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MIDWESTERN
STATE UNIVERSITY

Age of the Vikings

Course Number: HIST 4555/5555 **Course Dates:** Spring 2021 **Credit Hours:** 3

Professor: Dr. Tiffany A. Ziegler

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Office Hours/Hours of Availability

Monday 2:00 – 4:00 pm; Tuesday 3:20 – 4:00 pm; Wednesday 11:00 – 2:00 pm; Thursday 3:20 – 4:00 pm (except when FS meets); by appointment.

Course Description

This course examines the Scandinavian peoples of Europe in the central Middle Ages. Although traditional medieval history courses consider the Viking, Magyar, and Muslim invasions of the eighth and ninth centuries (beginning c. 750 CE), conventional courses tend to overlook the Scandinavian countries themselves and their culture. Thus, in this course we will examine Scandinavian origins in addition to their political, religious, and cultural backgrounds. This will require a look at the history of Scandinavia long before and after the traditional period of invasions. We will, then, consider Scandinavian pre-history, Scandinavian history before the Age of Expansion, and Scandinavian history up to c. 1200. The greatest percentage of the readings, however, will focus on the period of Scandinavian expansion and invasion. Finally, we will consider the conversion of the Scandinavian peoples to Christianity and the assimilation of these peoples into the political order of Europe during the later medieval period. For this course we will rely on primary source documents, archaeology, literary studies, and insights from other fields of research.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Asser. *The Life of King Alfred*. London: Penguin Group, 1983.

ISBN-10: 9780140444094

ISBN-13: 978-0140444094

Egil's Saga. Translated by Bernard Scudder. Penguin, 2005.

ISBN-10: 0140447709

ISBN-13: 978-0140447705

Logan, F. Donald. *The Vikings in History*. Third Edition. Routledge, 1991.

ISBN-10: 0415327563

ISBN-13: 978-0415327565

Rosedahl, Else. *The Vikings*. Second Edition. Penguin, 1999.

ISBN-10: 0140252827

ISBN-13: 978-0140252828

Sturlson, Snorri, *The Prose Edda: Norse Mythology*. Penguin, 2006.

ISBN-10: 9780140447552
ISBN-13: 978-0140447552

Other readings including primary sources, chapters, articles, and RTTP game posted on D2L.

You have three types of readings for this course. Logan and Rosedahl are the 'textbooks'. There are two since one focuses more on expansion and one more on the cultural history of the Scandinavian people. One is, as you will find, also devoid of maps, which are a must when studying Viking history. The second type of reading includes the 'primary sources' of Asser, Sturlson, and Egil. These are great and complete with murder, mayhem, and more! Finally, you have the Reacting to the Past student guide (provided to you on D2L). More about this later.

Study Hours and Tutoring Assistance

ASC offers a schedule of selected subjects tutoring assistance. Please contact the ASC, (940) 397-4684, or visit the [ASC homepage](#) for more information.

College Policies and Procedures

Refer to [College Policies and Procedures Manual](#).

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

Support Services

In coordination with the Disability Support Service, reasonable accommodations will be provided for qualified students with disabilities (LD, Orthopedic, Hearing, Visual, Speech, Psychological, ADD/ADHD, Health Related & Other). Please meet with the instructor during the first week of class to make arrangements.

Nondiscrimination Statement

Midwestern State University does not discriminate on the basis of sex, religion, creed, national origin, race, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. If you believe you have been discriminated against unlawfully, please bring this matter to the attention of your professor or to the Human Resource Office.

Grading

Please refer to the following for the percentage each assignment is worth:

Course Grade	Letter Grade Scale
Attendance and Participation (10%)	90-100 = A
Exam One (15%)	80-89 = B
Exam Two (15%)	70-79 = C
Final Essay Exam (15%)	60-69 = D
Paper One (15%)	0-59 = F
Paper Two (15%)	
RTTP (15%)	

Attendance and Participation

This is a discussion-based course; to succeed you need to be present and you need to participate. Come prepared to talk about the readings, engage in class discussion, and participate in in-class activities. You may also be asked to complete in-class (or out of class) informal writings as part of your participation. I will notify you in class of these and when they are due.

Attendance is mandatory for this course. If you miss two or more times you will receive a zero for attendance and participation. If you must miss and know about the absence ahead of time, please inform me. If you know you will be absent on a day an assignment is due, you must turn it in ahead of time. I do not accept late work.

