



Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic+

Scandinavian Studies Newsletter

Spring 2026

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Greetings from the Program Chair

Dear friends of Scandinavian Studies,

Let me begin with gratitude. Thank you to everyone who helped celebrate our 150th anniversary last year — to those who supported us financially, and to those who joined us for the highlight of our celebration, Scandinavia Day in November.

Last year was filled with celebration, but we are not resting on our laurels. We are already engaged in discussions to make our program stronger and attract even more students to our courses. We are proud that so many students continue to choose a Scandinavian language — whether Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Finnish, Icelandic, or Old Norse — at a time when enrollment in language classes is declining across the board.

In this issue of our newsletter, you will hear from current students about their experiences on Scandinavia Day, and you can read about the celebration itself if you were not able to attend. Several pictures are included.

In these pages, you will read about the research being done by graduate students who have chosen Scandinavian Studies not as their primary field, but as a significant part of their Ph.D. work. We also check in with some of our recent graduates to see where their paths have taken them. Read, too, about recent events in the department and an *in memoriam* dedicated to our dear colleague, Howard Martin.

I want to close by thanking my amazing colleagues and our graduate students for the many extra hours they devoted last year to making our 150th anniversary a success. We did it!

Welcome to the newsletter,

Claus Elholm Andersen, Program Chair

Photo credits:

Cover photo: A tree buds in front of Van Hise Hall on a spring day at the University of Wisconsin–Madison on April 7, 2026. (Photo by Taylor Wolfram / UW–Madison)

Above: A shrub buds in front of Hiram Smith Hall on a spring day at the University of Wisconsin–Madison on April 7, 2026. (Photo by Taylor Wolfram / UW–Madison)

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gns.wisc.edu/gns-newsletters

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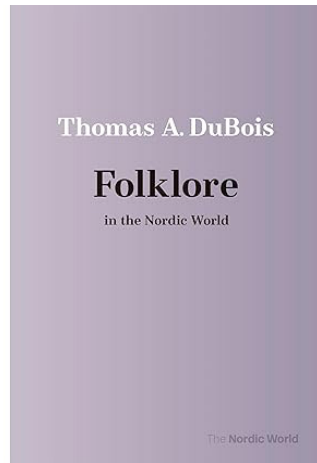
Follow us on Instagram for Nordic-specific events and updates!

[@nordicuwmadison](https://www.instagram.com/nordicuwmadison)

Recent Publications

Folklore in the Nordic World

by Tom DuBois
Aarhus University Press and the University of Wisconsin Press (2025)

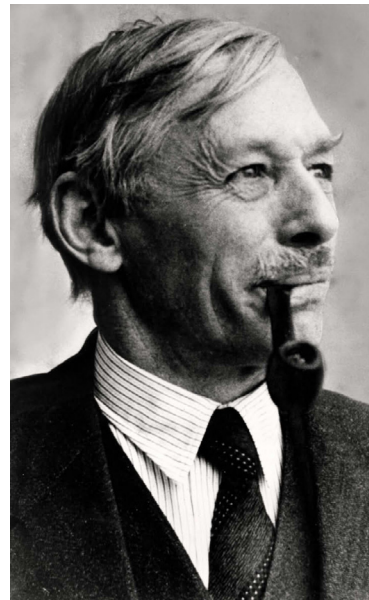


The series *The Nordic World* is copublished by Aarhus University Press and the University of Wisconsin Press. Each volume of the series highlights some aspects of Nordic history, culture, and society and the ways in which Nordic scholars have explored them. In the newly released *Folklore in the Nordic World*, UW professor Tom DuBois sets out to introduce the ways in which folklore has been studied in the Nordic region. Chapters look at folk music, legends, tales, jokes, seasonal celebrations like Midsummer and Christmas, food traditions, and aspects of material culture. The book underscores the historical and enduring importance of notions of tradition in the Nordic region and the insightful, and internationally acclaimed, ways Nordic scholars have approached these topics. With photographs sourced from some of the many folklore archives that exist in the Nordic countries

today, the book aims to provide a useful and approachable overview of a topic that has proved of perennial interest, both in Nordic societies and here at the UW-Madison, where courses on Nordic folklore are a longstanding part of the curriculum and often memorable favorites of students.

