ENGL 288

THE VIKINGS: WARRIORS-POETS

Spring 2014 • Tuesday, 3:30-6:10 p.m. • Bobet 214B
Prerequisite: ENGL T122

This course fulfills the Advanced Common Curriculum Humanities/Pre-modern requirement for students enrolling at Loyola before Fall 2013.
This course fulfills the Advanced Common Curriculum Creative Arts and Cultures requirement and the Pre-modern Requirement across the Curriculum (RAC) for students enrolling at Loyola in or after Fall 2013.
This course can be taken for Medieval Studies credit.

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270 Marquette Hall • 504.865.2277
Office hours: Tuesday and Wednesday, 9:30-11:00 a.m.,
and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

“From the fury of the Northmen deliver us, Lord.” So goes an apocryphal prayer that neatly summarizes medieval as well as contemporary conceptions of the Vikings as bloodthirsty pirates bent on plunder and destruction. Yet the surviving literary and visual record suggests that medieval Scandinavians were a people as devoted to poetry and art as they were to feuding and raiding. This course offers a multidisciplinary exploration of the fascinating tension between creativity and violence that characterizes Viking art and culture of the 8th-11th centuries, the so-called “Viking Age.” Students will begin by studying medieval narratives of Viking raids by non-Scandinavian chroniclers. These violent accounts will then be contrasted with the emphasis placed on poetry and wisdom in Norse myths. From there students will survey the major forms of Norse poetry and visual art as a prelude to offering presentations on the material remains of Norse culture. The majority of the semester, however, will be devoted to a careful reading of the Icelandic sagas, seemingly straightforward but wonderfully complex narratives of politics, love, adventure, and above all violence that comprise Europe’s first great corpus of prose literature and serve as the forerunners of the modern historical novel. Throughout the course a more complex picture of the Vikings as warrior-poets will emerge as students become familiar with sublime works of literary and visual art produced paradoxically within a culture reputed for its irrepressible violence.

OUTCOMES, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

In addition to their majors, students at Loyola take a broad range of courses in the liberal arts and sciences known as the Common Curriculum. This Common Curriculum offers an educational experience unique to Loyola. The Common Curriculum

- includes courses in English, history, philosophy, religious studies, the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the arts;
- teaches important foundational subject matter upon which the different majors build;
- provides a broad education beyond the major and thus prepares students for the demands of a complex world;
- is grounded in the core values of Loyola’s Jesuit mission and identity;
- develops students’ understanding of human values and social justice; and
- develops students’ critical thinking, writing and speaking skills.

Common Curriculum Student Learning Outcomes:

This course satisfies the following Student Learning Outcomes of the Common Curriculum:

- Critical Thinking (A1)
- Creative Thinking (A2)
- Written Communication (A3)
- Oral Communication (A4)
- Information Literacy (A6)
- Interdisciplinary Knowledge and Skills (A7)
- Literature (C1)
- Languages other than English (C2)
- History (C3)
- Appreciation of the Arts (C4)
- Religious Traditions (C6)
- Social Behavior (C7)

This course also fulfills the Creative Arts and Cultures requirement in the Advanced Common Curriculum and has the following goals:

- To acquire the basic vocabulary of an art (CAC Goal 1)
- To develop an understanding of the creative arts in society (CAC Goal 3)
  a. Students acquire an appreciation of the importance of the creative arts.
  b. Students explore the role of the arts in cultures past and present.
  c. Students explore an artistic movement and its historic context.
  d. Students explore social justice, values, and responsibility in and through the arts.
  e. Students acquire an understanding of the relationship between different arts.
  f. Students explore connections between creative arts and other disciplines.
- To develop the ability to think, write, and speak critically about the arts (CAC Goal 4)
  a. Students acquire a basic understanding of aesthetic analysis.
  b. Students acquire an understanding of a creative art(s) through research and analysis.
  c. Students acquire an understanding of a creative arts(s) within a cultural context through research and analysis.

