



Beyond the Nobel Prize: Innovation in Sweden

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: BIOL 3905

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: xxx

Contact Hours:

Instructor: Nikki Letawsky Shultz, PhD; cell phone: 952.240.8571; email: nlshultz@umn.edu

Course Description

This course is open to undergraduates from all disciplines and will appeal to students with a broad interest in the creative process and understanding innovation of the past and present. Students will examine innovation across a variety of disciplines and consider how solutions to problems facing society require creativity, collaboration, and new ways of thinking. In particular, we will explore how environments can foster innovation, particularly in the Swedish context by traveling to Stockholm over spring break. We examine the reasons behind Sweden's ranking (#2 in 2022) on the Global Innovation Index, as well as the Nobel Prize, international awards bestowed by Swedish institutions that recognize significant academic, cultural, and scientific advances. As a learning abroad seminar, students will learn about their level of intercultural competence and strategies to increase their competence, as well as engage in a practical experience of navigating another culture in an intentional and reflective way.

An important part of this course is immersing within Swedish culture to better understand its role facilitating an innovative environment in a Scandinavian context. Swedish innovation and culture will be explored across disciplines, such as the arts, education, science, and technology, through readings, lectures, and experiences in country to various sites, including the Vasa Museum, Nobel Museum, Swedish History Museum, and business visits. Through examining innovation through the Swedish lens and across disciplines, students will emerge with an understanding about how organizational and government practices foster innovation in a country beyond the United States.

Course Objectives

Liberal Education:

*This course is approved by the University of Minnesota to meet the Global Perspectives Liberal Education requirement.

Liberal Education is an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. It provides students with broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g. science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth study in a specific area of interest. A liberal education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, as well as strong and transferable intellectual and practical skills such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings (Association of American Colleges & Universities).

This focus of seminar is designed to allow you opportunities to examine:

- the role of creativity and innovation in addressing societal challenges and how organizational environments and locations can foster space for creative thinking and problem-solving
- the social, economic, cultural, historical, and political conditions which have led to the recognition of Sweden as a global leader in innovation
- the history of the Nobel Prize, as well as particular examples of academic, cultural, and scientific advances
- similarities and differences between the United States and Sweden in their approach to fostering innovative and creative practices within their societies
- your level of intercultural competence and strategies to increase your level of intercultural competence

Expectations:

You are expected to exhibit courtesy and respect toward your instructor and fellow students. It is important to seek to understand different viewpoints, values, and opinions in order to create a positive learning environment for everyone. Please keep in mind the following expectations and values during class discussions:

- We are all teachers and learners
- Each of us brings valuable contributions to this course
- We grow and move forward based on our interactions as a class
- What we learn in this course is determined by our mutual contributions, interactions, and relationships
- Our space is a place where you are free to change your mind, ask real questions, and have fun
- Each of us may have different creative processes and our experiences may take many shapes, but we are all creative in very important ways

In this course, you will have opportunities to reflect upon and critically evaluate information and perspectives related to creativity and innovation in Sweden. You are expected to express your opinions through written communication, small and large group discussion, and through in-class experiential learning activities. You will not just read about Swedish innovation, but will engage in exercises that are designed to stretch yourself and enhance your own creative process. As a result of this course, you will be better able to contribute your talents within your field of study and beyond your college experience.

You can expect me to do our best to answer your questions, support your learning and you as a person, challenge you, and respect your opinions. I will do my best to make sure I am accessible to you throughout the class and consider your feedback and goals when making plans for our time together. Feel free to contact me at any time if you think there are opportunities to improve the course.

Course Outcomes

Within this course, the following University of Minnesota Student Learning Outcomes are emphasized:

- Can locate and critically evaluate information
- Understand diverse philosophies and cultures within and across societies
- Can communicate effectively
- Understand the role of creativity, innovation, discovery, and expression across disciplines
- Have acquired skills for effective citizenship and life-long learning

These learning outcomes will be evaluated through the assignments as noted below. Within the course content and our abroad experience to Sweden, students will also have the opportunity to grow along the University's Student Development Outcomes: responsibility and accountability, independence and interdependence, self-awareness, resilience, appreciation of differences, and tolerate ambiguity.