Article: "Smashing the Nordic Race: Henrik Rytter's 1937 Anti-Nazi Polemic *Norden har ordet*"

by Dean Krouk
Scandinavica (2026)



A photo of Henrik Rytter.

Furthering his research into Scandinavian literary responses to Nazism and fascism in the interwar and WWII years, Dean Krouk has a forthcoming article about a forgotten polemic against the idea of the "Nordic race." The article is entitled "Smashing the Nordic Race: Henrik Rytter's 1937 Anti-Nazi Polemic *Norden har ordet*," and it will be published in the UK-based journal *Scandinavica* in 2026. Rytter's *Norden har ordet* ("Norden's Turn to Speak") is a 150-page nynorsk polemic against Nazism's manipulative use of Nordic history, mythology, and identity. Krouk's argument situates Rytter's text in three intertwined contexts of early-twentieth-century "Nordicism," in the United States, in Scandinavia, and in Nazi Germany. The term "Nordicism" refers to the cluster of beliefs in the supremacy of the "Nordic" people as a racialized group, which was frequently combined with a sense of cultural pessimism regarding its decline or disappearance. In the US, Nordicism appeared in intelligence research, eugenics projects, racist forms of nationalism, and restrictive immigration legislation. Krouk's article analyzes Rytter's attempt to construct a non-racist and democratic socialist interpretation of Norwegian/Norse cultural history and mythology, and it suggests that this attempt retains a crucial resonance in today's world.

Scandinavian Studies' 150th Anniversary

By Dean Krouk

This article was originally published in *SASS News & Notes*
Volume 72 • January/February 2026



In 2025, the Scandinavian Studies program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison celebrated its 150th anniversary. The program was founded in the same decade as Alfred Nobel's invention of gelignite, the opening of the University of Copenhagen to women, and Ibsen's *Et dukkehjem*. Over the years, it grew from an initial focus on Norwegian language, literature, and culture to include a broader spectrum of course offerings and advanced research, both in terms of interdisciplinary variety and linguistic and cultural diversity within the Nordic region.

After a dozen or so lectures and events over the year, Scandinavian Studies held a culminating day of programming and a festive banquet on November 14. The lead organizers were two incredible alums who were also present for the centennial celebrations in 1975, Carol "Orange" Schroeder and Martha Taylor. Working with faculty members, they planned a day of activities that included tours, seminars, and performances. Visitors could opt to attend lectures at the Memorial Union by program faculty on topics such as Sámi culture in Disney's *Frozen 2*; Hygge and Happiness; the idiosyncratic founder of the department (Rasmus B. Anderson); and the Teacher's Revolt against Nazism in Occupied Norway.

A cocktail reception and festive banquet followed at the university's Fluno Center, featuring Scandinavian foods and desserts. With over 150 guests in attendance, including alums, community members, and current undergraduate and graduate students, the mood was bright and jovial. Professor Claus Elholm Andersen served as the emcee. UW Madison's Associate Dean of Arts and Humanities, Grant Nelsestuen, provided a greeting that spoke to the importance and value of humanistic inquiry in our time. A moving salute to the Nordic unit was given by Orange Schroeder (MA 1974), followed by a rousing tribute to the program's educational impact by alum Dana Kelly (BA 2001). The event was a smashing success as we seek to secure a meaningful future for Scandinavian Studies at one of the historical centers for this type of research and teaching.

You can read more about the lectures and events from the celebratory year at:

<https://gns.wisc.edu/scandinavian-studies-150th-anniversary/>



Organizers Martha Taylor and Orange Schroeder mix with the guests



Professor Claus Elholm Andersen serves as the emcee



From left: Casey Hagen, Amalia Morner, Kari Hjelmeset, Emily Jensen

Undergraduate Students Reflect on Scandinavia Day

By *Ida Moen Johnson*

On a chilly afternoon in February, I had the pleasure of sitting down with four UW-Madison seniors who attended Scandinavia Day on November 14, in celebration of the 150th anniversary of Scandinavian Studies. While most attendees of Scandinavia Day were alumni and friends of Scandinavian Studies, whose affiliation with the department spans years or decades, we were delighted to have some current UW students among those present, and we were curious to hear about their experience. Over coffee, the students shared what they appreciated about the 150th Anniversary celebration and about the Scandinavian Studies community on campus.

