

STUDY GUIDE

POLITICAL CULTURE AND INTERCULTURALITY: VIEWS FROM NORTHERN EUROPE

Organised by
Karlstad University

1. IDENTIFYING DATA.		
• Course Name.	Political culture and interculturality: Views from Northern Europe (IKGEU1)	
• Coordinating University.	Karlstad University	
• Partner Universities Involved.	N/A	
• Course Field(s).	Intercultural Studies	
• Related Study Programme.	CROSSING BORDERS: Interculturality and Multilingualism in Europe and Beyond	
• ISCED Code.	0314	
• SDG.	5. Gender Equality 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth 10. Reduced Inequalities 16. Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions	
• Study Level.	B	
• EUNICE Key Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green – strongly • Orange- moderately • Red – partially • Blank cell - not at all 	
	Problem solving	moderately
	Teamworking	moderately
	Communication	strongly
	Self-management	moderately
	Cognitive flexibility	partially
	Digital competence	moderately

	Technical competence	partially
	Global intercultural competence	strongly

• Number of ECTS credits allocated.	6
• Mode of Delivery.	Online live
• Language of Instruction.	English
• Course Dates.	15 September – 9 November 2025
• Precise Schedule of the Lectures.	<p><i>There are online lectures every Monday between 1 and 2.30 pm CET and online seminars every second Wednesday between 1 and 2.30 pm CET. The expected student work rate is 20 hours a week.</i></p> <p>Schedule</p> <p><i>Monday September 15, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. Lecture 1.</i></p> <p><i>Monday September 22, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. Lecture 2.</i> <i>Wednesday September 24, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. First seminar</i></p> <p><i>Monday September 29, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. Lecture 3.</i></p> <p><i>Monday October 6, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. Lecture 4.</i> <i>Wednesday October 8, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. Second seminar</i></p> <p><i>Monday October 13, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. Lecture 5.</i></p> <p><i>Monday October 20, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. Lecture 6.</i> <i>Wednesday October 22, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. Third seminar</i></p> <p><i>Monday October 27, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. Lecture 7.</i></p> <p><i>Monday November 3, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. Lecture 8.</i> <i>Wednesday November 5, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. Fourth seminar</i></p>
• Key Words.	Welfare state, The Nordics, Intercultural relations, Gender, Racism, Citizenship, Diversity, Trade unions, Labour, Political culture

• Catchy Phrase.	The Nordics – in all fairness
• Prerequisites and co-requisites.	English Level B2
• Number of EUNICE students that can attend the Course.	10 spots per partner university
• Course inscription procedure(s).	N/A

2. CONTACT DETAILS.

• Department.	Department of Language, Literature and Intercultural Studies
• Name of Lecturer.	Staffan Löfving
• E-mail.	staffan.loving@kau.se
• Other Lecturers.	Ekatherina Zhukova, Tobias Hübinette

3. COURSE CONTENT.

The course introduces Nordic political culture and how Nordic welfare models are transferred to and reinterpreted in other parts of the world. Nordic societal models and ideals are portrayed as exceptional in comparative value studies. The course evaluates such presumed exceptionalism and the quantitative methods used to define, assess, and compare cultural values. Through an intercultural approach inspired by critical cultural theory, and by placing Nordic political culture in an international and historical context, students are offered the opportunity to reflect on welfare and "workfare," multiculturalism and segregation, trust and austerity, as well as equality and feminism.

4. LEARNING OUTCOMES.

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. give an account of various scientific approaches to Nordic political culture,
2. give an account of contemporary intercultural policy research in Nordic contexts,
3. use intercultural methods in a comparative approach to Nordic political culture, and
4. critically reflect upon Nordic exceptionalism.

5. OBJECTIVES.

6. COURSE ORGANISATION.

UNITS	
1.	Introduction to Political Culture in the Nordics
2.	Gender, Feminism, and Foreign Policy
3.	Multiculturalism, Whiteness, and a Politics of Colorblindness
4.	Neoliberalism and Labor Relations from Welfare to Workfare
LEARNING RESOURCES AND TOOLS.	
Scholarly literature, Audiovisual media, Podcasts, Websites	
PLANNED LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND TEACHING METHODS.	
Lectures, Group discussions, Seminars	

7. ASSESSMENT METHODS, CRITERIA AND PERIOD.
Assessment is based on individual oral and written assignments.
OBSERVATIONS.
One of the grades Distinction (VG), Pass (G), or Fail (U) is awarded in the examination of the course.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND TEACHING MATERIALS.
<p>Books</p> <p>Andersson, J. and C. Howell (eds). 2025. <i>Nordic Neoliberalisms: Perspectives on Economic, Social and Cultural Change in the Nordics after 1970</i>. London and New York: Routledge.</p> <p>Bergren, H. & Trädgårdh, L. (2023). <i>The Swedish Theory of Love: Individualism and Social Trust in Modern Sweden</i>. Seattle: University of Washington Press</p> <p>Byrkjeflot, H., Mjøset, L., Mordhorst, M. & Petersen, K. (red.) (2022). <i>The Making and Circulation of Nordic Models: Ideas and Images</i>. London and New York: Routledge</p> <p>Saunders, Robert A. (2020). <i>Geopolitics, Northern Europe, and Nordic Noir: What Television Series Tell Us About World Politics</i>. London and New York: Routledge</p> <p>Book Chapters</p> <p>Hübinette, T. (2023) Swedish Whiteness as White Terror and Non-white Rage in Antiracist Sweden in Tobias Hübinette, Catrin Lundström & Peter Wikström (eds.) <i>Race in Sweden. Racism and antiracism in the world's first "colourblind" nation</i>. (p. 114-138) Abingdon: Routledge</p> <p>Löfving, S. (2017). The Gift of Labor: The Town, the Union, and the Corporate State in the Demise of the Swedish Car Industry. In Durrenberger, E. P. (Editor). <i>Uncertain Times: The Anthropology of Labor in a Neoliberal World</i> (p. 61-86) Boulder: University Press of Colorado</p>

Articles

- Hübinette, T. & C. Lundström (2014). Three Phases of Hegemonic Whiteness: Understanding Racial Temporalities in Sweden, *Social Identities*. 20(6):423-437.
- Zhukova E, Rosén Sundström M, Elgström O. (2022). Feminist foreign policies (FFPs) as strategic narratives: Norm translation in Sweden, Canada, France, and Mexico. *Review of International Studies*. 48(1):195-216.
- Zhukova, E. (2021). Postcolonial Logic and Silences in Strategic Narratives: Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy in Conflict-Affected States. *Global Society*, 37(1), 1–22.
- Zhukova, E. (2023). A Struggle for Hegemonic Feminisation in Six Feminist Foreign Policies Or, How Social Hierarchies Work in World Politics. *Millennium*, 51(3), 839-865.