History 313: The Viking Age

Course Information:
History 313, Spring 2020 (CRN: 10761). Time: MWF 10:00-10:50. Room: MHRA 2209

Professor's Information:
Dr. Richard Barton. Office: 2115 MHRA Bldg. Office Phone: 336-334-3998. Mailbox: 2118A MHRA Bldg. Email: rebarton@uncg.edu

Office Hours: Mondays 11-12, Wednesdays 11-12 and by appointment

Course Description
At the end of the 8th century CE, Scandinavian peoples erupted onto the historical stage in what has become known as the Viking diaspora. For the next several centuries, Scandinavian people interacted with settled cultures in Francia, Britain, the Baltic, and Eastern Europe through trade, raiding, and settlement. This course provides an examination of the Viking Age through a close examination of sources – both written and material – produced during this period. It first explores the nature of pre-migration Scandinavian life and culture, looking particularly at social structures, gender norms, religion and magic. It then moves to examine the dialectical relationship with Scandinavian peoples and the more ‘settled’ people of continental Europe; themes include the conversion of Scandinavia to Christianity, Vikings voyages of discovery and settlement, and the heavy impact of Viking raids in Francia, Britain, and Eastern Europe.
General Education Historical Perspectives Student Learning Outcomes:
1. Use a historical approach to analyze and contextualize primary and secondary sources representing divergent perspectives.
2. Use evidence to interpret the past coherently, orally and/or in writing.

General Education Global Perspectives Student Learning Outcomes:
1. Find, interpret, and evaluate information on diverse cultures.
2. Describe interconnections among regions of the world. (Must include substantial focus on at least one culture, nation, or sub-nationality beyond Great Britain and North America).
3. Use diverse cultural frames of reference and alternative perspectives to analyze issues.

Course- and Department-Specific Student Learning Objectives
1. Analyze historical duration, succession, and change in terms of human agency and larger systems or structures in a wide variety of places and periods.
2. Use historical thinking to contextualize and analyze primary and secondary sources representing different points of view.
3. Locate and Evaluate appropriate scholarly materials to our subject matter.
4. Use evidence-based reasoning to interpret the past coherently while developing and presenting an original written argument
5. Recognize and explain the causes, events and impact of the Viking diaspora circa 750-1050 CE

Teaching Strategies
This is a lecture course, albeit one in which students are expected to participate with questions, comments, and occasional brief discussions. Written work focuses on the interpretation of primary sources, the evaluation of secondary sources, and the completion of a short research project.

Required Texts:

Course Requirements

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<tr>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>boost to grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Prompts, Quizzes, and Short Assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Project</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm: in-class, plus take-home essay</td>
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<td>Final exam: in class, plus take-home essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Modern Moment</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Explanation of Assignments

1. Participation (Course/Department SLOs 2, 5; GHP SLO 2; GL SLOs 1, 2, 3)
   Students who regularly ask questions, respond to my questions, and generally show their engagement with the class will receive a boost to their final grade average.

2. Discussion Prompts, Quizzes and Short Assignments (Course/Dept. SLOs 2, 4, 5; GHP SLOs 1, 2; GL SLOs 2, 3)
   Beginning in week 3, I will ask you to complete at least one short assignment per week. Some weeks this may be a 10-question canvas quiz (for the entire class). Other weeks, I'll divide the class into thirds and each day 1/3 of the class will post a quotation from the reading and 2 interpretive questions about it at least two hours before class starts. On other occasions I may ask for other short assignments.

3. Midterm Exam (Course/Department SLOs 1, 2, 4, 5; GHP SLOs 1, 2; GL SLOs 1, 2, 3)
   The midterm will have two parts, an in-class portion and a take-home portion. For the in-class portion, students will write responses to 3-4 short questions based on the primary sources and secondary sources we have read to that point. For the take-home portion, students will write a 3-page essay in response to one of several synthesis questions that I provide. These synthesis questions will focus around comparison and change over time.