COVID-19 Policies

We are currently dealing with an unprecedented pandemic, COVID-19, which complicates life on a college campus. Class may be interrupted due to outbreaks and quarantines, and it is possible that the instructor or a student may contract the virus. If the instructor contracts the virus, you will be notified and due dates and office hours will be modified. If you contract the virus, please notify the instructor for accommodations. Please self-report on the MSU website. **If you visit the instructor during office hours, you must wear a mask.**

Paper Help

I am more than happy to help you with your papers, but do not simply send me a copy of your paper and expect me to 'fix' it. Please include specific questions. In addition, the campus writing center provides free help to any enrolled student: Tutoring is available Monday through Thursday from 9am to 4pm; you can also find a tutor at the satellite location in Moffett Library Honors Lounge, Sunday and Thursday from 6pm to 9pm. Writing tutors will not edit your papers for you, but they will provide support and feedback at every stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to drafting, revising to proofreading.

Extra Credit

No extra credit assignments will be accepted.

Midterm Progress Report

In order to help students keep track of their progress toward course objectives, the instructor for this class will provide a Midterm Progress Report through each student's WebWorld account. All students will receive this midterm progress report. Midterm grades will not be reported on the students' transcript, nor will they be calculated in the cumulative GPA. They simply give students an idea of where they stand at the midpoint of

the semester. Students earning below a C at the midway point should schedule a meeting with the instructor.

Important Date

Last Day to drop with a grade of “W” is 23 April 2021. It is the student’s responsibility to visit with their academic advisor prior to withdrawing from a class. Students must come to the Dean of Students office located in the Clark Student Center, room 104, to fill out a withdrawal slip.

Computer Requirements

This class uses D2L. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. **Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!** If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

The following includes the minimum software and hardware recommendations:

PC Desktops and laptops Minimum Specification

- Intel Core (i3, i5, i7) processors; 4th generation or newer
- 4 GB of RAM, 8 GB of RAM is highly recommended
- 256 GB SSD Storage
- Dual Band spectrum (2.4 GHz and 5 GHz) with 802.11ac or 802.11n
- Use Windows' Operating System and PC Info to find your hardware information

Mac desktops and laptops Minimum Specifications

- Intel Core (i3, i5, i7) processors; 4th generation or newer
- 4 GB of RAM, 8 GB of RAM is highly recommended
- 256 GB SSD Storage
- Dual Band spectrum (2.4 GHz and 5 GHz) with 802.11ac or 802.11n
- Use Apple's About this Mac feature to find your hardware information

Chromebooks are not recommended, as they will not work with D2L.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first twelve class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the ***Schedule of Classes*** each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [undergraduate catalog](#), Volume LXXVIII, number 1 (2010 – 2012), pp. 75 – 77.

Notice

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the professor.

COURSE SCHEDULE	
<i>Dates</i>	<i>Activities, Assignments, Due Dates</i>
Week 1 11 January	Background to the Study of the Vikings We'll discuss geographical considerations and general European history from the end of the Roman era to the beginning of the Viking Age. TOPICS: Course Introduction, Climate and Geography The European Context: Rome to the Carolingians READING: Roesdahl, 3-5; 23-29. Begin reading <i>Egil's Saga</i> . <i>Start looking at maps. There will be a map quiz on the first exam!</i>
Week 2 18 January	The Northern Peoples to 800 CE We'll look at what is known and guessed about the Scandinavian peoples in particular from their cultural origins to the age of migration. We'll pay close attention to methodological problems, including the ambiguity of archaeology, the problem of determining the reliability of texts, and what biases are inherent when outsiders discuss the Scandinavian peoples. TOPICS: Written Sources from Outside Scandinavia Written Sources from Scandinavia (including Runes) Archaeology/Material Culture READING: Roesdahl: pp. 46-51; 168-184. Start the <i>Edda</i> : Intro, Prologue, and <i>Gylfaginning</i> . Continue reading <i>Egil's Saga</i> .
Week 3 25 January	The Structure of Scandinavian Society We will be examining kings, jarls, karls, and slaves (thralls). We will look at how these groups interacted, and we will look at their roles in Scandinavian law and economics. We will also be asking how Scandinavian kingship relates to medieval kingship and how it differs.

