

Ecology and Culture in Scandinavia

OLLI Spring 2016



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Course Description

The Scandinavian countries are known internationally for their concerted efforts to preserve their environments, which in the case of Iceland, Norway, and Sweden remain largely wild. Referring to theoretical essays on deep ecology and ecocriticism, this course will consider how the ideas of “nature” and “environment” are formulated through cultural concepts and practice, in literature, film, and other arts. How does the Scandinavian attitude to the environment take form through cultural representation, and what impact does that representation have on the ordinary practices and consciousness of people in the North?

Please read as much or as little of the listed works as you like; some are theoretical, some are literary. All are available on-line with OLLI.

Week I April 6th (NOTE: late start date)

What is ecocriticism?

Cheryl Glotfelty, “Defining Ecocritical Theory and Practice: What is Ecocriticism?”

Lawrence Buell, “The Emergence of Environmental Criticism” and “Environmental Criticism’s Future” from *The Future of Environmental Criticism*

Poems: “Face to Face,” “From March of -79” (Tranströmer), “Winter Piece,” “The Last Year” (Martinson), “Snow and Spruce Forest” (Vesaas)

Week II April 13

Animism: The World is Alive

Mythology and beliefs about the earth and the animals' world

Selections from the *Prose Edda*

Deep Ecology: Excerpts from Arne Naess, *Is it Painful to Think?*

Week III April 20th

How children learn about nature

Excerpts: *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils Holgersson*

“The Fillyfjonk who Believed in Catastrophes,” Tove Jansson from *The Invisible Child*

Karin Lesnick-Oberstein, “Children’s Literature and the Environment”

Week IV April 27

A poem about the world

Inger Christensen, *Alfabet*

Excerpts from Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*

Week V May 4

A book about a dog

Kersin Ekman, *The Dog*

Excerpts from Donna Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto* Derrida

Week VI May 11 (NOTE: extended one week)

A book about the animal and the human

Peter Høeg, *The Woman and the Ape*

Excerpts from Jacques Derrida, *The Animal that Therefore I Am*