The students who joined me, all of whom will graduate in May, represent a variety of academic backgrounds and connections to Scandinavian studies. Amalia Morner will earn her degree in mechanical engineering and a certificate in international engineering. Emily Jensen has three majors: Scandinavian studies, linguistics, and anthropology. Casey Hagen will earn degrees from the business school in finance and risk management, as well as a certificate in data science. Kari Hjelmeset has a major in international studies and no fewer than five (!) certificates, in history, political science, East Asian studies, European studies, and the Languages and Cultures of Northern Europe. All four students have studied abroad in Scandinavia: Amalia in Trondheim, Norway; Emily in Oslo and

Copenhagen; Casey at the BI Norwegian Business School in Oslo; and Kari in Copenhagen (and South Korea!).

When I asked how the students heard about Scandinavia Day, Amalia said she learned about it through her Dad, a native of Norway who is active in Torskeklubben, a local Scandinavian club. Casey learned about the event from Torskeklubben as well, as he is a recipient of their scholarship. Kari learned about Scandinavia Day in an email and asked friend Emily to join.

The students said Scandinavia Day provided a special opportunity to connect with people from various backgrounds who share their interest in Scandinavia. Though Amalia had taken Norwegian with the department, Scandinavia Day allowed her to meet more people in the Nordic Unit. Kari enjoyed encountering the UW Scandinavian studies community in one place. She appreciated the opportunity to chat with the chair of German, Nordic, Slavic +, David Danaher, who she was seated next to for dinner. Casey got to learn about the local Sons of Norway club at his dinner table, which was fitting given that he has received scholarships from the Sons of Norway national organization and recently gave a presentation on his time abroad to the Morris, MN lodge. Both Casey and Emily expressed their appreciation for Professor Dean Krouk's presentation on and knowledge of Norway's World War II history. Emily was also impressed to learn that the Chazen Museum of

Art, which created an exhibit for Scandinavia Day, has works by Edvard Munch in its holdings (see the Chazen piece in this newsletter). Emily also enjoyed Marcus Cederström's presentation on Scandinavia-American traditions--Did you know Norwegian-Americans eat far more lefse than Norwegians?--and she admired the after-dinner speech given by Dana Kelly, an alumna of Scandinavian Studies and the director of Norwegian American Genealogical Center here in Madison.

After graduation, Amalia Morner will begin a job in her field in Madison. Emily will take a gap year to prepare for graduate school. Kari will also take a break from school while she considers graduate programs abroad. Casey will start a job with the Milwaukee-based accounting firm Wipfli. We thank these wonderful undergraduate students for being members of our Scandinavian Studies community and for their reflections on Scandinavia Day!

ON THE NEXT PAGE...

Scandinavia Day: Celebrating 150 Years of Scandinavian Studies

Enjoy this selection of pictures from Scandinavia Day in November, with thanks to Lewis Photography.



Scandinavian Studies 150th Anniversary Chazen Exhibit

By *Ida Moen Johnson*

As part of the many events during the 150th Anniversary Celebration of Scandinavian Studies at UW-Madison, Berit Ness, Chief Engagement Officer at the Chazen Museum of Art on UW's campus, curated an exhibit of pieces in the museum's collection that featured works by Scandinavian artists. The exhibit consisted of ten items in various media, including serigraphs, etchings, and woodcuts. The oldest work dates from the late 19th century, with most of the works being created in the mid-20th century. The

exhibit included three pieces by the famous Norwegian expressionist, Edvard Munch: Vampire II (wood cut), The Sick Child I (etching), and a landscape (drypoint). Other featured artists included the Swedish modernists Olle Baertling, (1911-1981), the Swedish Arts and Crafts artist Kerstin Maria ("Maja") Fjaestad (1873-1961), and the Danish artists Lars Bo (1924-1999) and Asger Jorn (1914-1973), both of whom were influenced by their time in France. The exhibit was enjoyed by attendees of "Scandinavia Day" on November 14.



