

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

# **SWEDISH HISTORY**

Swedish History is a 7.5 ECTS credits course (corresponding to five weeks full-time study) for international students, given at the beginning of the semester. The language of instruction is English.

The course aims to give international students an introductory overview of Swedish history as well as promote an understanding of differences in national historiographies through a comparative approach. The course outlines the history of Sweden from c. 700 to 2000, providing a closer look at a few specific issues in different periods. The students will practice comparative and analytical skills by studying one chosen aspect of Swedish history more in depth, comparing it to the history of another country.

The course is divided into the following periods/themes, corresponding to six lectures/seminars:

- The Viking Era (c. 700–1050): Swedish History Before Sweden
- The Middle Ages (c. 1050–1550): the Formation of Sweden as a Nation
- The Long Seventeenth Century (c. 1550–1718): Sweden’s Rise and Fall as a Great Power
- The Age of Freedom and the Gustavian Era (1718–1809): Sweden’s Participation in Global Expansion
- Sweden in the Nineteenth Century: a New Society Emerges
- Twentieth-Century Sweden: Neutrality and the Welfare State

*A Concise History of Sweden* by Neil Kent is used as core literature for a broad overview of Swedish history. In addition, the lecturers may assign extra mandatory readings and short written assignments on particular topics in preparation for each lecture/seminar, highlighting an aspect of the theme at hand. The lectures may at times include elements of discussion, making them a mixture of lectures and seminars. They have a comparative approach and encourage awareness about the ways in which history is divided into eras and regions.

In addition to the given themes, each student will choose one aspect, phenomenon, event or process in Swedish history, which s/he will individually study more in-depth. Using additional secondary sources, the student will compare the chosen aspect to an equivalent

in another country's history (this could, for example, be the student's home country or the country they pursue their degree in).

After successfully completing the course the student should be able to:

- describe some central characteristics of Swedish history from the Viking Era to the present day with regard to political, economic, social and cultural changes
- use elementary comparative method
- describe at least one aspect or phenomenon in Swedish history as well as describe and discuss similarities and differences as compared to an equivalent aspect in another country's history
- describe differences in different national historiographies

### *Set-up*

The course consists of three main parts:

- Mandatory lectures, some w. additional readings and assignments (only graded as pass/non-pass)
- A written paper (75 % of the grade)
- A written peer review/comment on a fellow student's paper (25 % of the grade)

The first part of the course consists of lectures and an excursion. It begins with an introductory lecture, in which the main teacher will provide practical information about the course and assignments. The lecture will introduce the main themes, the readings, the comparative approach, and discuss expectations. Six lectures follow, taught by different lecturers and dealing with the periods/themes mentioned above. The lecture on the Viking Era is complemented by an excursion to Gamla Uppsala Museum and archeological site. Like the lectures, the excursion is mandatory.

The students are expected to read the relevant chapters from the course readings in advance and can be assigned additional readings and short written assignments by the lecturers. As the group size is small – no more than 20 students – the lectures will sometimes take on the character of a seminar, encouraging students to participate in a discussion about the subject at hand.

The last lecture, which deals with twentieth-century Sweden, includes an introduction to comparative history. After that lecture, the next part of the course begins with a tutoring session. Besides discussing the requirements of the paper and issues of using a comparative method, the students are given the opportunity to discuss a topic for their paper. They then proceed to write individual papers on a chosen and approved topic.

The paper should be about 2500 words ( $\pm 10\%$ ). The students must choose the secondary sources necessary to cover their subject. You are required to use at least four sources (primarily book chapters or articles). For the Swedish part, the book by Kent and/or other books listed under suggested reading may be used. The paper must have a reference system. This means that if you use quotations or present ideas from one of your sources, you must provide a reference (author, year of publication and page number is sufficient). If you summarize what an author says, you should indicate that by writing, for example, "Kent states..." and then provide a reference with a page number. The paper must include a bibliography/works-cited list, which contains the complete references to all books and articles used (author, title, place and year of publication). Avoid using websites as sources.

The paper must be uploaded on *Studentportalen* where it will automatically be checked for plagiarism. As the paper is to be reviewed within a week by a fellow student, it is imperative that the deadline is kept.

Finally, each student shall write a two-page peer review of a fellow student's paper. The student will be assigned a paper once all topics are known. All papers will be put in a shared folder where students can download them. The following criteria should be considered in the assessment of the assigned paper:

- the choice of comparative events
- how well the comparison was made
- that the used secondary sources were relevant
- the overall quality of the paper (the structure, comprehensibility, references, etcetera).

The student should study the assigned paper carefully. Criticism should be well argued, fair, and balanced. The assessment should end with a short statement of the good qualities of the paper and what can be improved. The peer-review should be 400–500 words.

### ***Examination***

The grades range from A – excellent, B – very good, C – good, D – satisfactory, E – sufficient, FX – pass with an extra assignment to F – not passed.

Your grade will be based on the quality of your written work; 75 % of the grade depending on the quality of your paper, 25 % on your peer review. Your lecture preparations and participation are graded as pass/fail, but if your results are on the border between grades, they may affect the final grade.

*Grading criteria for the paper*

Basic requirements: the paper must have a clear disposition, it must be readable, and it must be formally correct according to instructions given. Facts must be correct.

Grades	Requirements
A-Excellent	Independent and creative choice of topic. Creative choice of sources and a very clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. Ability to problematize the topic beyond the framework given by the literature. Ability to creatively use the comparative method. Ability to convincingly present a critical and analytical argument. Ability to synthesize and to express the above in writing.
B-Very good	Independent and creative choice of topic. Creative choice of secondary sources and a very good understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. Ability to productively use the comparative method. Ability to present critical and analytical arguments. Ability to synthesize and to express the above in writing.
C-Good	Independent choice of topic. Creative choice of secondary sources and a good understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. Ability to use the comparative method. Ability to present an analytical argument. Ability to express the above in writing.
D-Satisfactory	Good choice of topic. Good choice of secondary sources and an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. Ability to use the comparative method for the main arguments. Ability to present a coherent argument. Ability to express the above in writing.
E-Sufficient	Good choice of topic. Good choice of secondary sources and an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. Shows an understanding of comparative similarities and differences. Ability to present a clear argument. Ability to express the above in writing.

The grade for the peer review will depend on how well argued and balanced the assessment is and take into account whether you have followed the instructions.

***Literature***

Mandatory reading

- Kent, Neil, 2008, *A Concise History of Sweden*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 300 pp.
- Literature as assigned on <https://studentportalen.uu.se> before each lecture

Additional readings

- Nordstrom, Byron J. 2002: *The History of Sweden*, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 186 pp.
- Nordstrom, Byron J. 2000: *Scandinavia since 1500*, University of Minnesota Press, 400 pp.
- Roesdahl, Else 1999: *The Vikings*, Revised edition, London: Penguin Books, 368 pp.
- Sawyer, Birgit & Sawyer, Peter 1993: *Medieval Scandinavia: from Conversion to Reformation, circa 800–1500*, Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press., 265 pp.
- Lockhart, Paul Douglas, 2004: *Sweden in the seventeenth century*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 178 pp.