

SCANDINAVIA: HEALTH, HAPPINESS, AND HYGGE

STUDY ABROAD SPRING 2026



The newly released 2025 World Happiness Report finds that the top four happiest countries in the world are Nordic: Finland, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. What is it about the Nordic countries that makes them rank consistently and regularly so high in the World Happiness Report? Part of the answer is their emphasis on caring and sharing, or societies that help build connection, support, and trust. In this study abroad, we will explore cultures, social networks, and policy making, and focus particularly on the idea of compassionate communities. We will begin by visiting the Compassionate Mind Foundation, a research center in England, to better understand compassion as a driving force for better mental health, strong relationships, and flourishing societies. We will then see how caring and sharing play out in the Nordic region, visiting Stockholm, Sweden, and Copenhagen, Denmark. In both of these cities, we will spend time learning, exploring, and intentionally integrating Nordic values of balance, trust, social connection, nature, and intentional coziness into our day-to-day lives. We will also take an extended excursion to Norway to experience the fishing towns and fjords, and all along the way, soak in the long summer evenings, enjoy biking through cities and forests, swim in fjords and lakes, celebrate Midsommar and dance around the maypole, and experience firsthand the art of fika and hygge—ways of slowing down and savoring connection. Join us as we immerse ourselves in the cultures that consistently rank among the happiest on earth.

DATES

9 May–17 June 2026

HOUSING

Students will live in hotels and hostels in Derby, London, Stockholm, and Copenhagen. The program will arrange all housing except for the free travel weekend.

COURSES

Students will enroll in the following courses while on this program:

SCAND 340—Trust Societies: The Nordic Region (3 credit hours)

IHUM 202 – Arts in Western Civilization (3 credit hours)

PSYCH 390—Special Topics in Psychology: Introduction to Compassion Focused Therapy (3 credit hours)

PSYCH 430R—Capstone: Research (3 credit hours) **OR** PSYCH 492R—Supervised Instructional or Research Experience (3 credit hours)

Students may not take any other courses on this program, including BYU Online courses, without approval by the program director and ISP.

COST

\$7,200–7,500

Includes Latter-day Saint undergraduate full tuition (increased cost for graduate and non-Latter-day Saint students), housing; transportation within Scandinavia on program trips; some group meals; admission to program-related events, museums, and historical sites; and international health insurance.

Does not include transatlantic airfare, prep course tuition, most meals, the free travel weekend, or personal expenses.

TRAVEL

Students are responsible for purchasing their own airfare to and from the program sites. Airline reservations must be made through BYU Travel. Students should contact a BYU Travel agent at 280 HRCB | (801) 422-6293 | travel@byu.edu

PREPARATION

Accepted students are required to participate in an international, cross-cultural preparation course (IAS 201, 1 credit hour). This course will be held Wednesdays from 4:00 to 5:40 PM during the second block of winter semester.

Accompanying spouses need to be credit-bearing participants on the program. Spouses will also need to apply online and take the preparation course.

Students must meet all country- and program- specific COVID and health requirements for travel.

International study programs are physically, emotionally, and mentally taxing and you must be in good health to participate. These programs often take place in international locations that do not have the same level of safety and services in terms of transportation, living conditions, residential accommodations, food, public behavior, and policing that you may be used to on campus. If you have further questions or concerns on this, please see <https://kennedy.byu.edu/isp-travel-policy>.

FUNDING SOURCES

Regular BYU tuition scholarships, Pell Grants, and Federal Insured Student Loans may be applied to study abroad programs. Students who submit the financial aid section of the ISP application and who have a current FAFSA form on file at the Financial Aid Office (A-41 ASB) will be considered for a study abroad scholarship and may be considered for other scholarships.

Academic departments and colleges may assist with scholarships and grants.

Private grants and scholarships outside of BYU may also assist (see kennedy.byu.edu/scholarships).

APPLICATION PROCESS

Students must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

Complete the online application at kennedy.byu.edu/isp-apply. A nonrefundable \$35 application fee is required; applicants will be interviewed once the application is complete.

Students will be notified via e-mail of their acceptance into the program. The first payment is due upon acceptance; please refer to <https://kennedy.byu.edu/isp-payment-information>.

Application Deadline: 30 December 2025

FACULTY

Nate Kramer is a professor of interdisciplinary humanities and Scandinavian studies in the BYU Comparative Arts and Letters Department. He has lived and worked extensively in the Scandinavia and directed eight study abroad programs.

3031 JFSB | (801) 422-1932 | nate_kramer@byu.edu

Davey Erikson is a clinical professor in BYU's Counseling and Psychological Services. He is a licensed clinical psychologist and studies the effect of compassion on mental health and flourishing. He has had strong ties to Scandinavia for 26 years and was a visiting lecturer and researcher at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden.

1500 WSC | (801) 422-3035 | davey@byu.edu

INTERESTED STUDENTS SHOULD CONTACT

International Study Programs

101 HRCB | (801) 422-3686 | isp@byu.edu | kennedy.byu.edu/isp

PROGRAM ADJUSTMENTS

International Study Programs (ISP) reserves the right to cancel this program, revise its offerings, or make any adjustments to the preliminary cost. If it becomes necessary for ISP to cancel a program, all program payments made to BYU ISP will be refunded to the student's BYU financial account. ISP is the only office authorized to cancel any of its programs.