

**The Viking World**  
Christian Raffensperger  
History 311-1W  
Fall Semester 2017  
MWF 2:15–3:20 P.M.  
Hollenbeck 313

The Vikings occupy an important place in European, and indeed, Eurasian history. From their first recorded attack on Lindisfarne in 793, the Vikings roamed the Baltic and North Seas, continental Europe, the Mediterranean, the eastern European river systems, and even the Caspian and Black Seas. In their travels they met peoples of various faiths and origins, and traded with and raided them all equally. This course will explore the initial outburst of Viking expansion beginning in the late eighth century, look at the way Vikings lived at home and abroad, and will also examine the effect Vikings had on the various places they visited. We will also study the Icelandic sagas that have survived to this day as a view to what they can tell us about Viking life and practices.

*Writing Intensive*

*PAST Credit*

Professor: Christian Raffensperger  
Office: Hollenbeck 311  
Office Phone: 937-327-7843  
Office Hours: MW 9:00–10:30 A.M. or by appointment  
E-mail address: [craffensperger@wittenberg.edu](mailto:craffensperger@wittenberg.edu)

**Assignments and Deadlines**

There is a separate assignment sheet that I will hand out which details all of the graded assignments for this class. Please follow that assignment sheet in attempting to understand what each assignment is, and if you do not understand, please ask (in advance of the due date!). Due dates are included here on the syllabus.

Class discussion is 10% of your total grade for this class. As such it is incredibly important that you come prepared each day. This means that you will have with you the materials under discussion and you will have read them. Everyone in class is expected to participate in the discussion. You are also all expected to participate civilly and respectfully. This is a community of learners and we should act as such.

The grades will be weighted as follows:

Attendance: 6%  
Participation: 10%  
Reading Quiz: 15% (1% / week)  
Group Exercise : 10%  
Causes of the Viking Age Paper: 10%  
Historicity of Sagas Paper 2 : 10%  
Paper: 39%

Paper Proposal – 2%  
Annotated Bibliography (15 items) – 6% (2% / each of three)  
Outline – 3%  
First Draft – 8%  
Peer Review of First Draft – 2 %  
Final Paper – 18%

### **Required Books**

John Haywood. *The Penguin Historical Atlas of the Vikings*. (hereafter Haywood) – This will provide you with maps so you know where all of this is occurring. Haywood also has nice, short summaries of the various regions where we find Vikings. As we will be dealing with specific articles or book sections, use Haywood each week to provide you with a short grounding in each region/topic.

*The Sagas of the Icelanders* – A collection of numerous sagas dealing with the Viking period and later. We will read several of these over the course of the class.

### **Recommended Book:**

Robert Ferguson. *The Vikings: A History*. – This is a fine textbook treatment of the Viking World. It might be useful for you to utilize this, or something like it, to provide you with a longer background for the material that we will be discussing.

### **Schedule of Meetings and Assignments**

*Week 1 (August 21, 23, 25): Scandinavia and Scandinavians*

**Assignments: Reading Quiz Wednesday**

Wednesday - Sawyer – Land and People (*Medieval Scandinavia*); “The Scandinavian Kingdoms” (*From Viking to Crusader*) [recommended]

Friday – Downham, “Viking Ethnicities”; Curta, “Medieval Archaeology”

*Week 2 (August 28, 30, September 1): Causes of the Viking Age*

**Assignments: Reading Quiz Monday**

Monday – Jones, Causes of the Viking Age (*A History of the Vikings*)

Wednesday – “The Vikings” (NOVA)

Friday – Ferguson, “Causes of the Viking Age” (*The Vikings*)

*Week 3 (September 4, 6, 8): Scandinavians at Home and Abroad*

**Assignments: Reading Quiz Monday**

**Due Monday 9/4 – Causes of the Viking Age Historiography Paper**

Monday – *Viking Empires* (excerpt)

Wednesday – “Danish Coastal Landing Places and their Relation to Navigation and Trade” (*Land, Sea and Home*)

Friday – Lecture and Discussion of Primary Sources on the initial attacks

*Week 4 (September 11, 13, 15): Irish Expansion of the Vikings*

**Assignments: Due – Group Discussion 1**

**Reading Quiz Wednesday**

Monday – Group 1 on Primary Sources

Wednesday – Group 1 on Downham, “Ireland” (*Vikings Kings of Britain and Ireland*)

Friday – “Settlement and Acculturation in the Irish Sea Region” (*Land, Sea, and Home*)

*Week 5 (September 18, 20, 22): English Expansion of the Vikings*

**Assignments: Due – Group Discussion 2**

**Reading Quiz Wednesday**

Monday – Group 2 on Primary Sources

Wednesday – Group 2 on Downham, “England” (*Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland*)

Friday – “Viking Age Settlement in the Northwestern Countryside” (*Land, Sea and Home*)

