The Dept. of English; Dept. of Germanic Languages and Literatures; INSPIRE* and European Union Center** at the University of Illinois invite you to attend a public talk about a U.S. immigrant group’s rhetorical (self-)construction by

Dr. Dag Blanck
director of the Swedish Institute for North American Studies (SINAS) at Uppsala University
entitled

“Vikings in America?
Swedes in 19th Century American Ethno-racial Hierarchies"

on Wed., Oct. 22, 2014 at 4 p.m. in the Lucy Ellis Lounge
(ground floor in the Foreign Languages Building)

Dr. Blanck’s lecture will address how Swedish immigrants to the United States in the late 19th century managed to get classified as “Anglo-Saxons,” a significant category in American racial-ethnic hierarchies of the period, even though the mostly rural and impoverished immigrants from Sweden at that period could trace no ancestry to either England or Saxony. He will argue that the immigrating Swedes could build on and benefit from a dominant public discourse--fostered particularly in New England--that conflated “Anglo-Saxonism” with American notions of Vikings and the old Norse language. As white Protestants, Swedes enjoyed further privilege in light of the rising nativist feelings against the influx of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. Paradoxically, counter to explicit cultural preference for marriage to fellow Swedish or Scandinavian Protestants, especially Swedish Americans working in urban contexts soon began through affiliation with fellow immigrants to intermarry across faith and ethnic borders, e.g., with Irish and Italian immigrants and their descendants, to an extent not yet acknowledged in immigrant history.


This event, which is free and open to the public, is co-sponsored by the Dept. of English; Dept. of Germanic Languages and Literatures; *INSPIRE: Illinois-Sweden Program for Educational and Research Exchange, through Illinois Strategic International Partnerships (ISIP); and the **European Union Center (EUC) at the University of Illinois, with the support of a US Department of Education Title VI Grant.