

# **ANTH 398: Life and Death in the Viking World**

**Instructor:** Dr Erin McGuire - [ehalstad@uvic.ca](mailto:ehalstad@uvic.ca) [see email policy below]

**Office:** Cornett B225

**Office Hours:** Thursday 10:00-11:00, and by appointment.

**Course TA:** Thea Lamoureux – [theaml@uvic.ca](mailto:theaml@uvic.ca) [see email policy below]

**Lecture Schedule:** TWF 9:30-10:20

**Dates:** Sep 4-Dec 4 2013

**CRN:** 201309 10110

## **Course description**

Raiders and Traders, Pirates and Farmers – The Vikings colour our view of the Middle Ages in a multitude of ways. This course takes a detailed look at the nature and impact of the Viking expansion (ranging West to Scotland, the British Isles, Iceland & Greenland; and East to Russia and Continental Europe) in the period defined rather broadly from c.800-1300 AD. It will focus particularly, although by no means exclusively, on the social and ecological consequences of migration and will draw on a variety of sources including archaeological data, saga literature, and historical texts. We will examine theoretical approaches from a number of disciplines, such as archaeology, anthropology, and sociology. In addition to developing critical thinking skills, students will build on written and oral communication skills.

## **Aims**

The aims of this course are:

- To examine the Norse expansion using interdisciplinary source material with a focus on the archaeological record;
- To outline theoretical and interpretative approaches to the Norse migrations;
- To challenge the accepted narratives of the Norse expansion and propose/encourage alternative interpretations; and
- To develop writing skills for both academic and general audiences.

## **Learning objectives**

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Explain the causes and consequences of the Norse expansion;
- Describe the nature the Norse expansion and settlement in various regions;
- Critically assess the evidence used in the investigation and interpretation the Viking Age (e.g. archaeological, historical and literary sources);
- Analyse and explain content, methods, and theoretical approaches within academic articles;
- Develop group, written and oral communication skills.

## Course requirements

This course includes a combination of lectures, seminars, and group work. The nature of the assignments means that regular attendance is essential, as is completion of the assigned readings. Because of the nature of the group assignments you will sometimes be given class time to work within your groups.

## Textbooks

Lewis-Simpson, S. (ed.)

2004 *Vinland revisited: The Norse world at the turn of the first millenium. Selected papers from the Viking Millennium International Symposium (15-24 September 2000)*. St John's, Nfld: Historic Sites Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, Inc.

Other reading materials will be available in the library. Some of the materials are also available on databases online.

## Grading Scale

We will be using the standard UVic Undergraduate Grading Scale, as can be seen here: <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2012/FACS/UnIn/UARe/Grad.html>

In particular, I draw your attention to the criteria required for grades within the A range (A- to A+): *“Exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance. **Normally achieved by a minority of students.** These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.”* Therefore, B range grades are assigned to students who fulfill all expectations, while A range grades must be reserved for those who exceed them.

---

## Assessment

Assignment	Mark	Deadline
Reading responses	5%	Weekly
Extended reading response	10%	Varies
Exhibit catalogue contribution	10%	Oct 1
Project Proposal	0%	By Oct 11
Project Blog	5%	Weekly (Oct-Nov)
Project/Experiment	10%	Nov 8
Project Report	25%	Nov 15
Take home exam	35%	Dec 4

### Reading Responses – RR (5%):

Each week you will be assigned at least 2 peer-reviewed papers to read. It is expected that your readings will be completed before the Tuesday classes, so that they can form the basis of your understanding for the lectures. For 6 weeks in the term (your choice) you must make a post to the relevant Moodle forum about **two** of the assigned articles. The post must: provide a 2-3 sentence summary of each paper; identify connections between the papers; and add at least two questions that you will use to cultivate discussion during class. To be counted towards your grade, they must be approximately 300 words and be posted before their associated class.