RE QuIRED MaTeraIls

All books are available for purchase, and in some cases rental, through the campus bookstore. Students wishing to purchase their books from another vendor should be sure to obtain these translations/editions by checking that the ISBNs correspond to those in the list below. Penguin, for example, publishes more than one translation of Njal’s Saga.

A note about textbooks: Students have options when buying textbooks. Many of the titles below can be purchased through Amazon.com and similar vendors at a discounted price, but while prices on campus tend to be higher, a percentage of the profit generated by textbook sales at the campus store returns directly to Loyola. Students deciding on a vendor may wish to keep these differences in mind.

Additional readings will be made available as handouts, through Blackboard, and on other web sites.

Students are responsible for completing all readings by the start of class on the day for which they are assigned and should bring all readings to class, including printed copies of materials from Blackboard, which should be kept in a binder. Students who regularly fail to complete the readings or bring them to class will be penalized.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

All assignments are **required** and must be completed in order for a student to pass the course.

**Essays (15% each; 30% total).**
Students will write two brief essays of approximately 4 pp. each. The essays will be submitted via Blackboard. Several topics for each essay will be announced in advance, but students are welcome to develop their own topics so long as they secure the instructor’s approval. For these short essays, students are not expected to consult outside references. All essays must have an identifiable thesis and should pursue a specific argument. Essays will provide students with opportunities to pursue course readings in greater depth. (Outcomes A1, A3, A7, C1-4, C6-7; Goals 1, 3a-f, 4a)

**Presentation (15%).**
At the beginning of most class meetings, students will give very brief presentations on the material remains of the Vikings. Presentations will last not more than 5 minutes. Students are encouraged to be as creative as they can, and should appropriately employ whatever tools (PowerPoint, Prezi, the World Wide Web, slides, livestock, axes and shields, etc.) are available to them. Through these presentations students will share with the instructor the duty of introducing works of art and other material objects as well as important contexts for the study and interpretation of literary texts. In addition to the presentation itself, students will be required to create a wiki entry for their subjects on Blackboard. (Outcomes A1, A4, A6, C2, C4; Goals 1, 3a-f, 4a-c)

**Exams (5%, 5%, 20%; 30% total).**
Two brief, objective exams (i.e., multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short-answer essay) on Old Norse poetry and Viking art styles will test students’ ability to identify and explain the basic elements of Viking literature and visual art. (Outcomes A1, A3, A7, C1-4, C6-7; Goals 1, 4a)

A comprehensive final exam will cover readings, lectures, and in-class discussions as well as student presentations and wikis. (Outcomes A1, A3, A7, C1-4, C6-7; Goals 1, 3a-f, 4a)
Creative writing assignment (10%).
Old Norse sources boast what are undoubtedly some of the greatest nicknames in recorded human history. Characters like Olvir the Child-Sparer, who shunned the alleged custom of impaling babies on spear points, populate the sagas and other texts. Students may select a “real” Viking name (e.g., Eysteinn Foul-Fart or Odd the Erect) from a list generated by the instructor and write a brief (minimum 2 pages, no maximum) saga-like narrative that explains the origin of the cognomen. These explications may be turned in at any time but must be submitted no later than the last day of class, at which time the willing may be invited to share their stories. Points will be awarded based on creativity and success in imitating the peculiarities of Old Norse narrative that the class has discussed throughout the semester. (Outcomes A1-A3, C4; Goals 3a-f)

Preparation and participation (15%).
Students are expected to come to class with the readings prepared. More specifically, students should have read the assigned material, taken notes about the reading, completed any assigned written homework (reading guides/worksheets will be assigned for most class meetings and collected at the beginning of class), and brought the reading to class. Most class meetings will combine lecture with discussion, often in small groups, and to earn full participation points, students should be prepared to contribute to the conversation when invited to do so. Students will also be asked to respond to occasional in-class writing prompts. Students who routinely fail to prepare for class, are unable or unwilling to participate in discussion, or cannot respond satisfactorily to writing prompts will not earn full participation points. (Outcomes A1, A4, A7, C1-4, C6-7; Goals 1, 3a-f, 4a)

Attendance.
Regular attendance is expected. Students are therefore allowed 1 unexcused absence without penalty. Only those absences incurred on official Loyola business (such as a concert or an away game) or on account of documented illness or personal emergency will be excused. All other absences are considered unexcused. Any unexcused absence beyond the first, regardless of the reason for it, will result in a reduction of the final grade by a letter (B- to C- and so on). Students who accumulate 4 or more absences will automatically fail the course without exception. Attendance is taken before class begins promptly at 3:30. Any student not in his or her seat by then is responsible for informing the instructor after class that he or she was, in fact, present.

