948–2012. *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 26(1), 57-76.

23. Sept. **4. Methodological Foundations I: Interviewing People**

We will look at the interview method as a way to study culture. You will put the interview method into practice and prepare for your first portfolio assignment.

Readings:

O'Reilly, Karen (2005): *Ethnographic methods*. London: Routledge. (Chapter 5 and Ch. 6 is recommended)

Gilbert, N., & Stoneman, P. (Eds.). (2015). "Thematic Analysis", in *Researching social life*. Sage.

30. Sept. **5. Historical Developments in Danish Music (Guest lecture)**

This week we will look closer at Danish music and music culture, and make references to the work of some of the most cherished Danish composers, musicians and bands. Guest Lecture with Associate Professor Steen Kaargaard Nielsen (Musicology).

Reading:

Michelsen, M. (2004). Histories and Complexities: Popular Music History Writing and Danish Rock. *Popular Music History*, 1(1).

7. Oct. **6. You Are What You Eat: Danish Food Culture**

Food has in recent decades become increasingly visible as a form of cultural capital and leisure time consumption for the global middleclass and above. Danish food culture has in this period gained unprecedented attention as part of the New Nordic Cuisine. What are the ideas and philosophy behind the Danish food success? Does it reflect the average Dane's consumption habits? We will take a closer look.

Readings:

Leer, Jonatan. "The rise and fall of the New Nordic Cuisine." *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture* 8.1 (2016): 33494.

Further Reading:

Jensen, Tenna. "Pork, Beer, and Margarine. Danish Food Consumption 1900-2000: National Characteristics and Common Nordic Traits." *Food and History* 12.2 (2014): 3-37.

Watch:

Noma: My Perfect Storm (dir. Pierre Deschamps, 2015)

Midterm Feedback

14. Oct. **7. Methodological foundations II: Analyzing Texts**

Our second method will be to study Danish culture through the method of textual analysis. Texts carry meaning, some of which can tell us more about the culture and people that made it. We will look closer at what textual analysis implies as well as some of the approaches we can adapt in your attempt to opening of a text.

Readings:

McKee, Alan (2003): 'Textual Analysis: A Beginner's Guide. London: SAGE Publications. (Chapter 1)

Recommend further reading:

Ott, Brian L., and Robert L. Mack. *Critical Media Studies : An Introduction*, John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2014. (Chapter 5)

Notice: ***Deadline on Interview guide***

21. Oct. **Fall Break (Efterårsferie)**

28. Oct. **8. Nordic Noir & Global Audiences (Guest Lecture)**

We will look closer at Danish television drama and why it has gained international traction and appraisal. How come dramas set in a relatively dull social and natural setting of Denmark have been able to travel abroad? We explore the reasons behind the success of Danish television dramas. Professor Pia Majbritt Jensen will join us and share her work on the reception of Nordic Noir abroad.

Reading:

Jensen, P. M., & McCutcheon, M. (2020). "Othering the Self and Same-ing the Other": Australians watching Nordic Noir. I P. M. Jensen, & U. C. Jacobsen (eds), *The Global Audiences of Danish TV Drama* (s. 21-37). Nordicom.

Online access: <http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1414057/FULLTEXT02.pdf>

Recommend further reading:

Creeber, G. (2015). Killing us softly: Investigating the aesthetics, philosophy and influence of Nordic Noir television. *The Journal of Popular Television*, 3(1), 21-35.

4. Nov. **9. Are Danes as Funny as They Think?**

Humor and language are clear markers of cultural specificity and we often focus our attention on them in our attempt to distinguish or identify national communities. This week we will explore Danish humor through a cross-cultural perspective and discuss what the characteristics of Danish humor are and what it tells us about the Danes.

Readings:

Lundquist, L. (2014). Danish humor in cross-cultural professional settings: Linguistic and social aspects. *Humor*, 27(1), 141-163.

Weiss, K. (2017). *Living with Vikings*. Gyldendal Business, 130-138.
Humour & Politeness

Check out online:

[Wulff & Morgenthaler's comic strips](#)

11. Nov. **10. Transnational Perspectives on Nordic Kids' Television (Guest Lecture)**

This week we will look closer at the tradition of making television for children in Denmark and the Nordic region. The history of and different approaches to creating AV content for children will be presented by Helle Strandgaard Jensen, Associate Professor at the Department of History, AU.

Reading: TBA

18. Nov. **11. Portfolio Workshop**

This week you will work on your portfolio assignments. We will kick-start the work on your cultural research essay. You should bring a 1-page outline of your ideas for your research paper to class.

Reading:

Messenger Davies, Julia; Mosdell, Nick (2006): Practical Research Methods for Media and Cultural Studies. Making People Count. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP. (Chapter 2)

Notice: *Deadline for Cultural Analysis Essay outline*

25. Nov. **12. Gender in Denmark: Visit to Gender Museum KØN + Evaluation**

This week we look closer at the gendered history in Denmark. We will explore the development of the feminist movement in Denmark and how it has affected society through the exploration of exhibitions at Køn.

Readings:

Astrid Elkjær Sørensen: [Gender segregation in the Nordic labour market](#)

Anne Heith: [1970s feminist culture in the Nordics](#)

Hannah Yoken: [Transnational interaction among feminist activists in the Nordic Countries, 1970s-2000](#)

2. Dec. **13. Christmas Countdown, Portfolio Workshop & Course Wrap Up**

We will engage with a very Danish tradition for both young and old: Watching a special type of tv-series during December. We will wrap up the course with an evaluation and a discussion about what we have learned. Then will look at the finale development of your portfolio, consider the structure and paragraphing of your assignments. We will discuss what we have done and learned in the course and end with a quiz.

Reading:

Agger, Gunhild (2013): Danish TV Christmas calendars: Folklore, myth and cultural history. In *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema* 3 (3), pp. 267–280.

DEADLINE FOR HANDING IN PORTFOLIO ON DIGITAL EXAM: TBA