

# *SCAND 360: Nordic Cinema*

## *Swedish Film, Family, and the Welfare State*

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Online & Asynchronous

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Or...Where is Pippi Longstocking's family?

In America these days, it's not uncommon to hear people equate big government with the restriction of individual freedom. However, recent research shows that Sweden—with its strong welfare state and social democracy—is even more individualistic than America. A strong Swedish state may do more to protect individual autonomy than a weak one. One of Sweden's most famous exports, the “parentless” Pippi Longstocking, may even embody the way that the Swedish state protects individuals even from having to rely on their own families for support.

This course looks at contemporary Swedish cinema in order to grapple with some big questions: how do we understand ourselves as individuals in relation to social institutions like the family; to cultural institutions like cinema; and to political and educational institutions within the (welfare) state? We'll focus on three recurring figures: “family,” “the autonomous child,” and “home.” We'll also look at how filmic representations of family contributed to the foundation of the welfare state in Sweden and reflect its current challenges.