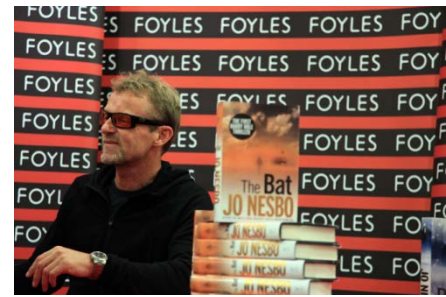


Seminar in World Literature: **Nordic Noir**  
Spring 2017, Mondays 7:30–10:20  
Dr. Rosemary Erickson Johnsen

Mankell is extremely absorbing, and he's very foreign. And those are great. ---Marilyn Stasio, *NYT* crime fiction reviewer

Jo Nesbø's *Harry Hole* is, as they would say on *The Wire* (the best rendering of urban America ever), good police: He smokes cigarettes, drinks with abandon, and doggedly investigates any and all cases that come under his purview. He has the makings of a Norwegian Jimmy McNulty. ---*Vanity Fair*



Stieg Larsson's *Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* was an international sensation, but Larsson is far from the only Scandinavian crime writer to make an impact in the English-language translation market. In fact, crime fiction from all of the Nordic countries—popularly known as Nordic noir—has been one of the headline stories in twenty-first century publishing. Michael Reynolds, Editor in Chief of Europa Editions, says that “**world noir confronts broad, global themes through an investigation of international crime in its local manifestations,**” a



description that suggests its value as a site of comparative study. Crime fiction combines detailed presentation of society, from its material circumstances to its values, with a strong narrative arc. Add to that its highly-visible connections to film and television, and we have an ideal site to undertake the kind of comparative study required by a seminar in world literature. This semester, we will read broadly in crime fiction from the Nordic countries, supplementing readings with clips from film and television adaptations. We will consider how these works are marketed to American audiences, we will ask questions about them as representative (as crime novels, as literature in translation from specific national traditions), and we will develop comparisons among course texts and to our own American context. Students will write short weekly responses to the reading, prepare background and discussion questions for one course author, and write a 12-15 page seminar paper.

Our reading includes at **least one work from each of the Nordic countries: Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland.** Denmark is represented by the television series, *Broen*, set on the bridge between Denmark and Sweden, while the other countries are represented by the following texts (ordered at the bookstore): Anne Holt, *The Lion's Mouth*; Jo Nesbø, *Redbreast*; Henning Mankell, *One Step Behind*; Liza Marklund, *Prime Time*; Jarkko Sipilä, *Nothing but the Truth*; Arnaldur Indriðason, *Jar City*.

Want to know more? [rjohnsen@govst.edu](mailto:rjohnsen@govst.edu)

Photos: Jo Nesbø (Foyles); Bogtrykkervej, Nørrebro district, Copenhagen, November 2015 (Johnsen); Thingvellir National Park, Iceland, July 2015 (Johnsen)

