



## Department of History

HTST 493 LEC 01 (Topic 13)  
The Vikings  
Winter 2020

**Instructor:** Dr. Courtney Konshuh

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**Office Hours:** Monday 10-11am, Wednesday 11-12am and by appointment

**Class Time:** MWF 1-2pm

**Location:** MS 217

### Course Description:

The Viking Age is popularly marked by the violent outburst of attacks upon monastic sites in western Europe from the end of the eighth century through Viking diaspora and settlement beyond the eleventh century. This course looks at Scandinavian society in the early middle ages and the rise of Viking raiding and conquest across Europe, Asia, North America and the Middle East. Areas affected by Viking influence and settlement are addressed in terms of both the shock of the Viking raids and the resultant accommodation to social and political change. While we explore such issues as the reasons for the origins of Viking activities, the responses to those activities, interactions between communities and the longer-term changes as new societies emerged in the areas settled by the Vikings, we will also look at the Viking legacy, as seen in early Scandinavian state-building, fiction, film and national movements. We will explore historical developments alongside archaeological reports and material culture to explore the Vikings, their beliefs, and the new identities they formed.

### Course Outcomes:

- Students will get a good overview of the Viking Age
- Students will have a good overview of Viking/Viking-influenced polities
- Students will develop historical thinking skills, evaluating primary sources written about Vikings as well as later Norwegian/Danish sources looking at their Viking pasts
- Students will learn to use a wide array of primary evidence to develop your own historical arguments, including material culture, archaeological evidence and written sources
- You will apply your knowledge of historical analysis in class discussion and regular writing assignments, including an essay of 1500 words

### Required Texts:

J. Haywood, *The Penguin Historical Atlas of the Vikings* (London, 1995)

E Roesdahl, *The Vikings* (New York, 1998)

B. Scudder, S. Oskarsdottir, *Egil's Saga* (London, 2005)  
Additional primary sources will be supplied on D2L

**Recommended Texts:**

- A. Somerville and R McDonald, *The Vikings and their Age* (Toronto, 2013)
- S. Brink and N. Price (eds.), *The Viking World* (London, 2008).
- R. Ferguson, *The Hammer and the Cross* (London, 2009).
- A. Forte, F. Pedersen and R. Oram (eds.), *Viking Empires* (Cambridge, 2005).
- J. Jesch, *The Viking Diaspora* (New York, 2015)
- G Jones, *A History of the Vikings* (Oxford, 2001)
- J. Richards, *The Vikings: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2005)
- P. Sawyer (ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings* (Oxford, 1997).
- I.P. Stephenson, *Vikings!* (Stroud, 2013).

<b>Evaluation:</b>		
Assessment Method	Description	Weight
Oral Presentation 5 minutes (Fridays throughout the semester)	A presentation is expected to identify relevant historical and/or archaeological debates pertaining to the topic and to address them. You should outline the relevant historical and/or archaeological evidence (i.e. primary sources) pertaining to the topic. Your presentation must not simply be a narrative of events or description of evidence (though obviously these may be useful in explaining the topic, they must not be allowed to dominate at the expense of analysis). Some topics may cover a wide area and/or period, so in those cases it will be appropriate to focus on a particular area or period, though you must indicate how you are doing this in your introduction and draw attention to the broader topic. A good presentation may make use of a case study as a way of drawing out issues relating to the topic as a whole. You must meet with me at least once before your presentation with a full draft of your powerpoint presentation by the Monday before you present. Please make sure the presentation is exactly 5 minutes long. If you go over or under by more than 30 seconds, you will lose points.	15%
Object Study 600 words (due week 4)	Learning to evaluate source material (either text or object) is an essential skill for thinking and writing about the medieval period. The goal of this assignment is to demonstrate that you understand the nature and value of material culture as a source for historical research and for developing a deeper understanding of the people who produced it. An object study is similar to an essay in that it has a thesis and argument and is written up in standard essay format — meaning in sentences and paragraphs with an introduction that	25%

