From the 9th to the 11th century, Vikings from Northern Europe made large impacts on many European cultures. Some visits were plundering, some regular trade, and some to establish new settlements: Iceland, Greenland, and even in North America. They plundered all over Europe and made hostile visits in large cities such as Paris, Rome, and Constantinople. This course will introduce students to the Viking culture, its religion, and language. There are more than 1000 Viking words in the English language due to their activities in England. Students will learn about Viking society, shipbuilding, weapons, rope making etc. Students will also analyze how the Viking culture still affects modern Danish culture.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the social, religious and political developments which formed Viking Age Scandinavia
- Examine how the Vikings acted abroad and how the Vikings entered and influenced the political scenes in several European countries.
- Evaluate the variety of methods which can be used in Viking Age/Historical studies
- Articulate orally and in writing how the Viking Age has affected and still is affecting modern Europe.
- Interpret and critically assess aspects of Viking Age culture

Course Prerequisites

Students should have previously completed a course in history or cultural studies.
**Methods of Instruction**

This class will be taught using a PowerPoint based series of lectures combined with guest speakers, discussion seminars, museum visits, homework and student presentations. The students are expected to come prepared to class and take active part in the discussions.

**Assessment and Final Grade**

1. Reflection Paper 20%
2. Short Essays (2) 15%
3. Presentations 20%
4. Final Research Paper 25%
5. Class Participation 20%

TOTAL: 100%

**Course Requirements**

**Reflection Paper**
During the course, the students are expected to complete one reflection paper. The reflection paper will be on a topic handed out the week before together with more detailed instructions. This paper should be typed, double-spaced, and 2500 words, and include references.

**Short Essays**
Students will complete two short essays, each worth 5%. Each paper will focus on a topic selected by the student and linked to the themes for the week(s) in which they are due. Each essay should not be 750 words each, typed and double-spaced.

**Presentation**
In assigned groups, the students will prepare a presentation on a topic related to the readings for the seminar-day (reading due for that particular day), and present and discuss the arguments in class. Students will be assessed on their ability to analyse, challenge, and defend the primary foci of the readings.

**Final Research Paper**
Students will complete a research paper of 3750 words, excluding references. In their paper, students must show that they are capable of formulating, analyzing and evaluating a research question of their own choice related to one or more of the topics discussed during this course. The research paper should include at least three primary resources.
Participation

Participation is defined as meaningful contribution in the digital classroom, using the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to prepare in advance of each recorded session and regularly engage with the resources, discussions, reflective assignments, and all other online learning activities. Students are required to demonstrate engagement with course materials, for example, through insightful, constructive comments and by using subject-appropriate terminology in: online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after viewing the presentations of others), interaction with guest speakers, where available, and submissions related to other outside-of-class activities. Students should ensure that submitted commentary balances opinions, general impressions, and specific and thoughtful criticisms or contributions. Grades are based on the content, depth, and quality of the aforementioned types of meaningful contributions as measured per the Participation grading rubric in Canvas.

Students are also expected to use the Canvas inbox for communicating any clarifying questions they may want to ask about assessments or other course requirements.

Technology Requirements

Participation requires access to a computer with microphone (a headset and microphone are preferred over built-in sound devices) and webcam; a stable and strong internet connection; and a quiet and well-lit environment.

Attendance

Expectations: In an asynchronous online learning format, attendance takes the form of active student engagement:

- in instructional activities, course content, course tools
- with the course instructor, other students, and
- by timely completion of all assessments.

“Attendance” is more than just logging into the course on Canvas. Students must establish a record of participation in academically related activities in order to comply with this requirement.

Academically related activities include, but are not limited to:

- submitting an academic assignment;
- taking an exam or quiz;
- attending a study group that is assigned by the instructor;
- participating in an online discussion about academic matters, designed by the instructor; or
- initiating contact in Canvas with the instructor to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course.

Academically related activities do NOT include activities where a student may be present, but not academically engaged, such as:

- logging into an online class without active participation
- contributing to or engaging in the CIEE Orientation or Community Course(s)

First Week of Class: Online courses officially commence on the first day of the term. Students must demonstrate engagement in class by no later than day 5 of the term, or risk being administratively dropped from the course with no opportunity to re-enroll. Students administratively dropped from the course for failure to engage will be considered withdrawn from the program and subject to CIEE financial withdrawal policies and fees.