*Week 6 (September 25, 27, 29): Eastern Expansion of the Vikings*

**Assignments: Due – Group Discussion 3**

**Reading Quiz Wednesday**

**Due Monday 9/25 – Paper Proposal**

Monday – Group 3 on Primary Sources

Wednesday – Group 3 on *Emergence of Rus'* (excerpts)

Friday – “Scandinavian Viking Age Boat Graves in Old Rus”

*Week 7 (October 2, 4, 6): Continental Expansion of the Vikings*

**Assignments: Due – Group Discussion 4**

**Reading Quiz Wednesday**

**Due Monday 10/2 – Annotated Bibliography 1**

Monday – Group 4 on Primary Sources

Wednesday – Group 4 on “Vikings in the Carolingian Empire” (*The Vikings*)

Friday – “Confrontation and Unification” (*History Compass*)

*Week 8 (October 9, 11, 13): Scandinavian Sources on Scandinavians*

**Assignments: Reading Quiz Monday**

**Due Monday 10/9 – Annotated Bibliography 2**

Monday – “Viking Homelands and Their Peoples” (*Chronicles of the Vikings*)

Wednesday – *Norwegian Runes and Runic Inscriptions*, 86-108

Friday – *Norwegian Runes and Runic Inscriptions*, 108-130

*Week 9 (October 18, 20): Viking Iceland*

**Assignments: Reading Quiz Monday**

**Due Wednesday 10/18 – Annotated Bibliography 3**

Wednesday - *Islendingabok*

Friday – “Landnam” - Smith

*Week 10 (October 23, 25, 27): Conversion of Iceland*

**Assignments: Reading Quiz Monday**

**Due Monday 10/23 – Outline**

Monday – *Kristni Saga*

Wednesday – “Late and Peaceful” – Jochens

Friday – Continuing Discussion

*Week 11 (October 30, November 1, 3): What Are Sagas?*

**Assignments: Reading Quiz Monday**

Monday – *Sagas of the Icelanders*, “Introduction”

Wednesday – “Fact and Fiction in the Icelandic Sagas” – Cormack

Friday – Continuing Discussion

*Week 12 (November 6, 8, 10): Erik the Red’s Saga and Saga of the Greenlanders*

**Assignments: Reading Quiz Monday**

**Due Friday 11/10 by noon – First drafts (on Moodle)**

Monday – *Erik the Red’s Saga*

Wednesday – *Saga of the Greenlanders*

Friday – Continuing Discussion in Groups

*Week 13 (November 13, 15, 17): Discussion of First Drafts*

**Assignments: Read all First Drafts**

All Week - Class discussion of first drafts

**NO CLASS – Monday, November 20**

*Week 14 (27, 29, December 1): Egil's Saga*

**Assignments: Reading Quiz Monday**

Monday – *Egil's Saga*, 3-64

Wednesday – *Egil's Saga*, 65-129

Friday – *Egil's Saga*, 129-184

*Week 15 (December 4, 6, 8): Feud and Negotiation*

**Assignments: Reading Quiz Monday**

**Due Monday 12/4 – Historicity of Sagas Paper**

Monday – Byock, “Limitations on a Chieftain’s Ambitions” (*Viking Age Iceland*)

Wednesday – Miller, “Gift, Sale, Payment, Raid”

Friday – Continuing Discussion

**Final Paper due – Monday, December 11 by 5:00 P.M. in my box in the History Office in Hollenbeck Hall**

**For More Information:**

This list below is a variety of books that can give you more information on our topics. However, not all of them are in the library. If you are particularly interested in a book, you can use OhioLink or Interlibrary loan to get it, but be sure to request it at least one month before you need it if you are using ILL. You should also use the JSTOR database for relevant articles on the Viking world, of which there are many.

A. W. Brøgger and Haakon Shetelig, *The Viking Ships: Their Ancestry and Evolution* (London: 1971).

Jesse L. Byock, *Medieval Iceland: Society, Sagas and Power*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988)

Eric Christiansen, *The Norsemen in the Viking Age*. (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2001)

Kelly DeVries, *The Norwegian Invasion of England in 1066*. (Rochester, N.Y.: Boydell Press, 1999)

Thomas A DuBois, *Nordic Religions in the Viking Age*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999)

William W. Fitzhugh and Elisabeth I. Ward (eds.), *Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga*. (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000)

James Graham-Campbell and Colleen E. Batey, *Vikings in Scotland: An Archeological Survey*. (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 1998)

James Graham-Campbell (ed), *Cultural Atlas of the Viking World* (Contributions by Colleen Batey, Helen Clarke, R.I. Page, and Neil S. Price) (New York: Facts on File, 1994)

L. M. Hollander, trans., *Heimskringla: History of the Kings of Norway* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964)

J. Jesch, *Women in the Viking Age* (Woodbridge: Suffolk, 1991).

Jenny Jochens, *Women in Old Norse Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

Gwyn Jones, *History of the Vikings*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984)

Ole Klindt-Jensen, *A History of Scandinavian Archaeology* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975).

