



**UiO** : **Centre for Development and the Environment**  
University of Oslo



# **The Politics of Nordic Generosity**

**PhD Course organized by**

Nordic Branding, the Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM)  
and SUM Research School, University of Oslo, Norway

**7 – 9 August 2019**

Application deadline: **11 April 2019**

## Course description

The objective of this interdisciplinary PhD course is to explore how changing geopolitical circumstances are challenging the politics of Nordic generosity. Among these challenges are the emergence of new global powers, the economic downturn around the world, the rise of populism, the merging of development and security agendas, and new forms of global collaborative structures.

The Nordic countries are among the world's most generous foreign aid providers. They claim to be in a unique position to mediate peace and promote human rights throughout the world. What will be the fate of Nordic countries' foreign policies in a new global context?

In this course, we will critically assess theories and cases of how and why the Nordic countries are perceived as exceptional actors on the international arena. We will discuss different explanations of what role this self-image and external perception has played in the Nordic region and beyond. The course will focus on how various actors – including civil society, governments, and business – construct and strategically use the idea of “Nordic exceptionalism”, and investigate the role of ideas, interests, and institutions in various policy processes.

The course will address the following questions

- What characterizes the traditional, “soft power,” model of the Nordic countries' international politics, and how is that model placed under pressure today?
- What are the factors shaping and forming Nordic development policies today, and how are such policies legitimized, at home and abroad?
- What role do increased geopolitical tensions, new global alliances and power-shifts play in changing the donor identity of the Nordic countries?

The course will bring together PhD students working on international relations, development and humanitarian issues, to contribute and expand their understanding of the politics of Nordic generosity.

## Learning outcomes

Students will be able to

- Examine empirically and theoretically Nordic countries' policy-making and policy framing processes.
- Use major theoretical and empirical approaches to studying soft power, small state status seeking, Nordic political culture and internationalism;
- Engage in critical discussion, become acquainted with the work of others on Nordic politics and Nordic generosity, and build networks within their chosen field of research.

## Lecturers

- [Christopher Browning](#) Reader of Politics and International Studies, Visiting professor at the Centre for Development and the Environment, University of Oslo.
- [Maurits van der Veen](#) Associate Professor, College of William and Mary, Virginia.
- [Johan Karlsson Schaffer](#) Senior lecturer, School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg.
- [Ada Nissen](#) Postdoc, Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History, Faculty of Humanities, University of Oslo.

## Objectives and Focus

This course will contribute to improve doctoral students understanding of key concepts, debates and perspectives on the politics of Nordic generosity, based on up-to-date literature – and on recent developments.

In addition to lectures, the course will allow those conducting PhD research to present their own work and comment on that of others, guided by experienced senior academics who are themselves working in this field.

Course capacity: 18 students

Language of instruction: English

Syllabus: Approximately 1000 pages of compulsory readings.

## Application

### Who may [apply](#)?

The interdisciplinary nature of this course will be most relevant for doctoral students engaging with different disciplines within the social sciences, humanities, or law.

Doctoral students will be prioritised, although other applicants may be considered *only if space permits*.

## Funding

The course is free. Lunches will be provided.

The organisers have some funds available to cover the cost of accommodation (meals not included) for selected students from outside Norway. Similarly, there is funding available for a

limited number of travel scholarships for selected students. Please consult point 3 under “Application procedures.”

## Application procedures

Interested students should state their motivation and upload the following via the [Application Form](#) by **11 April 2019**:

1. **A cover letter** signed by your Ph.D. supervisor or another person at your institution/workplace, stating your academic background and academic degree(s) held, your research interests and current research projects (if any), including estimated date of submission of doctoral thesis.
2. **CV**
3. Students from outside Norway may apply for a modest travel scholarship and/or accommodation support, **by uploading a separate document** along with their course application. If you wish to apply for a travel scholarship, please also attach a **budget** based on minimum cost travel.

Applications are invited from **February 2019**.

The application deadline is **11 April 2019**.

An early application is highly recommended due to space constraints.

Successful applicants will be contacted by **26 April 2019**.

## Preparations

A major purpose of the course is to provide participants with comments on their on-going work. It is therefore obligatory for all participants to submit a draft paper which will be discussed during the course.

The paper should be approximately 10 pages long (4000–5000 words, excluding the bibliography). You should submit a paragraph attached to the paper where you specify what you need feedback on, where you are in the process and what your ideas for publishing are.

Students who are admitted to the course should submit their draft paper electronically to the course secretariat by **16 June 2019**.

This paper may be revised and resubmitted for evaluation and approval after the course (please consult the section on “Credits” below). All draft paper submissions will be posted on the course’s password protected intranet site. All participants are required to read draft papers for

their allocated working groups in advance and provide feedback during the course. (You may of course read others as you wish.)

## Syllabus and programme

A complete reading list (with links to online publications, when possible) of approximately 1000 pages will be available on the course's intranet site by **26 April 2019**.

Participants are expected to read the syllabus in advance of the course.

Participants are expected to attend morning and afternoon sessions, and evening sessions when relevant, on all three days.

## Credits

Course participants will receive a Course Certificate, **recommending** either 10 or 3 ECTS credits, but your own institution must approve credits for the course. We therefore recommend that you contact your Ph.D. coordinator about the issue of credits prior to your participation.

For a Certificate recommending 10 credits, a revised paper of 15 – 20 pages (6000 - 8000 words) must be submitted to the course organisers no later than 8 weeks after completion of the course, and the paper must be graded with 'pass'. (The paper will be evaluated by a course lecturer and assessed within eight weeks after submission).

3 ECTS credits will be recommended for those who participate in full but choose not to submit a revised paper for evaluation (or for those whose revised paper does not pass).

## Contact information

Should you have any practical enquiries, please do not hesitate to email the course secretariat at [nordic2019@sum.uio.no](mailto:nordic2019@sum.uio.no).

## Check for updates

Please check for updated information at the [course's web pages](#) at the Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM).