	<p>clearly states the point of the evaluation and conclusion. A successful critical object study includes a description of the object embedded within research which contextualises the object. The point of an object study is to situate your object in its historical context, which means providing sufficient historical background to the culture and explaining how the object fits into this or exemplifies a historical development. More detailed information will be given in class in the weeks leading up to this assignment. Lists and links to documents and objects will be provided on D2L.</p> <p>A successful critical object evaluation will involve some research beyond just observing the object itself. Use reliable resources to do that, such as: Museum websites (The Museum of Cultural History / Viking Ship Museum (Oslo), National Museum of Denmark, Roskilde Museum, British Museum, etc.), an article in the New Cambridge Medieval History or any other quality secondary or tertiary source.</p>	
<p>Film Critique (due week 12)</p>	<p>Write a 1000-word comparative review of 2 episodes/films we've viewed. For the purposes of referencing, treat the movies as books; identify as accurately as you can the scenes to which you refer. When quoting, be as accurate as you can with regard to dialogue (although we will make allowances for the difficulty of pinning down the exact words spoken on film). Try to assess the merits of these films as adaptations of particular stories as well as secondary treatments of the period's history. How authentic are they? Is their portrayal of the past trustworthy? In what way(s) is it more or less reliable? What, according to your own understanding of the particular story and Viking Age history, do the films get right? In what ways do they fall short of recreating the story as well as Viking Age history, in your opinion, and what would you have done differently? How effective are they at evoking the past? Do these films help you get an historical sense of the Viking Age, and if so how and to what extent? How does the cinematic medium enable them to reconstitute story and history in way(s) different from those of printed books? Are they successful? If so, how, and if not, why not? You will need to use at least 4-5</p>	<p>25%</p>
<p>Essay 1500 words (due week 9)</p>	<p>For the essay, you will discuss one of the questions below, comparing AT LEAST TWO regions where Vikings were active (i.e. Scandinavia, the North Atlantic settlements, European Russia/Eastern Europe, the British Isles, the Frankish Empire). No internet sources will be allowed unless they are museum references to material culture you cite in your paper. A minimum of 3 appropriate secondary sources and at least 2 primary sources in your essay for a minimum grade of 50%.</p>	<p>35%</p>

	<p>Essay Questions (will need to be narrowed down by you):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What problems do the written sources present in studying Viking activities in the early middle ages, and in what ways can these problems be dealt with?</li> <li>2) To what extent is 'Viking Age' a useful term in the study of the early middle ages?</li> <li>3) What problems are encountered in the study of Scandinavian settlement in the early middle ages, and in what ways can these problems be dealt with?</li> <li>4) Assess a range of depictions of 'Vikings' since the Second World War. Which do you think best represent the 'Viking Age' and why?</li> <li>5) Why did Scandinavian and Scandinavian settler societies adopt Christianity in the early middle ages?</li> <li>6) To what extent is it possible to see political objectives in Viking activities outside Scandinavia?</li> </ol>	
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**Late Work:**

Extensions are possible and will be granted under extenuating circumstances. Serious and extenuating circumstances are not the same thing as poor time management. Late assignments will be penalised by 10% for the first day and an additional 1% for each subsequent day of lateness, and no feedback will be given on late papers. In order to pass this class, the student must complete all assignments and examinations. If you anticipate issues completing an assignment in advance of the deadline, please speak with me at least 3 days in advance.

**Internet sources:**

In general, you can and should use appropriate museum sites and databases material artefacts, but otherwise I expect your research and preparation to be based on print sources. If you are uncertain if your source qualifies, please check with me. In general, except for museum websites, you will not use any sources that do not exist in print. We will be practicing working with some of these databases in class, so you may bring computers/phones/tablets and use them in class, but please be respectful.

**Class schedule:**

	Date	Topic & Reading	Assignments/Due Dates
1	January 13 January 15 January 17	Introduction – who are the Vikings	Seminar: Roesdahl 9-45
2	January 20 January 22 January 24	Scandinavian Society at the beginning of the Viking Age	Readings: Roesdahl 52-93

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3	January 27 January 29 January 31	Old Norse language and poetry; Viking Mythology	Readings: selections from the <i>Havamal</i> , <i>Voluspa</i> ; Roesdahl 46-51, 147-167
4	February 3 February 5 February 7	Trade and technology	Readings: Rosedahl 94-146 <b>Object Study due this week!!</b>
5	February 10 February 12 February 14	Viking-Age Ireland	Readings: <i>The Annals of Ulster</i> , Roesdahl 210-232
<b>Reading Week</b>			
6	February 24 February 26 February 28	Iceland and the North Atlantic	Readings: The Allthing and <i>Landnamabók</i> ; Roesdahl 262-76
7	March 2 March 4 March 6	England and the Danelaw	Readings: Asser's <i>Life of Alfred</i> , <i>Anglo-Saxon Chronicle</i> ; Roesdahl 233-61
8	March 9 March 11 March 13	The Second Viking Age in England: King Cnut and the North Sea Empire	Readings: Letters of Cnut, <i>Anglo-Saxon Chronicle</i>
9	March 16 March 18 March 20	The Rus	Readings: the <i>Primary Russian Chronicle</i> , Ibn Fadlan; Roesdahl 277-94 <b>Essay due this week!!</b>
10	March 23 March 25 March 27	State Formation in Scandinavia	Readings: Saxo Grammaticus, <i>Egil's Saga</i>
11	March 30 April 1 April 3	Snorri and the Sagas	Readings: <i>Egil's Saga</i>
12	April 6 April 8 <del>April 10</del>	Viking Reception in the modern world	<b>Film Critique due this week!!</b>
13	April 15	Viking Games	