Hexagonal, from The Angles of Baertling: Open Form Infinite Space: From Cinetisme to Open Form 1949-1968
1951 - 1968



Kero, from The Angles of Baertling: Open Form Infinite Space: From Cinetisme to Open Form 1949-1968
1957 - 1968



The Nocambulists
1924 - 1978



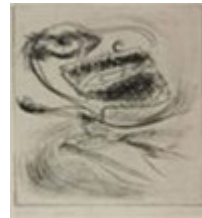
Cherry Blossom (Körsbärsblom)
1873 - 1961



Kaprifolium
1873 - 1961



Lecture at 7 (Conférence à 7)
1957 - 1957



Fool in Danger (Fjols i fare)
1964 - 1964



Vampire II (Vampyr II)
1895 - 1902



The Sick Child I (Det syke barn I)
1984 - 1894



Landscape (Paysage)
1904 - 1914

Artist in Residence Tara Austin

On Saturday, March 21, traditional Scandinavian American dance tunes rang out through the lobby of the Chazen Museum of Art as Tara Austin, our 2026 folk-artists-in-residence, began rosemailing on a canvas measuring five feet by ten feet. The event was hosted by the Chazen and the Sustaining Scandinavian Folk Arts in the Upper Midwest project and brought together Austin with the community ensemble Nordic Lights Dance Band which is led by Mary Pat Kleven and was born from Beth Hoven Rotto's 2022 residency.

Tara Austin, a rosemalar from Duluth, Minnesota, received her MFA in painting from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2017 and now works as a practicing artist and instructor, teaching rosemailing throughout the Upper Midwest. Her work is inspired by the boreal ecosystem of the Upper Midwest and draws from botanical and natural beauty. Originating in Norway, rosemailing has developed and changed over time and space and Austin's work—inspired by Norwegian and Norwegian American rosemailing styles, Swedish folk painting, scenic painting and faux finishing, and reverse painting on glass—has been exhibited in galleries throughout the region.



We have been lucky to host Austin here in Madison for the spring semester. Along with the event at the Chazen, Austin gave public demonstrations; presented for local cultural organizations; traveled throughout the state to see historical examples

of rosemailing, including in Door County, Mt. Horeb, and Stoughton, while meeting and learning from and with other rosemalers; and even taught a workshop for UW-Madison librarians in collaboration with the libraries and the Center for Design and Material Culture.

Of course, she also visited classes in GNS+ and the Art departments, explaining the history and significance of rosemailing, while demonstrating and, for well over 100 students, teaching the basics of rosemailing as part of several in-class workshops. For the 27 students in Dr.

Anna Rue's FOLK 320: Folklore of Wisconsin class, Austin's residency was also an opportunity to further develop their fieldwork skills. The class broke into small groups and each group documented Austin's residency, conducting interviews with Austin herself and other rosemalers in the region, photographing her class visits and public events, and conducting research into rosemailing in the region.



These types of hands-on experiences are central to the work of the Sustaining Scandinavian Folk Arts in the Upper Midwest project, which helps to make clear to students the connections between vernacular culture and lived experiences. Assigned readings,

discussions and lectures, and hands-on practices help make connections clearer and remind students that the things we do and learn in the classroom are alive and relevant outside of the classroom.

Austin is the fifth resident of the project and each and every artist and musician has brought a unique perspective and art form to the program as they share their experiences and expertise with our students and the wider community.



David Natvig: Heritage of Norwegian speakers

The project North Norwegian American Tonal Accents in Contact (NANTIC) is a four-year research project funded by the Research Council of Norway and led by Professor David Natvig at the University of Stavanger, who earned his Ph.D. in Scandinavian Linguistics in 2018 from UW-Madison. The research team consists of language researchers from Norway, the United States, and Canada. The purpose of the project is to research and understand prosodic features in the language, which concern stress, rhythm, intonation, and other musical aspects of speech. For Norwegian, these properties contribute to the language's 'sing-songy-ness'. The team will research the extent to which Norwegian prosodic patterns have been passed down over the generations and with the goal of understanding how heritage language bilingualism influences these patterns. Ultimately this gives language scientists better insight into fundamental properties of human language, and how they can be shaped in social contexts that have changed over longer periods of time.