Duration of Course: Continued, regular class engagement is required throughout the scheduled duration of the course, and disengagement will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course.
Due to the intensive schedules for completing courses online, consistent failure to engage in the course on a weekly basis (defined as failing to engage for two or more weeks of online learning) will result in a formal written warning from the CIEE Center Director. CIEE instructors/staff will monitor student engagement on a weekly basis. The weekly schedule below outlines due dates for asynchronous learning activities for this course. *N.B. Please note the class schedule is subject to change if opportunities arise to enhance the curriculum.*

**Weekly Schedule**

**Orientation Week**

**Class 1.1** Introduction

This week will focus on an orientation and an introduction to the course and requirements. We will go through the historical background of Viking Age Scandinavia and touch upon the variety of interdisciplinary approaches which can be used in Viking Age studies. Since the popularity of the Vikings and their fascinating world through modern times has urged many misunderstandings we will also in this first week look into ‘Facts and Fiction’ of the Viking World.

Workload 6 h

**Class 1.2** Before the Viking Age

During this week, we will dive into the general sociopolitical structures which formed Viking Age Scandinavia. However, in order to gain the best introduction for understanding the societal development and trends of the highly complex Viking Age, this first class deals with the preceding period known as the late Germanic Iron Age. In the centuries leading up to the Viking Age great social, economic, religious and political changes occurred within Scandinavian settlement structures – changes without which the Vikings would not have been able to achieve such success on an international level as they did.

Lecture and student presentation on Power Point

Reading:
Ashby 2015, 89-106
Barrett 2008, 671-685
Hedeager 2009, 11-22
Jørgensen, L. 2001, 73-82
Simek, R 2004, 9-21

Workload 7 h

**Class 1.3** Peasant Households and Rural Economy
Obviously not all Vikings were explorers, warriors and travelling merchants, and most of the Viking population lived their entire life in rural districts serving smaller functions in village communities or in farms. In this class, we will explore how life enfolded in the villages in the countryside during the Viking Age. Women, men and children all served important roles in the making and development of Viking Age Scandinavia and we will discuss how the diversity of life in the countryside and village communities contributed to the overall economy of Scandinavia in this period.

Reading:
Bender Jørgensen 2002, 129-245 and the following discussion 145-152
Fallgren 1993, 59-86
Hvass 1985, 211–228
Kaldal Mikkelsen 1999, 177-193
Magnus 2002, 5-33 and the following discussion 33-44

Lecture and group work

Workload 8 h

Class 1.4 Aristocracy and Power

During the Viking Age the aristocracy grew stronger and gained more solid power foundations in society. By gradually assembling more and more of the fundamental societal functions under them, the aristocratic families slowly, but firmly formed new and more permanent positions and institutions. In this class, we will investigate who the aristocratic families were and how they expanded their authoritative positions – in this matter we will discuss how the elite performed their power and how they managed to sustain the most comprehensive platforms for utilizing their power over the people.

Lecture and presentation/ written paper

Reading:
Fabech 1999, 37-47
Ringtved 1999, 49-63
Sindbæk 2011, 41-66
Sundqvist 2009, 223-226

❖ Short Essay 1 due

Workload 10 h

Class 2.1 Nordic Mythology – The Making of Social Order

Religion or religious ideas was a highly central aspect of the Viking life. The creation of Nordic mythology and the fascinating stories centered around Odin, Thor, Freya etc. all
gives insight into how the Gods and the Nordic religion were an important player in the making of social order. In this class, we will work with the main lines of the complex mythological world and dive into the functions of the Viking gods within a sociopolitical frame.

Lecture and student PowerPoint presentation

Reading:
Andrén 2005, 105-138
Steinsland 2009, 227-230
Schjødt 2012, 263-287
Gräslund 2009, 249-256

Workload 10 h

Class 2.2 Feasting with the Gods

Classroom seminar on rituals and cultic practices. One way of securing world order was through sacrifices or offerings. The Vikings celebrated their gods during different times over the yearly cycle and today, due to intense research and a growing archaeological material, we begin to get glimpses of how these feasts took form and what their functions were. In this class, each student will make a presentation based on the readings due for today. The main aim of the seminar is to reflect on and discuss the possibilities of multiple meanings behind the archaeological evidence of sacrificial customs.