*Please note:* Your mark is partially based on your engagement with these ideas. Read the posts of your classmates and comment on them frequently! The fora should be consulted before every class. I will expect a minimum of 4 replies to classmates' posts that indicate that you have read the material and are thinking critically about the content of the material and the original post.

### **Extended Reading Response – ERR (10%):**

You will select one week's readings for which to do an Extended Reading Response (ERR). You must sign up for your choice on Moodle and cannot do both a regular reading response and an extended one for the same week. Guidelines for the ERR will be posted on Moodle, but essentially this is a mini essay. You will decide what argument to make, you will use the assigned readings to support that argument, and you will draw on a minimum of 3 further readings. The essay will be approximately 1000 words, not including the bibliography. Please note, the week you select is the week that your ERR is due. There are no limits – the entire class could choose to do the last week, but please pick wisely, thinking not only about topics that interest you, but also about your other deadlines.

### **Exhibit Catalogue Contribution (10%):**

In May 2014, there is a Viking exhibit coming to the Royal BC Museum. I have arranged for the museum to give us a list of which artefacts will be on display. We are going to create an exhibition catalogue (not for actual use by the museum). Each student will be assigned an artefact to research and write about. The format of the assignment will be a 100-150 word paragraph, 1-2 photos (gleaned from the internet), detailed caption(s), etc. There will also be a short worksheet associated with the assignment. The catalogue entries and worksheets are due on Oct 1<sup>st</sup>. Further details will be provided in class and on moodle.

### **Group Project (Total: 40%):**

A key component of this course is a group project that focuses on a Viking technology. Each group will plan and create *something* Viking. There will be a list of options to select from, provided on Moodle. The goal of the project is to explore the possibilities created by experimental archaeology for developing an understanding of the Viking Age, thus your project should be informed by the archaeological record. This means that you will be expected to draw on published papers, excavation reports and other scholarly works for the completion of your project.

Students will form groups of 3-5 within the first month of class. The groups will be self-selected, based on shared interests or goals for the project/course.

### ***Project Proposal:***

Each group must submit a proposal for their project no later than Oct 11<sup>th</sup>. The proposal should consist of:

- A single paragraph description of the technology to be examined (what was it for, who did it, what evidence do we have, etc)
- 2-3 research/experiment questions
- A list of materials that may be required for the project and potential sources for those materials (*Please note:* there is no fund for this, so you need to purchase/scrounge your own materials)
- A proposed timeline for completion of project tasks
- A brief description of any anticipated challenges

- An annotated bibliography with a minimum of one *peer-reviewed* source per group member – non peer-reviewed sources, such as webpages, may also be included if you have annotated them and you want feedback from me about them

The proposal is marked as a pass/fail; there is no actual course mark assigned to the proposal. In order to move on to the next stage of the project, your proposal must be approved by me.

### ***Project Blog (5%):***

Each group will maintain a shared blog to track their progress through the project that will be tracked by both the course instructor and TA during October and November. The blog should include photos, ideas, successes, failures, etc. It is expected that the blog will actually provide a starting point for the written report, as students should be able to extract and edit passages for inclusion in their final reports. The blog should be started as soon as the group is formed and it is expected that it will be maintained through until the project is completed. Each group member should do a minimum of one signed post. Although there are no strict guidelines for the quantity or length of posts, at a minimum I would expect to see approximately weekly posts that cover these topics:

- Your starting research questions
- Your ideas around methods (how will you answer your questions?)
- What kinds of resources you need (esp. any issues about quality/sources of resources, nature of modern materials vs medieval, etc; e.g. using/accessing real vellum vs fake vellum/calligraphy paper)
- Documenting details of manufacture/construction (e.g. photos and details about each attempt to shape a bead, each attempt to decorate it, each attempt to remove it from the mandril, etc)
- Documenting any experiments conducted (e.g. consuming meal produced, testing effectiveness of catapult, etc)
- Thoughts on future work, revisions, etc.