Heritage languages are languages that are spoken in naturalistic settings, typically acquired as children, when there is another majority or society language. This was, and often still is, the case for many communities in the US, including Norwegian-speaking areas in the Midwest. As the language is acquired by newer generations, and increasingly alongside English, we see how these languages naturally influence each other, often leading to local flavors, or varieties, of both languages. Research shows that these influences are not random, and that they are constrained by grammatical properties and interactions. There has been great work on Norwegian-English influences in word (lexicon), sentence structure (syntax), word structure (morphology), and sound patterns (phonology). Even though prosody is a part of a language's phonology, it interacts more with all these other domains of language. Studying it can therefore shed light on how these areas of language 'communicate' with each other, and how these relationships do, or even do not, change over time.

In fall of 2025, Natvig led a fieldwork expedition with two other researchers from Norway, Sophia Bjorsnes Haave from the University of Oslo and Arnstein Hjelde from Østfold University College, to conduct interviews and brief language tasks with heritage Norwegian speakers. The trip took place over a three-week period from the 8th to the 22nd of October, with 38 participants from 13 places, including Hendricks, Wanamingo, Plymouth, Glenwood, and Sunburg in Minnesota; Fargo, North Dakota; Sioux Falls and Brookings in South Dakota; and Westby, Cameron, Oregon, Stoughton, and Oshkosh in Wisconsin.

While there were many individuals who have previously participated in recent investigations in North American Norwegian, the fieldwork team also met new informants. One exciting result is that some of these people speak Norwegian dialects that have not been documented as heritage varieties in the US in recent expeditions, and possibly even as far back as the 1940s. The benefit of documenting these varieties of course strengthens the project's findings, but more importantly underscores the rich diversity of Norwegian in the US, both past and present.

The interviews are currently being processed, and the research team is looking forward to discovering new aspects of the Norwegian language in America.

Anne-Marie Foltz, Author of *Survival Skills*, Visits Scand 348

On March 24, 2026, Professor Krouk welcomed a special guest to a session of "The Second World War in Nordic Culture," a course that examines how occupation, resistance, collaboration, neutrality, and the Holocaust have been remembered in the Nordic countries. Anne-Marie Foltz was a young child who escaped from the Nazi occupation of Norway in 1940 along with her mother, Lova, and her sister, Inger. Her father, David Abrahamsen, was a prominent Jewish intellectual figure in 1930s Norway who later became a renowned forensic psychiatrist in the postwar decades in the United States. Foltz, who now lives in Madison, published a memoir and work of history in 2020 with the title *Survival Skills: Norway, Anti-Semitism, and the Holocaust: A Family History*. In this book, she recounts the story of the family's escape from occupied Norway just a few years before many Jewish Norwegians were deported and sent to Auschwitz. Her book also reflects on the fragile nature of family memories of difficult episodes and the process of research that entailed posthumous reading of her parents' letters, which are interspersed throughout the tale.

Before Foltz's visit, students had studied the Holocaust in Scandinavia and read Espen Sørbye's *Kathe – Always Been in Norway*, a meticulous reconstruction of the life of a Jewish teenager in Oslo who was deported in November 1942. They were well positioned to understand Foltz's story, with its entanglement in the circumstances of war and occupation. Foltz divided her remarks into four sections: (1) her personal and familial memories of these early childhood events, (2) the history of anti-Semitism in Norwegian society, (3) her parents' persistent attempts to get passports and visas for arrival in the United States, and (4) issues of transitional justice in the postwar period, including the story from the book's epilogue of her uncle Haiman Abrahamsen, who was wrongly accused of treason during the legal purge and held for months. The students, the instructor, and the senior auditors had a wonderful experience listening to the experiences and reflections of Anne-Marie Foltz, a survivor who provides a living connection to the not-so-distant events we have studied.



Sarah Ganzel

Art History

Scandinavian Studies has helped me expand my research horizons in my major field of Art History, in which I primarily focus on illuminated manuscripts from late medieval Northern and Western Europe. I am particularly interested in medieval manuscripts from a material perspective and in terms of readers' tactile engagement with their books, and my research also incorporates approaches from critical animal studies. The unique material properties of medieval Icelandic manuscripts and the comparatively expansive literary culture in medieval Iceland prove especially fruitful for research into the materiality and reception of illuminated books across both high and low productions during this period. In addition to improving my Old Norse reading skills, my coursework in Scandinavian Studies has given me a foundation in other disciplines that are not traditionally taught within Art History, such as philology, paleography, and codicology. The methods I have learned from these disciplines have helped me explore illuminations within their original textual and object-based contexts, which has been invaluable for my scholarship on manuscripts both from Iceland and elsewhere in Europe.