Grading
In this course the instructor will follow the grading standards established by the Department of English for evaluating written work:

A (Superior): An A paper shows probing critical reading and analysis of a text; it evaluates selected textual elements with creative, detailed reasoning and use of evidence; its whole essay organization shows a logical arrangement of parts; all parts are relevant to the thesis. The thesis statement expresses a clear, confident stance and provides an accurate, concise forecast of topics to be developed. Paragraphs have a sharp focus and include carefully selected evidence. Sentences within paragraphs are linked by tight logical connections and effective transitions. Any source materials are clearly subordinate to the paper’s own purpose, which is elaborated with stylistic efficiency and even flair. Documentation, when needed, conforms to all appropriate conventions. Sentences are varied in structure and imaginative in style; wording is concise; style and tone create a distinctive voice. The final, revised paper is free of all serious errors in grammar and punctuation; there are no misspellings.

B (Strong): A B paper shows good critical reading skills and offers convincing reading and evidence; the parts of the essay are logically arranged and relevant to the thesis. The thesis statement takes a clear stand and forecasts the topics to be developed. Paragraphs are unified, and supporting details are sufficient and relevant. Any source materials are subordinate to the student’s own stand, which is developed clearly and purposefully. Documentation, when needed, conforms to most appropriate conventions. Sentences are linked by logical connections and adequate transitions. Sentences show variety. Wording is relatively concise and appropriate. The final, revised paper contains very infrequent errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
C (Competent): A C paper demonstrates an understanding of texts and issues, evaluates reasonably, and cites supporting evidence. The thesis statement takes a clear stand and forecasts the topics to be developed. Paragraphs and supporting details relate generally to the topic. Any source materials are subordinate to the student’s own stand. Documentation, when needed, conforms to most appropriate conventions. The sentences within the paragraphs are, for the most part, related and contain adequate transitions. Sentence style may consist of relatively simple sentence patterns. Word choice is appropriate. While a few mistakes in grammar, punctuation, and spelling may occur, most of these elements of the paper should be correct on the final, revised copy.

D (Below average, weak), and F (Failure): D and F papers display errors such as a failure to practice one or more of the principles of critical reading or writing. For instance, it may show an inability to correctly identify the main idea of a text, or it may mis-identify some elements of the text. It may defend a thesis in illogical or unconvincing ways. The paper may resort excessively to summary. The paper may lack content and repeat ideas or pad simply to fill space. The paragraphs may lack topic sentences. Some paragraphs may lack adequate supporting detail or may wander from the main idea. If source materials are used, they may be misread or adopted in a way that verges on plagiarism. Documentation may be faulty. Sentences within paragraphs are only loosely related, and transitions are missing. Sentences may be excessively wordy or vague. Style and word choice are flat, inconsistent, or inappropriate to the audience. The paper displays major or repeated errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling, even in the final revised copy.

An F paper, like a D paper, shows a failure to practice one or more of the principles of critical reading or writing, but an F paper reveals persistent problems, such as the following: the paragraphs lack focus and contain little supporting detail; sentences within the paragraphs are unrelated to the main idea, and transitions are missing; sentences are faulty in structure, or vague, wordy, and irrelevant; word choice is inappropriate, incorrect, or inconsistent; frequent major errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling indicate an inability to handle written conventions; there are excessive misspellings. Papers that fail to address the assignment topic at all also merit an F.