### ***Project/Experiment (10%):***

Each group will produce something – a replica, scale model, etc. The thing produced should fit one of two categories: either it will be **(A)** the end product of an experiment OR **(B)** something that is intended to be experimented on. An example of a **type A project** is: a food-based project looking at medieval manuscripts, cooking tools, archaeological reports of pot residues, etc with the end product being a meal. An example of a **type B project** is: a replica of multiple different types of chain mail, based on archaeological finds, which are then subjected to both blunt and sharp weapons to test effectiveness.

Each project will be presented in class on Nov 8<sup>th</sup>. Part of the project marks will be based on the presentation. Although the project involves a lot of work, the overall marks are not high. This is to allow for failed experiments, variation in project complexity, etc. It is permissible for groups to request a shift in grade distribution if every member of the group agrees. Guidelines for this will be given in class and on Moodle.

### ***Project Report (25%):***

Although the proposal, project and blog are collaborative efforts, the final report will be written individually. The report should contain the following: abstract; table of contents; introduction; research questions/objectives; background/context; literature review (*ca.* 800 words); methodology; description of results; analysis; evaluation; conclusion. The report is due on Nov 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Take Home Final (35%)**

The final exam will be in essay format and will be due on Dec 4<sup>th</sup>. You will be given the topic two weeks in advance. Details will be given in class and on Moodle.

---

**Course policies**

**Email Policy:** Most of the time, you can expect a reply to an email within 24 hours. Please do NOT expect an immediate reply. You should also know that I will only rarely reply to emails on the weekends. Moreover, there are limited issues that I will deal with over email – general administrative business, quick questions regarding class assignments etc. I will not answer bigger questions over email (such as questions about your marks, problems within your groups or course content questions while working on group papers). Please visit me during office hours or make an appointment to see me. Make sure you include the course code (ANTH 398) in your subject line, along with the subject of your message, otherwise your email may skip my inbox and be rejected as junk mail. Finally, before emailing me a question, check the Moodle, syllabus, assignment guidelines and announcements – the answer to your question may already be there.

**Late Assignments:** Assignments are to be submitted to Moodle by the start of the class on the due date unless otherwise noted. If you are unable to attend the class the day that something is due, you must still submit your assignment. **All late assignments will be penalised by 10% per day**, including weekends and holidays, to a maximum of 5 days. Assignments more than 5 days late will not be marked.

**Extensions will only be granted by prior arrangement or upon receipt of a medical note.**

**Academic Integrity:** The University of Victoria does not tolerate academic misconduct, and the policies of the University will be upheld in this course. The *Policy on Academic Integrity* can be found in the *University of Victoria Calendar*.

**Equity in the classroom:** The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive, supportive and safe learning and working environment for all its members [Senate resolution, January 13th, 1999]. As part of our commitment to equity, the Department of Anthropology has established an Equity Committee. If you have concerns regarding equity issues in the classroom, you may contact a member of the Equity committee or the Chair of the Department. The Department Secretary can provide you with the names of the current members of this committee.

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (RCSd) as soon as possible. The RCSd staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations <http://rcsd.uvic.ca/>. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

---

## Tentative schedule of themes, readings and course assignments

This list is approximate and subject to revision as needed. The length of class topics may be adjusted to support in-class discussions and activities. The reading list is also tentative, pending receipt of the requested articles by the library. All readings not contained in your course text will be made available through reserve. Remember that readings are generally meant to be completed by Tuesday's classes.