Erin Dowding

Design History

Finnish architect and designer Eliel Saarinen's approach to design focused on an expanded view of an object within its larger context. He asked one to think of "a chair in a room, a room in a house, a house in an environment, environment in a city plan." As a design historian, I look at objects to explore a larger, more nuanced and complete history of a time period or place. Nordic design, and specifically Finnish makers, represent one of the common threads in my work. In my focus on twentieth century design, craft, and architecture, the influence of the Cranbrook Academy of Art and its Finnish roots pops up in my research on midcentury modern design, the American studio craft movement, or the development of the weaving program at India's National Institute of Design. Cranbrook's influence, along with Finnish design houses of Marimekko, Arabia,

Iittala, and Artek have not only strengthened the role of design in everyday life in Finland, but have inspired and affected the culture of design worldwide with a human-centered approach, thoughtful use of materiality, and a bright definition of modernism. I've appreciated the courses I have taken in the Scandinavian Studies department that have helped me place Finnish and Scandinavian design within the larger context of Nordic culture and history and place that history within the

larger context of the world. From stools, to toys, to coffee cups and striped shirts, these objects of material culture provide insights into the values, hardships, ingenuity, and creativity of century full of political, social, and historical upheaval and tell the stories of the people who lived through it.

Alisha Roberts

Physics

After my Bachelor's in 2023, I participated in the Fulbright Student Research Award in Norway, working alongside a physics professor at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. I had been learning Norwegian for a year prior, but otherwise had no connection to the country.

However, my time in Trondheim sparked a deep appreciation for the language and Nordic culture that I knew I wanted to integrate into my long-term academic identity. Starting my PhD at UW-Madison in 2024, I felt a strong desire to continue my journey with Norwegian and to learn more than I had in the two semesters of language classes I took at NTNU during my Fulbright year.

My PhD work focuses on the IceCube Neutrino Telescope, a massive instrument at the geographic South Pole. My current project involves modelling the Milky Way using neutrinos, elusive particles that allow us to 'see' the galaxy in ways light cannot. We are seeking potential sources of these particles within our galaxy. Though this work is carried out entirely in English, the field is inherently international, as the experiment spans 60 countries.

Continuing my education in Scandinavian studies fosters the spirit of international communication and efficient writing, which are skills I actively want to develop during my studies. Additionally, I hope to find myself either teaching or conducting further research in my field in Scandinavia, so taking this minor has been vastly advantageous to bridging my scientific work with the region's unique academic landscape.



In December 2025, Elliot Brandsma and Richelle Wilson defended their dissertations.

Richelle Wilson

IKEA Fictions

This dissertation is a critical reading and analysis of the Swedish furniture store IKEA, especially through the lens of the IKEA catalog (chapter 1) and the blue shopping bag called Frakta (chapter 2), along with several literary and artistic works that parody IKEA or otherwise use it as an intertext, particularly *Horrorstör* by Grady Hendrix (chapter 3) and *Finna* by Nino Cipri (chapter 4). The term “IKEA fictions” refers to both the genre of these IKEA intertexts as well as the stories IKEA tells about itself, especially the fiction of democratic design.

My intervention here is to “read” IKEA, both in the

sense of (1) “reading” the company and its media, especially the catalog and the showroom, as a cultural text and (2) reading and analyzing the fictional works that have used IKEA as a central metaphor or space of critical parody. Throughout, I draw on theoretical concepts and frameworks from the fields of literary studies, design history, material culture, and media studies to produce an interdisciplinary reading of IKEA, which until recently has received limited scholarly attention and critique outside the fields of business and consumer science.