The grading scale is as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>74-77</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>71-73</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>0-60</td>
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**Late Work Policy**

All work is due on the assigned date. Papers will be submitted via Blackboard. Late papers will be penalized a third-grade per day (e.g., a B- paper submitted a day late becomes a C+ paper). Extensions must be requested at least one day in advance and are granted at the discretion of the instructor. There will be no opportunity to improve essay grades after the fact, so students should please make use of the WAC lab and office hours before submitting their papers. Presentations cannot be rescheduled nor exams taken late except in case of documented emergency. Incomplete worksheets and missed in-class writing cannot be made up.
INSTRUCTION IN THE EVENT OF EVACUATION, VIKING RAID, OR OTHER CAUSE OF CAMPUS CLOSURE

- At times, ordinary university operations are interrupted as a result of tropical storms, hurricanes, or other emergencies that require evacuation or suspension of on-campus activities. To prepare for such emergencies, all students will do the following during the first week of classes:

1. Practice signing on for each course through Blackboard.
2. Provide regular and alternative e-mail address and phone contact information to each instructor.

- In the event of an interruption to our course due to the result of an emergency requiring an evacuation or suspension of campus activities, students will:

3. Pack textbooks, assignments, syllabi and any other needed materials for each course and bring during an evacuation/suspension.
4. Keep up with course work during the evacuation/suspension as specified on course syllabi and online Blackboard courses.
5. Complete any reading and/or writing assignments given by professors before emergency began.

- Assuming a power source is available....
6. Log on to university Web site within 48 hours of an evacuation/suspension.
7. Monitor the main university site (www.loyno.edu) for general information.
8. Log on to each course through Blackboard or e-mail within 48 hours of an evacuation/suspension to receive further information regarding contacting course instructors for assignments, etc.
9. Complete Blackboard and/or other online assignments posted by professors (students are required to turn in assignments on time during the evacuation/suspension period and once the university campus has reopened.)
10. Contact professors during an evacuation/suspension (or as soon as classes resume on campus) to explain any emergency circumstances that may have prevented them from completing expected work.

Further information about student responsibilities in emergencies is available on the Academic Affairs web site: http://academicaffairs.loyno.edu/students-emergency-responsibilities

A FEW FINAL NOTES

Classroom Etiquette
- Cell phones should be turned OFF (vibrating backpacks are as distracting as ringing ones) and put away before class begins.
- Laptops, iPads, and similar devices may be used in class as readers and for note-taking purposes, provided they do not become distractions. Anyone caught using such devices for purposes not strictly related to the class itself (e.g., Facebooking, Tweeting, gaming, e-mailing, video-watching, among a host of other sins) or using their phones for any reason will lose half of their total participation points for each offense. If you cannot avail yourself of technology without succumbing to the temptations of its abuse, then consider the less morally precarious medium of paper.
- Under no circumstances may class meetings be recorded (video and/or audio) without my explicit consent.
- Infractions of these classroom rules and any other behaviors deemed disruptive will result in a lowered participation and/or final grade at my discretion.
Academic Integrity
Student should familiarize themselves with Loyola’s Academic Honor Code (http://2013bulletin.loyno.edu/academic-honor-code). Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course and is cause for failing the course at the instructor’s discretion. When in doubt, students should contact the instructor, who would much rather grant extensions than fail students for turning in plagiarized assignments on time (but please note that academic honesty can assume a variety of forms beyond plagiarism, as set forth in the Honor Code; ignorance of the law is no excuse).

Disability Services
If you have a disability and wish to receive accommodations, please contact Sarah Mead Smith, Director of Disability Services, at 504.865.2990. If you wish to receive test accommodations (e.g., extended test time), you will need to give the course instructor an official Accommodation Form from Disability Services. The Office of Disability Services is located in Marquette Hall 112.

Any additional concerns or questions about the course may be discussed with the instructor at any time.

The instructor reserves the right to alter this syllabus at any time.

Any changes will be announced in class and on Blackboard.

The most recent version of the syllabus posted to Blackboard should be considered authoritative.