Required Reading / Materials

Course learning materials will be available via Canvas.

- Robinowitz, C. J. & Carr, L. W. (2001). *Modern-day Vikings: A practical guide to interacting with the Swedes*. Boston: Intercultural Press.

Recommended supplemental reading:

- DeWill, C. J. (2006). *Sweden - culture smart! The essential guide to customs & culture*. London: Kuperard.

Grading

Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

Assessment Details

Late Work:

1. Grace period for one individual assignment. I realize that personal, medical, and miscellaneous events that prohibit students from turning work in on time do arise, and since this class is composed of responsible adults, I have no desire to closely monitor reasons for late work. A 48-hour grace period will be granted once per semester to any student needing to take advantage of this policy. You are under no obligation to explain the circumstances to me, and the grace period can only be utilized once during the course of the semester.

2. Late work beyond the grace period will have 10 percentage points deducted from the total score per day, unless you have contacted me before the due date and made prior arrangements.

The earlier you can talk to me about late assignments, the better. I understand that “life happens,” and that sometimes it is hard to meet all your deadlines—it certainly happens to me sometimes! Please come and see me, and we can discuss your options for doing your best to complete the work in a timely fashion. If you do need to request an extension, I will ask that you write us an email so that I have a record of what your new deadline is. Please note: Missing a class session does not excuse you from completing any future assignments on time.

Schedule of Classes/Stockholm Itinerary:

The schedule of classes is included on the Canvas site and materials for each week in the “Module” view. Please remember this syllabus is a working document to guide us during the abroad course. There may be times we decide to pursue different subjects than what are directly stated in the syllabus, or may be changes to the in-country schedule. Therefore, this document is subject to change.

Course Content

This course is graded A-F and the grading scale will be posted on the Canvas site. Points can be earned as follows:

Unit 1

Sweden Presentation (10 points)

- Due on site; date TBA
- You will work with a group of three to develop a 15-minute presentation about an aspect of Swedish culture.
- Topics may include religion, social policy, politics, famous Swedes, music, literature, customs, etc. This is meant to be an informal presentation—B level work will receive full credit.

Unit 2

Nobel Prize Presentation (10 points)

- Due on site; date TBA
- You will work with a group to develop a 15-minute presentation about one of the Nobel Prizes. You'll include a basic overview of the prize, who chooses it, the process, recent winners, notable laureates, interesting facts/winners (i.e., Einstein did NOT win for the theory of relativity), scandals, criticisms, controversies, concerns, etc. This is meant to be an informal presentation—B level work will receive full credit.

Unit 3

Nobel Prize Assignment (30 points)

- Due after we return from Stockholm; submit prior to our return and you can resubmit for a higher grade if you want. The history of the Nobel Prize is filled with societal changing ideas, but it is also filled with drama and controversy! We'll consider who has been chosen to receive a Nobel Prize and why (and who has not!) and discuss how the Nobel Prize selection might be adapted for the future. To demonstrate your learning about the Nobel Prize, you are welcome to choose from the following options: (1) a Nobel Prize Nomination or (2) an Advocacy Proposal to the Nobel Foundation. There are multiple formats you can use to demonstrate your learning. Papers are generally equivalent to 3 pages, double spaced in 12-point font with one inch margins. Videos

are typically about 2-3 minutes in length. You must use academic sources within your assignment (APA style preferred). Submit your assignment via the Canvas website.

Unit 4

Why Sweden? Assignment (30 points)

- Due after we return from Stockholm; submit prior to our return and you can resubmit for a higher grade if you want. Identify three to five different aspects of Sweden that make it an appropriate location to explore innovation. These aspects are not limited to, but are expected to be related to Swedish culture, politics, education, religion, social context or history. There are multiple formats you can use to demonstrate your learning. A paper should be 4 pages in length, typed in 12-point font, and double-spaced with one-inch margins. Videos are typically about 2–3 minutes in length. You must use appropriate resources to provide supporting evidence for the arguments/claims that you make in your analysis and cite these sources appropriately (APA style preferred). Submit your assignment via the Canvas website.

