The reputation of Scandinavian cinema has been built on beautiful-but-bleak art-house films full of existential anguish and stylistic experimentation. This course reconsiders the raw emotion and humanity of this “high art” cinema through the lens of film melodrama. Although it might seem the polar opposite of melodrama’s (supposed) comprehensibility and overflowing expressivity, actually Scandinavian art-house cinema exploits melodrama’s heightened emotional registers, its suffering protagonists, and its pressure on the domestic sphere in interesting ways that challenge and expand what we think of as melodrama.

This course satisfies both the Arts and Letters and International Cultures requirements. It also satisfies Cinema Studies Core C requirements.

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