**Departmental Grading System:**

The following percentage-to-letter grade conversion scheme is used in all Canadian Studies, History, and Latin American Studies courses, except for HTST 200.

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	Description
90-100	A+	4.00	Outstanding performance
85-89	A	4.00	Excellent performance
80-84	A-	3.70	Approaching excellent performance
77-79	B+	3.30	Exceeding good performance
73-76	B	3.00	Good performance
70-72	B-	2.70	Approaching good performance
67-69	C+	2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance
63-66	C	2.00	Satisfactory performance
60-62	C-	1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance.
56-59	D+	1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject
50-55	D	1.00	Minimal Pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.
0-49	F	0	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.

**Program Advising and Student Information Resources:**

- For program advising in the Faculty of Arts, contact the Arts Students Centre (ASC) in SS 102, call 403-220-3580, email [artsads@ucalgary.ca](mailto:artsads@ucalgary.ca), or book an appointment with an ASC advisor at <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/current-students/undergraduate>.
- For further information on academic advising and degree planning for arts students, see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/current-students/undergraduate/academic-advising>.
- For registration issues, paying fees, and assistance with MyUofC, contact Enrolment Services in MacKimmie Tower Room 116, call 403-210-ROCK (7625), or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/>.
- **Attention history majors:** History 300 is a required course for all history majors. You should normally take it in your second year.
- Registration Changes and Exemption Requests: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals>

**Writing:**

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All written assignments and written exam responses are assessed partly on writing skills. Writing skills include surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) and general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented according to the format described in the History Student's Handbook.

D2L: Throughout the course, important material such as lecture outlines and study guides will be regularly posted on D2L. Students are advised to check this regularly.

### **Red Box Policy:**

If your instructor requires paper copies of an essay and/or assignment, and the essay/assignment can be handed in outside of class, you can drop them in the red box located outside of the History Department office (Social Sciences, Room 656). Please include the following information on your assignment: 1) **course name and number**, 2) **instructor**, 3) **your name**, and 4) **your student number**. Assignments received after 4:00 p.m. are date stamped the next business day. We do not time stamp any papers. Please do not bring your paper into the office to be stamped. The box is emptied at 4:00 p.m. Monday to Friday.

### **Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism occurs when one submits or presents one's work in a course, or ideas and/or passages in a written piece of work, as if it were one's own work done expressly for that particular course, when, in fact, it is not. Please see [The History Student's Handbook](#).

Plagiarism may take several forms:

- Failing to cite sources properly
- Submitting borrowed, purchased, and/or ghostwritten papers
- Submitting one's own work for more than one course without the permission of the instructor(s) involved
- Extensive paraphrasing of one or a few sources, even when referenced properly, unless the essay is a critical analysis of those works

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence, and written work that appears to contain plagiarized passages will not be graded. All such work will be reported to the Faculty of Art's associate deans of students who will apply the penalties specified in the *University of Calgary Calendar*, [Section K](#).

### **Academic Accommodations:**

The student accommodation policy can be found at: [ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy](http://ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy).

Students needing an accommodation because of a disability or medical condition should contact Student Accessibility Services (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>) in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities [ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy](http://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy).

Students needing an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should contact, preferably in writing, the course instructor.

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**Copyright:**

The University of Calgary has opted out of the Access Copyright Interim Tariff proposed by the Copyright Board. Therefore, instructors in all University of Calgary courses will strictly adhere to Copyright Act regulations and the educational exceptions permitted by the Act for both print and digital course material. No copyrighted material may be placed on course D2L or web sites without the prior permission of the copyright holders. In some cases, this may mean that instructors will require you to purchase a print course pack from the University of Calgary bookstore or consult books on reserve at the library. For more information on the University of Calgary's copyright policy, see <http://library.ucalgary.ca/copyright>.

**Other Useful Information:**

- Department Twitter @ucalgaryhist

Please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information on:

- Wellness and Mental Health
- Student Success
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk

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