Unit 5

Sweden Experiential Journal (20 points)

- Due once on site and once at conclusion of the course. When we travel to Stockholm, you will have many observations and an opportunity to deepen your understanding of Stockholm, Sweden, and the course topics. This assignment is designed for you to make meaning of the experience in a structured way and will include prompts and reflections of exploratory analysis for the various learning opportunities presented in Stockholm. It is expected that you will spend time at least every other day responding to the journal prompts. Students must turn in this journal once on- site and once upon completion of the Stockholm experience. You will receive a grade for the quality of the writing and assignments completed. The experiential journal also provides content and analysis that can serve as a foundation from which to draw for the Why Sweden? Assignment (HINT, HINT!).

Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

All members share responsibility for the success of this course. As such, you are expected to participate actively in each class session. Doing so requires you to attend every class session for the full period, having prepared by reviewing the learning materials prior to coming to class. I want you to share your thoughts, reflections, criticisms, and half-formulated ideas in a way that is open to possibilities and helps us contemplate together. You will be asked to make thoughtful contributions in large and small group discussions and share your informed reactions to readings, materials, and general class discussions. If you don't attend class, you will lose the chance to discuss the material and learn from your peers, and your peers will lose the chance to learn from you. If you need to miss class, you must contact me prior to class and receive consent to have an excused absence from class. You may be asked to provide documentation for your absence. Excused absences are likely to include illnesses and emergencies.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).

Use of Personal Electronic Devices in the Classroom

Using personal electronic devices in the classroom setting can hinder instruction and learning, not only for the student using the device but also for other students in the class. To this end, the University establishes the right of each faculty member to determine if and how personal electronic devices are allowed to be used in the classroom. For complete information, please reference: <https://policy.umn.edu/education/studentresp>

Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences

Students will not be penalized for absence during the semester due to unavoidable or legitimate circumstances. Such circumstances include verified illness, participation in intercollegiate athletic events, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, bereavement, and religious observances. Such circumstances do not include voting in local, state, or national elections. For complete information, please see:

<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/MAKEUPWORK.html>.

Appropriate Student Use of Class Notes & Course Materials

Taking notes is a means of recording information but more importantly of personally absorbing and integrating the educational experience. However, broadly disseminating class notes beyond the classroom community or accepting compensation for taking and distributing classroom notes undermines instructor interests in their intellectual work product while not substantially furthering instructor and student interests in effective learning. Such actions violate shared norms and standards of the academic community. For additional information, please see: <https://policy.umn.edu/education/studentresp>

Sexual Harassment

"Sexual harassment" means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment in any University activity or program. Such behavior is not acceptable in the University setting. For additional information, please consult Board of Regents Policy:

<http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/SexHarassment.pdf>

Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, & Affirmative Action

The University will provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status,

disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For more information, please consult Board of Regents Policy: http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Equity_Diversity_EO_AA.pdf.

Disability Accommodations

The University of Minnesota views disability as an important aspect of diversity, and is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

- If you have, or think you have, a disability in any area such as, mental health, attention, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical, please contact the DRC office on your campus (612.626.1333) to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.
- Students with short-term disabilities, such as a broken arm, can often work with instructors to minimize classroom barriers. In situations where additional assistance is needed, students should contact the DRC as noted above.
- If you are registered with the DRC and have a disability accommodation letter dated for this semester or this year, please contact your instructor early in the semester to review how the accommodations will be applied in the course.
- If you are registered with the DRC and have questions or concerns about your accommodations please contact your (access consultant/disability specialist).

Additional information is available on the DRC website: <https://disability.umn.edu> or email drc@umn.edu with questions.

Mental Health & Stress Management

As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Student Mental Health Website: <http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu>.

Academic Freedom & Responsibility

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Within the scope and content of the course as defined by the instructor, it includes the freedom to discuss relevant matters in the classroom. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.* (Language Adapted from the

American Association of University Professors' *"Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students"*)

Reports of concerns about academic freedom are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. Contact the instructor, the Department Chair, your adviser, the associate dean of the college, or the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost.