This is a sample syllabus only.

The instructor may make changes to the syllabus in future courses.

The Vikings: Raiders, traders & farmers.

**ANT 000, course no.**

**Times:** TBA  
**Location:** TBA  
**Instructor:** Dr. Gregory Mumford  
**Email:** gmumford@uab.edu  
**Office:** Room 320, Dept. of History & Anthropology, Heritage Hall, 1401 University Blvd  
**Office Hours:** TBA  
**Bus. Tel.:** (205) 934-0490; **Project library** (205) 933-7552.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**
The Vikings are most popularly thought of as warriors raiding settlements along the northern coastline of Europe during the Viking Age (ca. 793 – 1050 AD), but their society and activities extended well beyond this time frame and scope. This course furnishes a broad overview of the Vikings, beginning with the roots of Norse culture in Scandinavia, their social structure, subsistence, art, architecture, technology, religion, language, and literature, and their broad interactions as raiders, traders, and explorers in the world beyond Scandinavia, including their expansion westward into parts of Europe, the British Isles, Iceland, and Greenland. Additional discussion will cover their variously hostile through peaceful interactions with the indigenous peoples in Greenland, the Arctic, Labrador and Newfoundland (ca. 1000 – 1450+ AD), their demise in Greenland, and the evidence for Norse explorations, exploitation, and influence in northeast North America, ranging from the eastern Arctic through Newfoundland, and perhaps beyond.

**OVERALL COURSE OBJECTIVES:**
This course aims (1) to educate students in the broad historical, archaeological, cultural, and related topics regarding the Viking period and world, furnishing a fairly comprehensive and introductory overview. The documentaries and written responses serve (2) to illustrate and reinforce selected topics, providing visual references, specialist views, and general narration. (3) The in-class seminars and (4) class member presentations are designed to provide students with more in-depth understanding regarding key concepts and subject materials, and experience in presenting one’s essay research and results. The mid-term and end-of-term examinations, accompanied by pre-posted, focus-learning guides, should (5) aid students in focusing upon, comprehending, and memorizing the most salient data and broader trends that characterize the Viking World. The research essay enables students (6) to explore in more depth and in a more critical fashion a topic of interest not covered in sufficient detail in class, including guidance and feedback to assist in learning and refining the composition of college essays. This course also aims (7) to provide a sufficiently comprehensive overview as a “gateway” course to allow students to assess whether they wish to pursue additional and more advanced studies regarding this cultural area, period, and/or a related aspect.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**
The course includes grades for attendance/participation (10%), a series of (in-class) written responses to several
documentaries and/or readings (20%), a mid-term and end-of-term examination (40% [20% each, with pre-posted study guides]), and a 10-12 page research paper (i.e., 2500-3000 words; 30% [with in-class and posted guidance]). Of note, three gratis absences are provided for illness, official UAB events, and other legitimate reasons, while unexplained, additional absences will require consultation with the instructor and will receive a deduction of 0.5% per missed class (albeit with an opportunity to make-up legitimate, documented absences by submitting a 500-word summary for each missed lecture from the pertinent readings and/or power point presentations [individual circumstances may vary, but require consultation with the instructor]).

Plagiarism will result in at least a ZERO (“0”) on a given assignment, for the course, and possibly further academic and related penalties imposed by the College of Arts and Science/UAB. Consult the UAB handbook regarding the academic code of conduct. In essence, plagiarism constitutes representing someone else’s work (be it published or unpublished) as one’s own work, which may range from minor infractions through to full replication of another person’s work. Minor infractions are often simple misunderstandings and can be easily remedied (see essay guide); major infractions will not be tolerated. Students will be asked to submit both a physical paper and an electronic version via “Turn-it-in” on Canvas (the latter medium checks a growing data base, with internet access, for plagiarism).

SEE STUDENT UAB HANDBOOK for definitions of “plagiarism”: i.e., it means essentially submitting any work, or large portions of any work, that is actually not your own work (i.e., words), and without crediting the original source. In brief, one should re-word another person’s/persons’ words/arguments into one’s own words and credit the source from which one obtained the data (e.g., using footnotes, endnotes, and/or parenthetical referencing/citations with the author’s name(s), date of publication, page(s) for the data, and a full reference in the bibliography). You cannot “double dip” either, meaning you can only submit one assignment once (at UAB); you cannot re-submit the same assignment to another instructor/course (this also counts as “0” / ZERO).

Grade range: Fail = 0-59%; D = 60-69%; C = 70-79%; B = 80-89%; A = 90-100%

REQUIRED READINGS (Textbooks):
Rosedahl, Else

Haywood, John

Somerville, Angus A. and McDonald, R. Andrew (eds.),
Toronto: University of Toronto Press. In-print.

Anonymous and Robert Cook

Anonymous and Byock, Jesse L.
2012 The Saga of the Volsungs: The Norse Epic of Sigurd the Dragon Slayer (3rd revised edition). Translated
by J. L. Byock. Berkeley: University of California Press. ASIN: B00RWRTGDG.
This and other editions in-print (e.g., Penguin Classics 2nd edition).
PENULTIMATE (still being finalized for actual initial semester)

SYLLABUS:

PLEASE NOTE: The syllabus is subject to adjustment (the course is being designed & taught for the first time)

COURSE ITINERARY (being adapted from a syllabus provided by Dr. Douglas Bolender):

**WEEK-1: Who were the Vikings?**
Somerville and McDonald 2014, *The Viking Age* … 40. Viking raids on England (pp. 230-32)
41. Alcuin’s letter to King Athelred (pp. 232-34)

**WEEK-2: Viking Culture.**
Somerville and McDonald 2014, *The Viking Age* … 3. The Lay of Rig (pp. 18-28)
21. Unn the deep-minded takes control of her life (126-29)

**WEEK-3: Farm and Family.**
Somerville and McDonald 2014, *The Viking Age* … 6. How the Hersir Erling treated his slaves;
28a. The betrothal of Olaf Hoskuldsson (pp. 146-48)
29c. How Aud dealt with her humiliating divorce (155-57)
xx. Egil in youth and old age (pp. 362-69)

**WEEK-4: Kings and States.**
Somerville and McDonald 2014, *The Viking Age* … 4. Politics in Herald Finehair’s Norway (pp. 28-38);
94. Herald Finehair and the unification of Norway (434-39)
95. State-making in Denmark: the Jelling stone (pp.439-40)
97. Knut the Great and the North Sea empire (pp. 444-56)

**WEEK-5: The Heroic Ideal.**
*The Saga of the Volsungs* (all).
Somerville and McDonald 2014, *The Viking Age* … 26. Gudrun Osvifs daughter’s incitement of her sons 142-4
30. The accomplishments of a Viking warrior (pp. 160-62)
103. Advice from Odin (*Havamal*) (pp. 491-93)
WEEK-6: Religion, death and burial.
Somerville and McDonald 2014, *The Viking Age* …
8. The Norse creation myth (pp. 76-84)
9. Ragnarok (pp. 85-90)
10. A prophetess in Greenland (pp. 90-92)
13. Odin hangs on Yggdrasil (pp. 96-97)
16. The temple at Uppsala (pp. 102-3)
19a. An Arab description of a Viking funeral (pp. 106-10)
19d. The death of Baldr (pp. 111-13)
20. The living dead (pp. 114-24)

WEEK-7: Cultures in Contact: Vikings in the East and West.
Somerville and McDonald 2014, *The Viking Age* …
43. Viking raids on Ireland, 795-842 (pp. 235-240)
45. Irish resistance to the Norse men (pp. 242-45)
49. An account of the siege of Paris (pp. 267-69)
51. Viking activities in England, 851-900 (pp. 274-82)
55. Runic inscriptions from Maes Howe (pp. 293-94)
57. Rollo obtains Normandy from king of Franks (295-300)
58. The Piraeus Lion (pp. 302-303)
60. The Rus attack Constantinople (pp. 304-308)
62. A Muslim diplomat meets Viking merchants (316-18)
64. A Norwegian soldier of fortune in the East (pp. 321-25)

WEEK-8: BREAK.
No Class

WEEK-9: The Icelandic Sagas.
Readings: *Njal’s Saga*, chapters 1-34.

WEEK-10: Ships, Raiding, and Trade.
Readings: *Njal’s Saga*, chapters 35-90.
Somerville and McDonald 2014, *The Viking Age* …
37. Animal head on the prows of ships (pp. 201-2)
38b. Olaf Tryggvason and the Battle of Svold (204-14)
77. Advice for sailors and merchants (pp. 360-62)

WEEK-11: Reconciliation and Feud.
Readings: *Njal’s Saga*, chapters 91-159.
WEEK-12: Christian Conversion.
86. A poet abandons the old gods (pp. 408-9)
87. Christianization of Norway under Saint Olaf (409-16)

70. Icelandic accounts of the discovery and settlement of Iceland (pp. 336-42)
71. Skallagrim’s landtake in Iceland (pp. 343-46)
72. The settlement of Greenland (pp. 346-48)
75. The Norse discovery of Vinland (pp. 350-54)
76. Thorfinn Karlsefni in Vinland (pp. 355-57)

WEEK-14: Special lectures on the Vikings in Greenland, L’Anse aux Meadows & indigenous interactions
Readings: Pending.

WEEK-15: The End of the Viking Age.
101. The decline of the Earls of Orkney (pp. 479-84)

WEEK-16: Legacies of the Viking Age.
Readings: None.
ADDITIONAL, RECOMMENDED READINGS:

(a). *Articles/chapters:*

i. **Who were the Vikings:**
Hedeager, Lotte
2008  “Scandinavia before the Viking Age,” pp. 11-22 (chp. 1) in S. Brink and N. Price (eds.), *The Viking World.* London: Routledge. [Pdf via online search]

ii. **Viking culture:**
Brink, Stefan

iii. **Viking farm and family:**
Callow, Chris

Jochens, Jenny

Karras, Ruth Mazo

Østergård, Elise
See specific excerpts from this volume.

iv. **Viking kings and state:**
Thurston, T. L.
1997  “Historians, Prehistorians, and the tyranny of the historical record,” *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* vol. 4 nos.3/4: 239-263. [See JSTOR]

v. **The Viking heroic ideal:**
Jakobsson, Ármann

Meulengracht Sørensen,
Pdf copies available online ([https://openlibrary.org/](https://openlibrary.org/)).

vi. **Viking religion, burial and death:**
Haustrup, Kirsten
Pdf copies available online ([https://openlibrary.org/](https://openlibrary.org/)).

Jakobsson, Ármann
Lucas, Gavin and McGovern, Thomas
Pdf online via http://eja.sagepub.com/content/10/1/7.abstract

Price, Neil

Raudvere, Helena Catharina
2008 “Popular religion in the Viking Age,” pp. 235-243 (chp. 17) in S. Brink and N. Price (eds.), *The Viking World*. London: Routledge. Pdf via online search (e.g., google books)

### vii. Cultures in contact: Vikings in the East and West:

Holm, Paul

Metcalf, Michael

Barrett, James H.

Price, Neil

### viii. The Icelandic sagas:

Turner, Victor Witter

Jakobsson, Ármann

### ix. Ships, raiding and trade:

Bill, Jan

Miller, William I.

Sindbæk, Søren Michael
Skre, Dagfinn

x. Reconciliation and feud:
Byock, Jesse L.

xi. Christian conversion:
Byock, Jesse, et al.,
2003 “A Viking Age farm, church and cemetery at Hrisbru Mosfell Iceland,” Antiquity 77 (no. 297): -. Pdf online search (see JSTOR)
Jochens, Jenny
Bagge, Sverre
Vésteinsson, Orri

Goodacre, S., Helgason, A., et al.,
McGovern, Thomas; Vésteinsson, Orri; Fridriksson, Adolf; Church, Mike; Lawson, Ian; Simpson, Ian A.; Einarsson, Arni; et. al.,
Ross, Margaret Clunies
Jochens, Jenny
Sutherland, Patricia D.
Wallace, B. L.
xiii. **The End of the Viking Age:**
Diamond, Jared
**Note:** Critique of chapter 6 (pp. 178-210) “The Viking Prelude and Fugues,” chapter 7 (pp. 211-47) “Norse Greenland’s flowering,” and chapter 8 (pp. 248-76) “Norse Greenland’s end.” **Mixed reviews!**
Arneborg, Jette, Lynnerup, Niels, and Heinemeier, J.
Pdf: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254560368_Human_Diet_and_Subsistence_Patterns_in_Norse_Greenland_AD_C980-AD_c_1450_Archaeological_interpretations](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254560368_Human_Diet_and_Subsistence_Patterns_in_Norse_Greenland_AD_C980-AD_c_1450_Archaeological_interpretations)
Arneborg, Jette
Lynnerup, Niels
McGovern, Thomas H.
Ogilive et al,

**ESSAY GUIDANCE:**
**Selected bibliography: The Vikings in Scandinavia and Europe in general:**
Brink, Stefan and Price, Neil (eds.)
Brondsted, Johannes
Clarke, Helen and Ambrosiani, Bjorn
Graham-Campbell, James
Hadley, D. M. and Harkel, Letty Ten (eds.)
Jones, Gwyn
Rosedahl, Else et. al. (eds.)
Sigurðardóttir, Sigriður
2012 *Traditional Building Methods.* Translated by Anna Yates. Skaga fjörður Heritage Museum Booklet no. XVI. Glaumbaer: Skaga fjörður Heritage Museum. **Pdf/online**
Sigurðardóttir, Sigriður
2008 *Building with Turf.* Translated by Nancy Marie Brown. Skaga fjörður Heritage Museum Booklet no. X. Glaumbaer: Skaga fjörður Heritage Museum. **Pdf/online**


**Viking sagas:**


**Syntheses on the Vikings and their settlement in Iceland, Greenland (and related explorations):**

Carter, W. Hodding and Kaye, Russell

Davis, Graeme

Fitzhugh, William W. and Ward, Elisabeth I. (eds.)

Ingstad, Helge and Ingstad, Anne Stine

Ingstad, Anne Stine

Ingstad, Helge
1985b  *The Norse Discovery of America, Volume Two: The Historical Background and the Evidence of the Norse Settlement Discovered in Newfoundland*. Translated by Elizabeth S. Seeberg. Oslo: Norwegian University Press (via Oxford University Press).

Jones, Gwyn

Kay, Janet E.

Kilmer, Martin F. and Scott, Peter J.

Kunz, Keneva and Sigurðsson, Gisli

Lewis-Simpson, Shannon (ed.)

Maschner, Herbert, Mason, Owen K., and McGhee, Robert (eds.),

Reeves, A. M., Beamish, N. L., and Anderson, R. B.

Seaver, Kirsten A.

Short, William R.

Vinding, Niels

Wahlgren, Erik
1986  *The Vikings and America*. London: Thames and Hudson.
Wallace, Birgitta L.

**Selected documentaries on the Vikings:**

A&E Home Video

2006  *Ancient Mysteries: Vikings in America.* 50 min. New York: Arts & Entertainment Television Networks, LLC.

A&E Home Video


BBC


BHTV


History / A&E Home Video

2007  *The Vikings.* 47 min. New York: Arts & Entertainment Television Networks, LLC.

History / A&E Home Video

2000  *Vikings: Fury from the North.* 50 min. New York: Arts & Entertainment Television Networks, LLC.

IMAX

2006  *Vikings: Journey to New Worlds (IMAX).* 62 min. Toronto: Vista Point Entertainment.

PBS-NOVA

2000  *The Vikings (120 min).* Boston: WGBH Educational Foundation, PBS.

PBS-NOVA

2012  *Secrets of the Viking Sword.* 60 min. Boston: WGBH Educational Foundation, PBS.

**Contemporary Native North Americans in Newfoundland, Labrador, etc. (temp. Viking settlement).**

Bragdon, Kathleen J.


Coe, M., Snow, D., and Benson, E.


Fagan, Brian


Howley, James P.


Jennings, Jesse D. (ed.)


Mannion, John J. (ed.)


Marshall, Ingeborg


Marshall, Ingeborg

Pauketat, Timothy (ed.),

Quinn, David B.

Seaver, Kirsten A.

Speck, Frank G.

Such, Peter

Sutherland, Patricia D.

Tuck, James A.

Webb, Jeff A. (ed.)