The version of the syllabus posted to LORA will not be updated regularly and should not be consulted for accurate information about assignments.
N.b.: Students are expected to complete a minimum of two hours of work outside of class for every hour of direct classroom instruction. For a 3-hour course that means 6 hours of work outside of class per week. Since this class meets only once a week, please plan enough time to complete six hours of reading and writing weekly. Students are not advised to begin their work for each week on Tuesday morning! All readings should be completed by the start of class on the day for which they are assigned (except for January 7; see below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic/Readings</th>
<th>Presentations/Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>January 7</td>
<td>The World of the Vikings: Some Outsiders’ Perspectives</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>For this first class meeting, short readings will be distributed in class and discussed in small groups:</td>
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<td>☐ Byock, pp. 11-13</td>
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<td>☐ Adam of Bremen, from The History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen</td>
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<td>☐ Ahmad ibn Fadlan, from the Risāla</td>
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<td>☐ Dudo of St. Quentin, from The Customs and Deeds of the First Dukes of Normandy</td>
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<td>☐ The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Viking raids on England, 789-850/1</td>
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<td>☐ The Annals of Ulster: Viking raids on Ireland, 795-842</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>January 10</td>
<td>Last day to add</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>January 14</td>
<td>The Old Gods</td>
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<td>☐ Byock, pp. 292-297</td>
<td>☐ Questionnaire</td>
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<td>☐ Snorri Sturluson, The Prose Edda: Prologue and Gylfginning (The Deluding of Gylfi), pp. 1-79</td>
<td>☐ Worksheet #1</td>
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<td>In The Elder Edda</td>
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<td>☐ Völuspá (The Prophecy of the Seeress), pp. 5-14</td>
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<td>☐ Hávamál (The Lay of the High One), pp. 15-39</td>
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<td>☐ Prýmskviða (The Song of Thrym), pp. 96-101</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>January 17</td>
<td>Last day to drop</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>January 21</td>
<td>The Mead of Poetry</td>
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<td>In The Elder Edda</td>
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<td>☐ Vafþrúðnismál (The Lay of Vafthrúðnir), pp. 39-49</td>
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<td>☐ Grimnismál (Grimnir’s Sayings), pp. 49-59</td>
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<td>☐ Alvíssmál (The Lay of All-wise), pp. 108-113</td>
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<td>☐ The Viking Age: “Odin’s Wisdom and Arts,” pp. 92-93 (also on Blackboard)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Tuesday  January 28  Sticks and Stones May Break My Bones: Language and Violence
- Selections from Grágás, the Icelandic legal code (on Blackboard)
  In The Elder Edda
- Hárbarðsljóð (Grey-beard’s Poem), pp. 67-76
- Lokasenna (Loki’s Home-truths), pp. 82-96
- Helgakviða Hundingsbana in fyrri (The First Song of Helgi, the Slayer of Hunding), pp.117-125
- Helgakviða Hjörvarðssonar (The Song of Helgi Hjörvardson), pp. 126-134
- Helgakviða Hundingsbana önnur (The Second Song of Helgi, the Slayer of Hunding), pp. 135-145

Worksheet #3
Exam 1: Mythology and Poetry

Tuesday  February 4  Viking Art
- Anne-Sofie Gräslund, “Religion, Art, and Runes” (on Blackboard)
- Signe Horn Fuglesang, “Viking Art” (on Blackboard)
- Timothy Morton lecture

Worksheet #4
Ardre stones
Tjängvide stone
Gosforth Cross
Horns of Gallehus
Franks Casket
Stora Hammars stones

Tuesday  February 11  Heroes and Legends
- Vǫlsunga saga (The Saga of the Volsungs)

Worksheet #5
Exam 2: Viking Art

Tuesday  February 18  Sagas of Icelanders: Recalling the Dawn of the Viking Age
- Jesse Byock 5-11, 21-24, 81-98, 142-169
- The Viking Age: “Icelandic Accounts of the Discovery and Settlement of Iceland,” pp. 336-341 (also on Blackboard)
- The Viking Age: “Harald Finehair and the Unification of Norway,” pp. 434-439 (also on Blackboard)
- Egils saga Skallagrímssonar (Egil’s Saga), chapters 1-55