Elliot Brandsma

Parables for Modernity:

The Secularization of Biblical Myth in Modernist Swedish Literature and Film

At the end of the twentieth century, a series of longitudinal sociological surveys declared Sweden one of the most secular countries in the world. Despite this irreligious reputation, many of Sweden’s most celebrated authors, from Bellman to Lagerkvist, revised and reenacted biblical myths in their novels, poetry, and plays, often to critical and popular acclaim. This peculiar contradiction of a thoroughly secular society, interested in reading biblical adaptations, raises questions about the Bible’s complex role in Swedish cultural life, especially given the nation’s well-documented ambivalence toward religious practice. This study analyzes Swedish biblical adaptations across four centuries, paying closest attention to the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and concludes that Swedish intellectual elites have long desacralized scripture and used it for secular purposes in their works. These writers frequently challenged the Bible’s divine claims while retaining its status as a work of cultural significance. This finding supports the view that Lutheranism in Sweden functions as a “cultural religion”—a source of national identity and cultural

memory rather than supernatural belief. Examining adaptations from Sweden’s age of empire to the turn of the twentieth-first century, this study traces the origins and development of this refrain of “biblical modernism,” which matured in twentieth-century Swedish literature. These works secularized familiar biblical myths, expatiated marginal biblical figures’ biographies, and posed existential questions that challenged religion’s claims to absolute truth, while exploring the ideological diversity of the modern age. This study argues that Sweden’s secularized “biblical modernism,” in literature, visual art, and film, served as a platform for renegotiating national identity in the wake of Sweden’s social democratization, theological liberalization, and industrialization. Comparative analysis of twentieth-century Finnish biblical adaptations suggests this secular biblical refrain may be more pronounced in Sweden than in neighboring Nordic countries. The study concludes with suggestions for further comparative research on biblical adaptation in Nordic and European literary traditions.

Cody King (MA from UW-Madison)

Hello from Texas everybody! This is now my second semester teaching Danish and Scandinavian literature at UT Austin. Last fall, I taught a 6-hour first semester Danish course, a 3-hour advanced Danish independent study, and a course on Hans Christian Andersen, which Claus Elholm Andersen’s course on H.C. Andersen prepared me quite well for. This semester, I am teaching the continuation of both of those Danish courses and a course called *Scandinavian Stories*, where I was tasked with teaching a period of Scandinavian literature of my choosing. Scandinavian Romanticism being my great enthusiasm in modern literature, I am now dutifully passing Susan Brantly’s love for Tegné and Stagnelius on to my own students. On top of this, I am a Danish tutor for several students at a couple universities in the northeast.

The job has kept me extremely busy between preparing for the courses, translating about 18,000 words of Oehlenschläger and Stagnelius for my students, grading, and actually instructing. That said, I have gotten very comfortable teaching, have met lots of great students and colleagues, and have generally received overwhelmingly positive feedback from students and observers alike. If everything works out, I will be continuing here next year.



Jackson Puent

After graduating from UW Madison in December 2025 with a certificate in Scandinavian Studies (which supplemented my Chemical Engineering B.S.), I have started a role as a Technical Trainer at Epic Systems Corporation working on the reporting team. My job is to train the IT departments of hospitals on how to use Epic’s reporting software, called Cogito, to track trends in healthcare. I am still training for a few months before teaching classes myself, but I am looking forward to applying the problem solving and presentation skills I acquired during my time at UW to my work as a trainer.

Epic recently came to an agreement with the Norwegian national health system to add them to their long list of global customers, which includes the Danish and Finnish health systems. I look forward to using the Norwegian I learned in the Scandinavian Studies department’s excellent language courses to work with healthcare professionals from Norway and with customers across Scandinavia, Europe, and around the world.

Laura Moquin

Laura Moquin is a visiting associate professor in the English section of the Department of Education and Sports Science at the University of Stavanger. She earned her PhD in Scandinavian Studies from UW-Madison in 2025.