Week	Topic	Important Dates
1 Sep 4, 6	<p><b>Cultural footprints</b> (Vikings at home, defining the Vikings &amp; the Viking Age, social structures)</p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Myhre, B. (2000) The Early Viking Age in Norway. <i>Acta Archaeologica</i> 71: 35-47.</p>	This week has no assignments based on readings – the reading is meant to be background info for class discussions.
2 Sep 10, 11, 13	<p><b>Going to Valhalla</b> (Religion &amp; Funerary practices in the Viking Age)</p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Andren, A. (2005) Behind heathendom: Archaeological studies of Old Norse religion. <i>Scottish Archaeological Journal</i> 27: 105-138. Einarsson, B.F. (2008) Blót Houses in Viking Age farmstead cult practices. <i>Acta Archaeologica</i> 79: 145-184.</p>	
3 Sep 17, 18, 20	<p><b>Living spaces</b> (The archaeology of Viking dwellings: farms, towns, villages etc); subsistence etc</p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Hansen, S. S. (2004) Scandinavian Building Customs of the Viking Age: the North Atlantic Perspective. In <i>Vínland Revisited</i>: 241-254. Skre, D. (2001) The Social Context of Settlement in Norway in the First Millennium AD. <i>Norwegian Archaeological Review</i> 34(1): 1-12.</p> <p><b>Optional extra reading:</b> Nancke-Krogh, S. (1990) Experimental archaeology in Denmark. <i>Norwegian Archaeological Review</i> 23(1-2): 153-160.</p>	
4 Sep 24, 25, 27	Dr McGuire will be away (in Copenhagen!) this week. You will have two guest lectures (with assigned readings) by Dr James Acken and one free class. Details to be confirmed at the start of term.	

5 Oct 1, 2, 4	<p><b>Causes of the Viking Age &amp; the Expansion</b> Skim through the Viking Expansion links on Moodle and Sawyer (2004) Scotland, Ireland and Iceland: Norwegian settlers in the ninth century. In <i>Vinland Revisited</i>: 29.</p> <p><b>Going Raiding, Trading &amp; Settling</b> (Targets, texts, evidence etc)</p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Barrett, J. H. (2008) What caused the Viking Age? <i>Antiquity</i>, 82(317), 671–685.</p> <p>McEvoy, B. and C.J. Edwards (2005) Reappraising the Viking Image. <i>Heredity</i> 95: 111-112</p>	<p><b>DUE Oct 1:</b> Exhibit Catalogue contribution</p> <p>Form groups</p>
6 Oct 8, 9, 11	<p><b>First stops (Scotland)</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Barrett, J. H. et al. (2000) What was the Viking Age and when did it happen? A view from Orkney. <i>Norwegian Archaeological Review</i> 33: 1-39.</p> <p>Batey, C. E. (2003) The Islands of Scotland: their role in the Western Voyages. In <i>Vinland Revisited</i>: 65-74.</p> <p><b>Extra Readings (could be used in ERR)</b> Smith, B. (n.d.) The Picts and the Martyrs - Link on Moodle</p> <p>Ritchie, A. (1977) Excavation of Pictish and Viking-Age farmsteads at Buckquoy, Orkney. <i>PSAS</i> 108: 174-227.</p>	<p><b>DUE by Oct 11:</b> Project proposal</p> <p>Start blogs</p> <p>[Oct 8 is last day for 50% fee return]</p>
7 Oct 15, 16, 18	<p><b>First stops (Ireland &amp; the Irish Sea Region)</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Sawyer, P. (2003) Scotland, Ireland and Iceland: Norwegian settlers in the ninth century. In <i>Vinland Revisited</i>: 29-36.</p> <p>Griffiths, D. (2004) Settlement and acculturation in the Irish Sea Region. In J. Hines, A. Lane and M Redknap (eds.), <i>Land, Sea and Home: Proceedings of a conference on Viking-period settlement, at Cardiff, July 2001</i>: 125-138. Leeds: Maney. (On reserve)</p>	