	<p>TOPICS: Kings and Jarls <i>Hirds, Things, and Althings</i> Considered The Scandinavian Household: Women?</p> <p>READING: Roesdahl, pp. 30-73. <i>Edda</i>, Intro, Prologue, and <i>Gylfaginning</i>. Continue reading <i>Egil's Saga</i>.</p>
<p>Week 4 1 February</p>	<p>Scandinavian Religious Systems This week we will look at and discuss various topics related to religion (native and Christian).</p> <p>Scandinavian Cosmology The Aesir, Vanir and Ragnarok The Problem of Christianization</p> <p>READING: Roesdahl, pp. 147-167. Read <i>Skaldskaparmal</i> and as much of the rest of <i>Edda</i> as you are interested in. Finish reading <i>Egil's Saga</i>.</p>
<p>Week 5 8 February</p>	<p>Scandinavian Culture We will look at various topics including the structure of the family and kinship groups, warfare, economic activities, literature, and artistic accomplishments.</p> <p>TOPICS: Trade Goods, Travel, and Boats Scandinavian Art and Architecture Warfare, Weapons, and Feud</p> <p>READING: Roesdahl, 78-146; 168-184.</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT DUE: The first paper will be due 10 February</p>
<p>Week 6 15 February</p>	<p>Scandinavian Political Systems This week we will begin to work together in class to develop ideas and proposals for your major projects. At the same time, I will give some lectures based on the political history of the three mainland Scandinavian countries in the Second Viking Age.</p> <p>TOPICS: The Political History of Norway The Political History of Denmark The Political History of Sweden Political Exile Expansion into Iceland</p> <p>READING: Roesdahl, pp. 73-77.</p> <p>EXAM ONE</p>

<p>Week 7 22 February</p>	<p>The Vikings in Britain We will look at the impact of the first Viking raids and settlements, primarily in England and Ireland, but touching also on Scotland and Wales. Our focus will be political, military, and economic, but cultural transmission and other ideas will also be explored.</p> <p>TOPICS: Outside Perceptions of Scandinavian Expansion The Vikings in Ireland The First Viking Raids in England and the Unification of England under King Alfred</p> <p>READING: Roesdahl, pp. 185-194; 210-261. Logan, pp. 1-42 and 121-153. Asser, all.</p>
<p>Week 8 1 March</p>	<p>The Vikings in France This week will finish the Viking invasions in England, which segue into the invasions in France. We will look at how invasions in both areas are related, and what impact both sets had on the peoples and areas attacked.</p> <p>TOPICS: Finish Vikings in England The Frankish Kingdoms and the Vikings from Charlemagne to Charles the Bald The Settlement of Normandy The Norman Expansion into England</p> <p>READING: Roesdahl, pp. 195-209. Logan, pp. 97-120, 153-160.</p>
<p>Week 9 8 March</p>	<p>The Settlement of Iceland This week, we'll look intensely at what is known of one of the first mass movements of the Scandinavian people, the settlement of Iceland.</p> <p>TOPICS: The Settlement of Iceland Icelandic Society Progress reports on projects</p> <p>READING: Roesdahl, pp. 262-276; Logan, 43-55.</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT DUE: Paper Two due 10 March</p>
<p>Week 10 15 March</p>	<p>Greenland and the Americas</p>

	<p>This week we look at the settlement of Greenland and the question of the Vikings in North America.</p> <p>TOPICS: The Settlement of Greenland The Fate of the Greenland Settlement The Scandinavians Discover America</p> <p>READING: Logan, 55-96</p>
<p>Week 11 22 March</p>	<p>The Swedish Expansion Eastward</p> <p>We head east to the Baltic, Russia, and Byzantium. This will set us up for next week's author, Ib'n Fadlan!</p> <p>TOPICS: Trade Routes in the Baltic The Problem of the Rus The Rus and Byzantium</p> <p>We will look at the impact of the Viking raids and settlements in Russia, the Baltic area, Byzantium, and beyond. Our focus will be political and economic, but cultural transmission and other ideas will also be explored.</p> <p>READ: Rest of Logan; Rest of Roesdahl</p> <p>RTTP: Prep 1</p>
<p>Week 12 29 March</p>	<p>The Vikings and the Muslims</p> <p>We will be reading and discussing Ib'n Fadlan's reports, which will help us in our exploration of the Vikings and their interactions with the Muslims. Then, we will turn to conquests and expeditions in Spain, Italy, and the surrounding areas of the Mediterranean. Like in France and England, we consider Viking imports and their role in settlement and acculturation.</p> <p>TOPICS: The Writings of Ib'n Fadlan The Vikings and the Muslims The Vikings in the Western Mediterranean The Normans in Italy</p> <p>EXAM TWO</p>
<p>Week 13 5 April</p>	<p>RTTP</p> <p>Monday: Prep 2</p> <p>Wednesday: Game day 1</p>

Week 14 12 April	RTTP Monday: Game day 2 Wednesday: Game day 3
Week 15 19 April	RTTP Monday: Game day 4 Wednesday: Postmortem
Finals Week	Final Essay Exam Due