Last summer, I moved to Norway with my husband and children (and cat) to begin a one-year position as Visiting Associate Professor in English at the University of Stavanger. I teach in a combined bachelor's and master's English teacher training program which has required me to merge multiple skillsets. I regularly pull from my knowledge of Norwegian-English contact phenomena in teaching my current course on linguistics, and I was able to utilize my experiences with literary analysis and visual literacy in last semester's course on English language, culture and literature. My experiences working with and developing learning materials for children and young adults have also come into good use! Teaching and advising in this program has helped me realize new applications for my own expertise and background. Fortunately, I have dedicated research time for individual projects and to participate in the quickly expanding research environment here at UiS – especially within FLUENT (Flerspråklig utvikling og endring i nyere tid 'Multilingual development and change in society today'), a cross-departmental research group that focuses on a wide range of aspects pertaining to multilingual communities and speakers in Norway. Stavanger is a beautiful and friendly coastal city that I am happy to call home, even if temporarily. Living and working here has been an exciting, educative and rewarding experience!



Congratulations to our graduating seniors in May 2026. Gratulerer!

Jenna Hillestad

BS in Scandinavian Studies and Certificate in the Languages and Cultures of Northern Europe

Kari Hjelmeset

Certificate in the Languages and Cultures of Northern Europe

Emily Jensen

BA in Scandinavian Studies

Niklas Lauridsen

Major in Scandinavian Studies (College of Engineering)

Eliana Sauer

BA in Scandinavian Studies and Certificate in the Languages and Cultures of Northern Europe

Paige Schulz

Certificate in the Languages and Cultures of Northern Europe

Kathryn Stearns

Major in Scandinavian Studies (School of Human Ecology)

Kate Stukel

Certificate in the Languages and Cultures of Northern Europe

Sofia Stutesman

Certificate in Scandinavian Studies

We also want to congratulate Emily Jensen on winning the inaugural **Ygdrasil Prize for Undergraduate Excellence**. The \$500 award comes from the Ygdrasil fund, whose purpose is to “aid the department in its mission to study, identify, and disseminate Norwegian cultural and heritage achievements.” The award goes to a graduating senior who has studied Norwegian and who has demonstrated academic excellence and has been a good citizen of the program.

Emily has excelled in her study of Norwegian. She has studied abroad in both Norway and Denmark, and has also studied Danish. Not least, she has been an excellent citizen of the program, as demonstrated by her leadership in Norden, her willingness to represent Scandinavian Studies on a variety of occasions, both large and small, and in her approachability and friendliness. Gratulerer!

Howard Martin – In Memoriam

by Kirsten Wolf

Howard Martin (May 16, 1941 – September 29, 2025) passed away from a long battle with kidney disease.

Howard's service to UW-Madison is unparalleled. His 42-year career included 22 years of teaching and research as well as 20 years as Dean of Continuing Studies, during which he pioneered the Division of Continuing Studies on campus. During his tenure as dean, Howard was also the chief campus liaison for the annual agreement with UW-Extension, which at that time supported nearly 400 Madison-based faculty and staff in serving Wisconsin people and communities. He played a key role in forwarding the Wisconsin Idea and advancing lifelong learning. Under his tenure at the Division of Continuing Studies, the Division evolved to serve a variety of nontraditional audiences, from summer session students to senior guest auditors. He also created the Wisconsin Alumni Lifelong Learning initiative in partnership with the Wisconsin Alumni Association, expanding continuing education programs to UW program.

Howard's research was within the fields of German

and Scandinavian Studies, and he published significant books and articles within those fields. He became an active member of Torske Klubben and served on the Executive Committee of what was then the Department of Scandinavian Studies for many years.

After his retirement, he traveled extensively with his wife Cathy, typically using their second home in England as a launching point for trips to other countries in Europe and even Africa. Howard donated precious books to Scandinavian Studies and German, and in his will he set up a fellowship for students in German / Scandinavian Studies.

Howard was a man of intellect – an educator, traveler, mentor, and builder of communities. He touched and influenced many people's lives. More than anything else, he was a mensch in every sense of the word.

Howard was preceded in death by his wife. He is survived by his daughter, his two sons, and his seven grandchildren.

Support Scandinavian Studies

Our sincere thanks to the many alumni and friends who have generously supported Scandinavian Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Private gifts are increasingly critical to ensuring that we maintain our stature as one of the nation’s best Scandinavian Studies programs. Your donations help us attract top faculty and graduate students, support our amazing undergraduate majors, and host a stimulating series of lectures, symposia, and other scholarly activities. Gifts of any size are most welcome and gratefully received. There are several options if you’d like to donate.

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