8 Oct 22, 23, 25	<p><b>First stops (England)</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Biddle &amp; Biddle (1992) Repton and the Vikings. <i>Antiquity</i> 66(250): 36-51. <i>(On reserve)</i></p> <p>Hadley, D. (2002) Viking and native: re-thinking identity in the Danelaw. <i>Early Medieval Europe</i>. 11(1): 45-70.</p> <p>Richards (2004) Excavations at the Viking Barrow Cemetery at Heath Wood, Ingleby, Derbyshire. <i>The Antiquaries Journal</i> 84: 23-116</p>	
9 Oct 29, 30, Nov 1	<p><b>Moving on (The Faeroes &amp; Iceland)</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Arge, S. G. Sveinbjarnardóttir, K. J. Edwards and P. C. Buckland (2005) Viking and Medieval Settlement in the Faroes: People, Place and Environment. <i>Ecology</i> 33(5): 597-620.</p> <p>Hayeur-Smith, M. (2004) Dressing the dead: Gender, identity and adornment in Viking-Age Iceland. In <i>Vinland Revisited</i>: 227-240.</p> <p>McGuire, E (2006) Archaeology in Iceland: Recent Developments. <i>Scandinavian Canadian Studies</i> 16: 10-26.</p>	[Oct 31: Last day to withdraw]
10 Nov 5, 6, 8	<p><b>Final Destinations (Greenland)</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Arneborg, J. (2004) Norse Greenland Archaeology: The dialogue between the written and archaeological records. In <i>Vinland Revisited</i>: 111-122</p> <p>Arneborg, J., Lynnerup, N. &amp; Heinemeier, J. (2012) Human Diet and Subsistence Patterns in Norse Greenland AD C.980—AD c. 1450: Archaeological interpretations. <a href="#">Journal of the North Atlantic</a> 3(3): 119-133. <i>(Follow link, find Vol 3, etc.)</i></p> <p>Roesdahl, E. (2003) Walrus ivory and other northern luxuries: their importance for Norse voyages and settlements in Greenland and America. In <i>Vinland Revisited</i>: 145-152.</p>	<b>DUE Nov 8:</b> Project/Experiment (to be displayed in class)



11 Nov 15 (1)	<p><b>Final Destinations (Vinland)</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Wallace, B. (2004) The later excavations at L'Anse aux Meadows. In <i>Vinland Revisited</i>: 165-180.</p> <p><i>Saga of Erik the Red</i> – Ch 8-16 - <a href="http://sagadb.org/eiriks_saga_rauda.en">http://sagadb.org/eiriks_saga_rauda.en</a></p>	<p>Reading break until Nov 14</p> <p><b>DUE Nov 15:</b> Project Report</p>
12 Nov 19, 20, 22	<p><b>Going East (Russia &amp; the Baltic Sea Region)</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Curry, A. (2013) <a href="#">The First Vikings</a>. <i>Archaeology</i> July 1, 2012: 24-29.</p> <p>Jansson, I. (1999) Scandinavian Finds from the 9th-10th Centuries on Ryurikovo Gorodische. In P. Purhonen (ed.), <i>Fenno-Ugri et Slavi 1997 - Cultural Contacts in the Area of the Gulf of Finland in the 9th-13th Centuries</i>: 44-59. Helsinki: National Board of Antiquities. (<i>On reserve</i>)</p> <p>Mikhailov, K.A. (2005) A Scandinavian cemetery at Plakun. <a href="#">Russian History</a> 32(3-4): 419-32. (<i>Follow link, select version with 1974-Pres, find Vol 32.</i>)</p>	<p>Take home exam will be assigned this week</p>
13 Nov 26, 27, 29	<p><b>Going South (Continental Europe and the Mediterranean)</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Coupland, S. (2003) The Vikings on the Continent in Myth and History. <i>History</i> 88: 186-203.</p> <p>Sindbæk, S.M. (2007) Networks and nodal points: the emergence of towns in early Viking Age Scandinavia. <i>Antiquity</i> 81: 119-132.</p>	
14 Dec 3, 4	<p><b>Vikings today</b></p> <p>Readings: tbc</p>	<p><b>DUE Dec 4:</b> Take home exam</p>