THE VIKINGS

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Office hours: T, R, 2 – 3

Course requirements

**Attendance:** Regular class attendance is expected. If for some reason you miss a class, please, contact me BEFORE the class. *If you miss more than 4 classes, you might fail the course.*

**Assignments:**

- Participation in class discussions – 10%
- Formal essays (2) – 40% (20% each)
- Response paper (4) – 20% (5% each)
- Presentation 10%
- Althing case – 20%

**PLEASE NOTE:** All papers must be typed, double-spaced with 1” margins, stapled, and must meet the length requirements of the assignment. Use a reasonable font such as Times New Roman, 12 pt.

**Syllabus:** The course syllabus provides a rough course schedule and gives you an idea about in-class activities. However, I reserve the right to make alterations in the course schedule such as substituting readings or home assignments. Of course, you will be given advance notice if any changes are to be introduced into the schedule.

**Plagiarism:** A writer commits plagiarism when he or she fails to attribute material properly to another author (for example, uses the author’s exact words without putting them in quotation marks, or uses someone’s ideas without attributing them to their author). While I assume many of you have a good idea of what does and does not constitute plagiarism, I encourage anyone who has questions to seek my help.
Class behavior: I ask you to please limit your use of computers in the classroom. They are allowed only for taking notes. Please refrain from visiting any non-class related websites while in class. It distracts not only you, but also your classmates. If you violate this request, I will ask you not to bring your computer to class.

Required books:
Angus Somerville and Andrew McDonald, eds., The Viking Age: a Reader
Vinland Sagas
Snorri Sturluson, Prose Edda (you can find the full text on-line)
Njal’s Saga
The Saga of the Volsungs
The Sagas of Ragnar Lodbrok

Course schedule

Tuesday, September 1
Introduction
Syllabus. Course structure.

Thursday, September 3
Vikings’ Homeland: Prehistoric, Celtic, and Roman Scandinavia. The Age of Migration.
Sources: Runes, Poetry, Visual Arts, Sagas.

Tuesday, September 8
Legendary Kings and Heroes of the Vikings
Read: Read The Saga of the Volsungs.

Thursday, September 10
Read: as much of Snorri Sturluson as you can
Watch in class: Beowulf and Grendel

Tuesday, September 15
Mytholody. Cosmology
Read: finish Snorri Sturluson; Reader, Chapter 4, “Early Religion and Belief”, pp. 75 – 124.

Thursday, September 17
Presentations: Scandinavian Gods and Goddesses.

Tuesday, September 22.
Presentations: Scandinavian Gods and Goddesses.

Response paper 1 due

Thursday, September 24
Death and afterlife.
Read: Reader, Chapter 12, “Viking Life and Death”, pp. 359 – 396
**Tuesday, September 29**  
Warriors and Weapons  

**Thursday, October 1**  
Ships.  

**Thursday, October 8**  
Viking Kingdoms. Unification.  
Read: Reader, Chapter 14, “State-Building at Home and Abroad,” pp. 433 - 462

**Formal paper 1 due**

**Tuesday, October 13**  
Christendom on the Eve of the Viking Age and the beginning of the attacks. Attacks on the Carolingians  

**Thursday, October 15**  
Read: Reader, Chapter 8, “Sudden and Unforeseen Attacks of Northmen”, pp. 227 – 272; *The Sagas of Ragnar Lodbrok*

**Tuesday, October 20**  

**Response paper 2 due**

**Thursday, October 22**  
Settlement of Iceland.  
Read: Reader, Chapter 11, “Into the Western Ocean, the Faeroes, Iceland, Greenland, and Vinland”, pp. 329 – 358, begin reading *Njals Saga*

**Tuesday, October 27**  
Documentary on Icelandic Sagas  
Read: Jesse Byock, “Governmental Order in Early Medieval Iceland”

**Thursday, October 29**  
Icelandic Society. Law and Order.  
Read: finish reading *Njals Saga*, Jesse Byock, “Icelandic Althing”

**Tuesday, November 3**
Women and family life
Read: Reader, Chapter 5, “Women in the Viking Age”, pp. 125 - 158

**Thursday, November 5**
Preparation for the Althing

Response paper 3 due

**Tuesday, November 10**
Preparation for the Althing

**Thursday, November 12**
Althing

**Tuesday, November 17**
Christianization and Church Organization
Read: Reader, Chapter 13, “From Odin to Christ”, pp. 397 – 432; Jenny Jochens, “The Church and Sexuality in Medieval Iceland”

**Thursday, November 19**
Settlement of Russia.

**Tuesday, November 24**
Documentary on the Vikings in Russia

Response paper 4 due

**Thursday, November 26**
Thanksgiving

**Tuesday, December 1**
Discover of America
Read: *Vinland Sagas*

**Thursday, December 3**
The Viking Age ends
Tuesday, December 8
But the Vikings live on: The Normans.

Thursday, December 10
Vikings legacy

 Formal paper 2 due