4. Final Exam (Course/Department SLOs 1, 2, 4, 5; GHP SLOs 1, 2; GL SLOs 1, 2, 3)
   The format of the final is identical to the midterm and will cover only the material since the midterm.

5. Research Project
   In the second half of the semester, students will choose one topic from the syllabus (each class meeting has a topic; you should choose one that interests you) and conduct additional research into that subject. The project requires you to find some scholarly literature about your topic and to produce a final product, either a paper of 6-8 pages, or a piece of art, a short work of music, some viking-style literature, some representative food, or a physical object. Those who choose the non-paper option will need to have their project approved by me at least 2 weeks before it is due.
   a. Initial Topic and Justification
   b. Annotated Bibliography (Course/Department SLOs 3; GL SLOs 1)
      Students must assemble a bibliography of primary and secondary sources concerning their subject. Sources cannot be those assigned for the class and must be reputable and scholarly. Depending on the topic, I expect 1-3 primary sources and 3-5 secondary sources. Guidelines on how to present the bibliography and its annotations will be presented in class.
   c. Research Project (Course/Department SLOs 2, 3, 4; GHP SLOs 1, 2; GL SLOs 1)
      As noted above, you will produce EITHER a 6-8 research paper that poses a specific question about your subject and answers it using the sources you gathered for your bibliography, OR a project of an alternate source. In the case of the latter, you must still produce a 1-2 page paper in which you outline how your bibliography items helped you produce the project.

6. Modern Moment (Course/Department SLOs 4, 5; GHP SLO 2)
   From a list of sources that I provide (to be supplemented by student suggestions, provided I approve), students will evaluate one piece of modern popular culture concerning the Vikings (film, TV, manga, novel, comic strip, etc.). This analysis should focus on the representation of Vikings and incorporate insight from the primary and secondary sources read during the semester.
Grading Scale:

100-97% = A+
96-93  = A
92-90  = A-
89-87  = B+
86-83  = B
82-80  = B-
79-77  = C+
76-73  = C
70-72  = C-
69-67  = D+
66-63  = D
60-62  = D-

59 or lower = F

Attendance Policy
Attendance is mandatory. You are allowed to miss 3 classes without explanation; I will not, however post lectures or otherwise tell you what you missed when you were absent. For every absence after the first three, I will deduct 1 point from your final cumulative course grade.

Academic Honor Code
Each student is required to sign the Academic Integrity Policy on all major work submitted for the course. Refer to this address on the UNCG website for more details: http://studentconduct.uncg.edu/policy/academicintegrity/complete/.

Additional Requirements and Advice
1. In case later consultation should prove necessary, students are asked to keep copies of all graded assignments until at least the end of the semester.
2. All course requirements must be completed to receive a grade for the class.
3. Late work will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade (ie., A to A-) per day it is late unless previous arrangements have been made with the instructor.
4. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense that occurs when someone - whether knowingly or not - uses the words or ideas of someone else without giving that person credit for those words or ideas with a formal citation. I therefore expect that all work will be your own. Should I find evidence to the contrary, I will consider any and/or all of the punitive sanctions made available to me by the university. When in doubt, cite your source. If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me in private - I'm happy to discuss it.
SEQUENCE OF CLASSES:

Notes on Readings:
1. When to Read: You are expected to do the readings in full before the class for which they are assigned.
2. How to Read: I recognize full well that medieval texts can sometimes seem dense and unforgiving. Don’t despair! Our collective mission is to force them, through discussion and analysis, to reveal their secrets. I don’t expect you to be masters of a topic after doing the reading, especially if it is hard. I do expect, however, you to think carefully both about the surface meaning of the medieval author’s text (what he or she said) and about the significance or value that each text may hold for modern readers. In the case of works by modern authors, you should attempt to understand the author’s main argument (that is, of what is the author trying to convince you? What does s/he want you to believe? Why?) and to spend some time evaluating it (does the author succeed? Why or why not? Do you buy it? Why or why not? Does the author present enough - and convincing enough - evidence to persuade you?).

Date/Topic   Readings   Assignments

Week 1: Introduction
1. January 13:
   Course Intro
2. January 15: 1. Stefan Brink, “Who were the Vikings?”, in Brink and Price, eds., p. 4-7
   Definitions, Geography, and Sources for the Viking Age 2. Fitzhugh and Ward, 11-17, 31-34
   5. Somerville, 6-15
   Popular (Mis-)Conceptions 2. Watch: Vinland Saga, Ch. 1 (manga):
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gHG__1uQj5k
   3. Watch: the Saga of Bjorn (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MV5w262XvCU)
   4. FYI: the Vikings (History Channel), TV Series, 2013-
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_BpxwBgGyQ0

Week 2: Northern Europe Before the Viking Age
4. January 20: MLK Jr. DAY
NO CLASS
5. January 22: No readings! (It’s a miracle!) France, Britain, Ireland and the North Sea before the Vikings

6. January 24: Scandinavia Before the Viking Age
   1. Lotte Hedeager, “Scandinavia Before the Viking Age,” in Brink and Price, eds., p. 11-22
   2. Fitzhugh and Ward, 27-30, 34-41

Week 3: Life in Scandinavia

7. January 27: the Farm
   1. Fitzhugh and Ward, 42-54

   2. Somerville, 17-28, 38-42, 337-342

   4. Somerville, 120-121

Week 4: Gender and Magic

10. February 3: Gender Roles
    2. Somerville, 85-90, 91-93, 96-111

11. February 5: Marriage, Divorce, and Sexuality
    Somerville, 111-120, 125-153

12. February 7: Sorcery and Magic
    1. Neil Price, “Sorcery and Circumpolar Traditions in Old Norse Beliefs,” in Brink and Price, 244-248
    2. Fitzhugh and Ward, 70-71
    3. Canvas: : Njal’s Saga, tr. Magnusson and Pálsson, chaps.10-14 (p. 57-68)
    4. Somerville, 121-125
Week 5: Norse Religion?

13. February 10:  
Pagan Rituals and Beliefs  
1. Fitzhugh and Ward, 55-60  

14. February 12:  
“the Norse Pantheon” and its Creation  

15. February 14:  
Popular Religion  
2. Somerville, 69-84  

Week 6: Power Structures  

16. February 17:  
Warriors and their Weapons  
1. Anne Pedersen, “Viking Weaponry,” in Brink and Price, eds., 204-211  
2. Somerville, 155-166, 173-186, 349-356, and 509 (verses 1 and 38)  

17. February 19:  
Jarls, Chiefs, and Kings  
1. Fitzhugh and Ward, 72-85  
2. Canvas: Elise Roesdahl, *The Vikings*, 64-77  

18. February 21:  
Plunder: Raiders or Traders, or both?  
1. Fitzhugh and Ward, 99-102  
2. Gareth Williams, “Raiding and Warfare,” in Brink and Price, eds., 193-204  
3. Somerville, 334-337  

Week 7: Conversion  

22. February 24:  
Conversion, pt 1  
1. Skim: Fitzhugh and Ward, 60-71, mostly for images  
2. Stefan Brink, “Christianisation and the Emergence of the Early Church in Scandinavia,” in Brink and Price, eds., p. 621-628  
4. Somerville, 367-398  

23. February 26:  
Conversion, pt 2  
1. Somerville, 398-417  
2. Canvas: *Njál’s Saga*, tr. Magnusson and Pálsson, chaps. 100-105 (p. 216-226)  

February 28  
MIDTERM EXAM  

DUE: Research Topic: Initial Topic and Justification  

DUE: Midterm in-class and take-home
March 2, March 4, March 6: **NO CLASS**

**Week 8: Ships, Trade and Plunder**

19. March 9: Viking Ships
   1. Fitzhugh and Ward, 86-97
   3. Somerville, 187-201

20. March 11: Trading Communities and Towns
   1. Søren Michael Sindbæk, “Local and Long-Distance Exchange,” in Brink and Price, eds., 150-158
   2. Svein H. Gullbekk, “Coinage and Monetary Economies,” in Brink and Price, eds., 159-169
   4. Somerville, 332-334

   4. Somerville, 419-429

**Week 9: Early Viking Raids in Britain**

25. March 16: Early Raids and Settlement
   1. Fitzhugh and Ward, 127-141
   5. Somerville, 203-211

26. March 18: Alfred Strikes Back
   1. Somerville, 245-256

27. March 20: Vikings in Ireland and Scotland
   1. Fitzhugh and Ward, 143-145, 146-153, 154-163
   4. Somerville, 211-224, 256-268

**DUE: Research Project:**

**Annotated Bibliography**

**Quiz (Canvas)**
Week 10: Vikings and Iceland
28. March 30: The Settlement of Iceland
1. Fitzhugh and Ward, 164-174
4. Somerville, 305-319

29. April 1: Icelandic Law and Society
1. Fitzhugh and Ward, 175-185
2. Canvas: excerpts from Gragas
3. Canvas: Njal’s Saga, tr. Magnusson and Pálsson, chaps. 138-145 (pp. 290-323)

30. April 3: Feuding
1. Canvas: Njal’s Saga, tr. Magnusson and Pálsson, chaps. 35-40 (pp. 97-108)
2. Somerville, 356-365 (burning of Njal)
4. Begin reading Egil’s Saga, intro and p. 1-50

Week 11: Case Study: Icelandic Saga
31. April 6: Egil’s Saga, part I
1. Optional: Fitzhugh and Ward, 186-187
2. Egil’s Saga, pp. 51-100

32. April 8: Egil’s Saga, part II
1. Egil’s saga, pp. 101-150

33: April 10: Egil’s Saga, Part III
1. Egil’s Saga, pp. 151-205

Week 12: Vikings and Franks
34. April 6: the Viking Raids
1. Fitzhugh and Price, 116-126
3. Somerville, 224-240

35. April 8: The Siege of Paris and the Settlement of Normandy
1. Somerville, 240-242
3. Somerville, 268-274

36. April 10: NO CLASS SPRING HOLIDAY
### Week 13: Greenland and Vinland

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Pages/References</th>
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<tr>
<td>37. April 13</td>
<td>Greenland</td>
<td>1. Fitzhugh and Ward, 17-25, 189-192, also 193-207? Also 304-317</td>
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<td>4. Somerville, 319-322</td>
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<td>38. April 15</td>
<td>Vikings and North America</td>
<td>1. Fitzhugh and Ward, 208-231, 238-247</td>
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<td>3. Somerville, 322-330</td>
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<td>Settlement</td>
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<td>DUE: Research Project: Final Project</td>
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### Week 14: the Rus and the East

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40. April 20</td>
<td>Vikings in East</td>
<td>1. Fitzhugh and Ward, 103-115</td>
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<td>3. Somerville 275-282</td>
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<td>Constantinople</td>
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<td>2. Somerville, 282-304</td>
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<td>42. April 24</td>
<td>The End of the Viking Age?</td>
<td>1. Somerville, 451-470</td>
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<td>Group 1</td>
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<td>DUE: Modern Moment</td>
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### Week 15: Impact and Representation

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<tr>
<td>43. April 27</td>
<td>Impact of the Vikings</td>
<td>1. Fitzhugh and Ward, 374-400</td>
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<td>DUE: Modern Moment</td>
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<td>44. April 29</td>
<td>Remembering the Vikings</td>
<td>1. 2. Somerville, 480-488, 498-507</td>
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May 4 (Monday) **Final Exam** (in-class and take-home)