Lecture and student presentation

Reading:
Gotfredsen & Thomsen 2011, 211-220
Jørgensen 2009, 329-354
Jørgensen 2014, 129-150
Larson 2006, 248-253
Nielsen 2006, 243-247

❖ Presentation due

Workload 10 h

Class 2.3 Magic and Powerful Women

A fascinating part of the myth and beliefs of the Vikings is connected to the group of women identified as the so-called Völur-figures, known from the early medieval written sources. These women from the archaeological record possessed magical skills which made them both very feared but also highly respected in Viking Age society. We will look into how they functioned, how they deployed their magical gifts and discuss what their social role were in the societies.

Furthermore, we will examine if these women are connected to the later medieval witches
and if so, how these women went from highly powerful individuals to social ‘losers’ who did not deserve anything but to end their days in bonfires or drowned in bogs.

Lecture and on-line discussion and written paper

Reading:

Workload 10 h

Wallace 2009, 604-612

Class 3.1 Ship Technology

According to many researchers, one of the more significant technological achievements of the Vikings were the ship and sailing technologies. In this guest lecture/online interview with Ole Kastholm from Roskilde Museum (TBC), we will explore how the Viking ship functioned and how it helped create the means to which it became possible to cross for example the rough North Atlantic sea.

Lecture and student paper

Reading:
Bill 2009, 170-180
Kastholm 2011, 175-183
Pentz 2014, 202-227
Wallace 2009, 604-612

✧ Reflection Paper due

Workload 8 h
Class 3.2  Queens, Kings and Vassals?

How the political structures were formed in the Viking Age is still up for much debate – some researchers argue that an established royal kingdom were already present during the late Germanic Iron Age in Southern Scandinavia or in the beginning of the Viking Age, while others believe that Viking Age society was build up around smaller chieftains and that a more established or centralized kingdom first emerges during the early middle ages. In this class, we will approach and discuss the different perceptions found in academia.

Lecture and on-line discussion

Reading:
Jessen 2014, 42-64

❖ Short Essay 2 due

Workload 11 h

Class 3.3  Military Organization

This class will examine military organization of Southern Scandinavia and how it influenced the Viking success in diplomatic deals with for example the Frankish empire. By discussing written sources who mentions the Viking armies we will explore the complex nature of a militarized social order. We will also review a handout with a sample of translated written sources concerning Vikings on the continent.

Lecture and student presentation

Reading:
Dobat 2009, 27-67
Jesch 2010,165-173
Jesch 2010,165-173

Workload 8 h
Class 4.1  Viking Age and Nationalism

The Vikings are popular and has been so for a very long time. In this guest lecture, we will explore and discuss how archaeology and particularly the Vikings have been used in nationalistic constructions and identity building.

Lecture and on-line class discussion

Reading:
Byock 1994, 163-187

Workload 6 h

Class 4.2  Vikings in Popular Culture

This session will approach how and why the Vikings are so popular in the modern world – not only in exhibitions, but in movies, series, in company names etc. - and how Vikings continue to affect contemporary articulations of heritage and identity in Europe.

Lecture, video and on-line discussions

Viewing: Beowulf
(2007)
How To Train Your Dragon (2010) Vikings
(2013-)
The Last Kingdom (2015-) The 13th Warrior (1999)

Workload 6 h

Class 4.3  Summary

In this final class, we will revisit the learning objectives and primary themes of the course.

❖ Final Paper due

Workload 35 h
Course Materials

Readings


Brink, S. "Christianization and the emergence of the early Church in Scandinavia”. In: S. Brink & N. Price (eds.) *The Viking World* (2009): 621-629


Hedenstierna-Jonson, C. “Social and political formations of Scandinavian areas, 8th to 10th century, the martial perspective”. In: *Territorio, Sociedad y Poder*, Anejo No. 2 (2009): 89-104


Price, N. "The Viking Way: Religion and War in Late Iron Age Scandinavia". The Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University (2002): 111-161