John Lindow, *Norse Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Heroes, Rituals, and Beliefs*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002)

H.R. Loyn, *The Vikings in Britain*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997)

Mark Redknap, *Vikings in Wales: An Archeological Quest*. (Cardiff: National Museum and Gallery of Wales, 2000)

Julian D. Richards, *Viking Age England*. (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2000)

*Saga of the Volsungs: The Norse Epic of Sigurd the Dragonslayer*. Introduced and translated by Jesse L. Byock. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990)

Peter Sawyer, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

P.H. Sawyer, *The Age of the Vikings*. (London: Edward Arnold, 1971)

P.H. Sawyer, *Kings and Vikings*. (New York: Methuen, 1982)

Kristen A. Seaver, *The Frozen Echo: Greenland and the Exploration of North America, ca. A.D. 1000–1500*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996)

Rudolf Simek, *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*. (Rochester, N.Y.: D. S. Brewer, 1993)

Jacqueline Simpson, *Everyday Life in the Viking Age*. (New York: Putnam, 1967)

Frank Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971)

E. O. Turville-Petre, *Myth and Religion of the North* (London, 1964)

Ian W. Walker, *Harold, The Last Anglo-Saxon King*. (Gloucestershire, Sutton, 1997)

David M. Wilson and Ole Klindt-Jensen, *Viking Art* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980).

### **Communication with Faculty**

If you have questions about class, would like to know your grade, would like to set up a time to meet, or need to let me know that you will not be in class, please email me. When you email me, please put the topic in the subject line so I know what you would like to discuss. Your email should begin with a salutation such as “Dear Professor Raffensperger”. It should not begin with “hey” or “I need”. Your email should close with something polite as well. “Best wishes” “have a good day,” or something similar is just fine, followed by your name. I would emphasize that they are not fussy, outdated conventions, but things that you will need to know to live in the world. Employers will not appreciate the casual informality with which you might be most comfortable.

### **Missed Examinations, Papers, and Class Sessions**

A good rule of thumb is do not miss anything. However, if you are ill or have a conflict and cannot make a class, notify me in advance or as soon after the class as is possible. *Do not miss examinations!* If you have a conflict, notify me a minimum of one week in advance and we can schedule an exam as close to the normal time as possible. If you miss an examination for reasons that are not discussed with me ahead of time or are not catastrophic you will receive a zero, which is much worse than an F in your overall grade. Late papers are accepted for one week, but the grade will drop one full grade when turned in after class the day it is due. For each additional day thereafter (weekend day or weekday) that it is late, it will drop a fraction of a grade, for example—an A paper handed in after class will be a B paper, handed in the next day will be a B- paper, the next day a C+ paper.

### **Attendance Policy**

As part of your grade for this class, and to get the most out of the class, you are required to attend on a regular basis. Attendance in this class is worth 6% of your grade, and attendance will be taken on a regular basis. If you are going to miss class, let me know in advance. If you accumulate 3 unexcused absences over the course of the semester, you will receive a grade of F for your attendance. If you miss 7 or more classes over the course of the semester you will receive a grade of zero for your attendance, much worse than an F when calculating your final grade. You are solely responsible for signing the attendance sheet, or notifying me of your absence, as proof of your presence in class.

### **Special Needs**

Your learning in this course is important to me. I invite you to talk with me about ways to ensure your full participation in this course. Please be aware that Wittenberg is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. If you are eligible for course accommodations because of a disability, you need to register with the Academic Services Office, COMPASS Center located in Thomas Library. After you register, give me your accommodation letter from Academic Services and arrange to talk with me about your learning needs privately in a timely manner. Early identification at the start of the term is essential to ensure timely provision of services. If you have questions or would like more information about services for students with disabilities, please contact Grace Whiteley, Disability Services Coordinator/Student Success Coach, [whiteleyg@wittenberg.edu](mailto:whiteleyg@wittenberg.edu)

### **Weather-Related Concerns**

Whenever weather becomes a problem, I shall do my best to adhere to the university guidelines. If the university cancels classes, there will be no class. If the university has not cancelled class, but I am unable or unwilling to risk traveling, I will do my best to post a notice to this effect on Moodle as early as possible. I will do my best not to cancel class if at all possible.

If there is an exam scheduled or a deadline for a written assignment on a day when class is cancelled, you may assume that the exam or assignment will be due on the following class session.

### **Academic Honesty**

Students in this course are expected to uphold the standards of Wittenberg's Code of Academic Integrity. At its most basic level, this means that you will not turn in someone else's writing as your own, quote from a source without proper acknowledgment, or provide a classmate with inappropriate help. You will be asked to submit papers and exams with the following statement followed by your signature: "I affirm that my work upholds the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity at Wittenberg, and that I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance." Sanctions for violating these rules range from receiving no credit for a particular assignment to failing the course for a significant act of academic dishonesty. If you are in doubt about any of these rules, please talk to me before submitting your work.