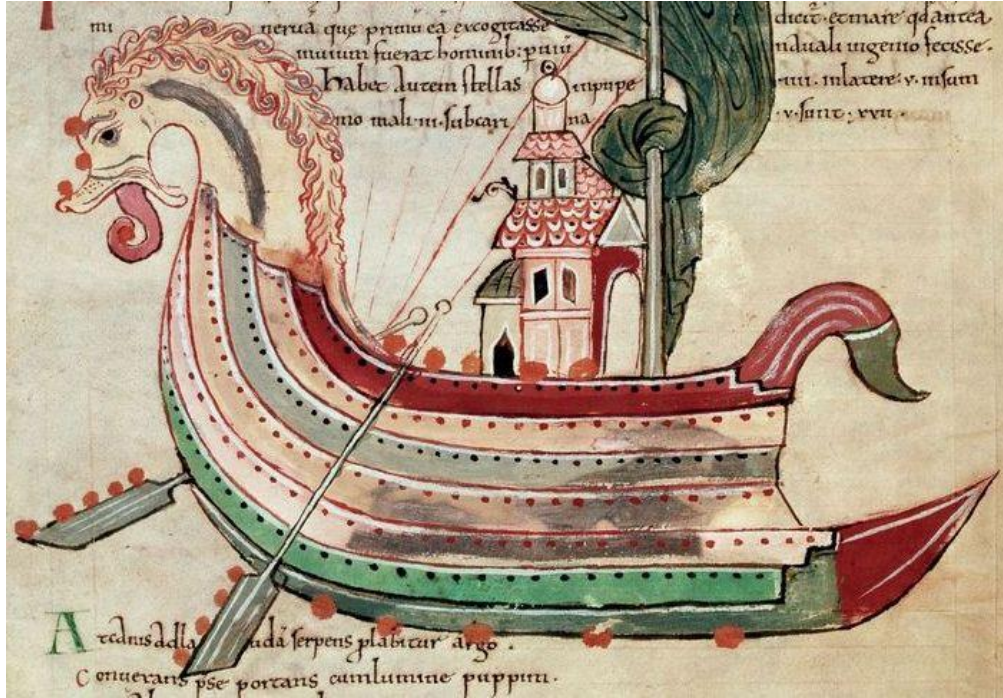


THE VIKINGS



The Vikings were the terror of Europe from the late eight to the eleventh century. Norwegians, Danes and Swedes left their homeland to trade, raid and pillage, leaving survivors praying “Oh Lord, deliver us from the fury of the Norsemen!” While commonly associated with violent barbarism, the Norse were also farmers, craftsmen, and merchants. As their dragon ships sailed the waterways of Europe and beyond, they also transformed from raiders to explorers, discoverers and settlers of found and conquered lands. This course will introduce students to various facets of the culture and society of the Viking world ranging from honor culture, gender roles, political culture, mythology, and burial practices. We will also explore the range of Viking activity abroad from Kiev and Constantinople to Greenland and Vinland, the Viking settlement in North America. We will use material and archaeological sources as well as literary and historical ones in order to think about how we know history and what questions we can ask from different sorts of sources. Notably, we will be reading Icelandic sagas that relate oral histories of heroes, outlaws, raiders and sailors that will lead us to question the lines between fact and fiction, and myth and history.

Instructor: Prof. Ada Kuskowski

Course Number: HIST 145-401, cross-listed GRMN145-401

Time: MWF 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Major Concentrations: European

Major/Minor requirements fulfilled: Europe, pre-1800

Required Books:

1. Else Roesdahl. *The Vikings: Revised Edition*. New York: Penguin, 1998.
2. Sawyer, Peter. *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings (Oxford Illustrated Histories)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
3. Thomas A. DuBois. *Nordic Religions in the Viking Age*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.
4. Angus A. Somerville and R. Andrew McDonald, eds. *The Viking Age: A Reader*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010.
5. Snorri Sturluson, *King Harald's Saga*, trans. by Magnus Magnusson. New York: Penguin Classics, 2005.
6. Snorri Sturluson. *The Prose Edda: Norse Mythology*, trans. by Jesse L. Byock. New York: Penguin 2006.
7. *Egil's Saga*, trans. & ed. by Bernard Scudder and Svanhildur Oskarsdottir. Penguin Group (Penguin Classics), 2004.
8. *Gisli Sursson's Saga and the Saga of the People of Eyri*, trans. by Martin Regal and Judy Quinn. New York: Penguin, 2003.
9. *The Vinland Sagas*, trans. & intro. by Keneva Kunz & Gisli Sigurdsson. Penguin Group (Penguin Classics), 2008.

Course Themes

1. Prehistoric Scandinavia
2. The Sources: How do we know the history of the Viking Age?
3. Political and Legal Culture
4. Norse Mythology
5. Burial and the Afterlife
6. Christianization of the Viking World
7. Ships & Merchants
8. Beginning to Raid: England
9. Beginning to Raid: The Carolingian Empire
10. The Settlement of Iceland
11. Sailing East: From Novgorod to Kiev
12. Sailing West: From Greenland to Vinland
13. The Age of Cnut: A Moment of "Empire"?
14. End of the Viking Age: Kingdoms & Crusaders
15. Viking Legacy in the Modern World: Victorians & Nationalist Movements

Evaluation:

- Participation in Discussion (15%)
- Two in-class mini-assignments: Boasting Contest, Viking Name Ceremony (5%)
- Shorter Paper (5-6 pages, 10%)
- Midterm (20%)
- Longer Paper (10-12 pages, 20%)
- Final Examination (30%)