Worksheet #6
Hylestad Church portal
Jarlabanke stones

Friday  February 21
Paper 1 due

Tuesday  February 25  Egil Skallagrímsson, Warrior-Poet
- Egils saga Skallagrímssonar (Egil’s Saga), chapters 56-87
- Film: A Viking Landscape (on Blackboard)

Worksheet #7

Friday  February 28  Mid-term grades due

Tuesday  March 4  No class: Fat Týr’s Day
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>March 11</th>
<th>Skalds' Sagas: From Poetry to Prose</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Sagas of Warrior-Poets: Kormáks saga (Kormak’s Saga), pp. 5-67</td>
<td>Worksheet #8</td>
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<td>The Viking Age: “The Sword Skofnung,” pp. 171-173 and 176-178 (also on Blackboard)</td>
<td>Gokstad ship</td>
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<td>Jelling ship</td>
<td>Mammen axe</td>
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<td>Gjermundbu and Valsgärde helmets</td>
<td>Gripsholm stone</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>March 14</td>
<td>Last day to withdraw</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>March 18</td>
<td>Whispers of Love, Words of War</td>
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<td>Sagas of Warrior-Poets: Gunnlaugs saga ormstungu (The Saga of Gunnlaug Serpent-tongue), pp. 111-149</td>
<td>Worksheet #9</td>
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<td>Lewis chess pieces</td>
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<td>Morby stone</td>
<td>Ranvaig’s Casket</td>
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<td>Setre comb</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>March 25</td>
<td>Sex, Sexuality, and Gender</td>
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<td>Sagas of Warrior-Poets: Bjarnar saga Hitdaelakappa (The Saga of Bjorn, Champion of the Hitardal People), pp. 153-221</td>
<td>Worksheet #10</td>
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<td>Skuldelev ships</td>
<td>Oseberg ship</td>
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<td>Hällestad stones</td>
<td>Great Hall at Lejre</td>
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<td>Ulunda stone</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>March 21</td>
<td>Paper 2 due</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Law, Power, and Society in the Sagas</td>
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<td>Byock, pp. 118-141, 185-195</td>
<td>Worksheet #11</td>
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<td>The Elder Edda: Rigspula (Rig’s List), pp. 241-249</td>
<td>St. Paul’s rune stone</td>
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<td>Njáls saga (Njal’s Saga), chapters 1-56</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>April 8</td>
<td>From Thor to Christ: Politics and the Christianization of Scandinavia</td>
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<td>Byock, pp. 170-184 and 297-307</td>
<td>Worksheet #12</td>
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<td>The Viking Age: “Olaf Tryggvason and the Conversion of Norway,” pp. 400-408 (also on Blackboard)</td>
<td>Thorwald’s Cross</td>
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<td>The Viking Age: “The Conversion of the Icelanders,” pp. 417-419 (also on Blackboard)</td>
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<td>Njáls saga (Njal’s Saga), chapters 57-123</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>No class: Easter break</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>April 22</td>
<td>Feuding: The Art of Violence</td>
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<td>Byock, pp. 77-80, 196-232, and 308-323</td>
<td>Worksheet #13</td>
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<td>Selections from Grágás, the Icelandic legal code (on Blackboard)</td>
<td>Course evaluations</td>
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<td>Njáls saga (Njal’s Saga), chapters 124-159</td>
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Tuesday April 29
Endings
☐ Final exam review
☐ Útlaginn (The Outlaw), dir. Ágúst Guðmundsson, 1981

☐ Creative assignment due

Tuesday May 6
Final Exam: 7:00-9:00 p.m.

“The Viking Terror” (Old Irish, trans. Kuno Meyer)

Bitter is the wind to-night,
It tosses the ocean’s white hair:
To-night I fear not the fierce warriors of Norway
Coursing on the Irish Sea.

A furore normannorum libera nos domine.
From the fury of the Northmen deliver us, Lord.
--Apocryphal medieval prayer