



Course Syllabus: Age of the Vikings
Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences
History 5555 Addendum
Fall 2024 Tuesday/Thursday 9:30-10:50 PY 202

Contact Information

Instructor: Tiffany A. Ziegler, PhD
Office: O'Donohoe 214 and Ferguson 214
Office hours: By appointment
Office Phone: (940) 397-4151
E-mail: tiffany.ziegler@msutexas.edu

Instructor Response Policy

The best way to contact me is via e-mail. I will respond to e-mails on business days within 24 hours. E-mails sent after hours will be responded to on the next business day (this means Friday e-mails sent after 5:00 pm will receive a response on Monday).

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.

Textbooks & Instructional Materials

Asser. *The Life of King Alfred*. Translated by Simon Keyes. London: Penguin Group, 1983. ISBN: 9780140444094

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

9780140447705

Jarman, Cat. *River Kings: A New History of the Vikings from Scandinavia to the Silk Roads*. New York: Pegasus Books, 2022. ISBN: 9781639365425

Sturlson, Snorri. *The Prose Edda: Norse Mythology*. London: Penguin, 2006. ISBN: 9780140447552

Winroth, Anders. *The Age of the Vikings*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014. ISBN: 9780691169293

Other readings including primary sources, chapters, articles, and the Reacting to the Past (RTTP) game posted on D2L. Graduate students will be responsible for two additional readings: One secondary source over a topic of their choice and one saga.

Note: You have three types of readings for this course. Jarman and Winroth are the 'textbooks'. There are two since one focuses more on expansion (Jarman) and one more on the cultural history of the Scandinavian people (Winroth). 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

Located in Moffett Library, the Office of Tutoring and Academic Support Programs (TASP) offers a variety of resources designed to help students meet the demands of the college classroom, including both on campus and distance education tutoring. For more information go [here](#).

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

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 to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct. [Office of Student Conduct](#)

Furthermore, writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are all part of the learning outcomes of this course, and thus all assignments should be prepared by the student. AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism.

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Grading

Course Grade - The grade for this course will be based attendance and participation, two papers, two take-home exams, and the RTTP final.

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Points
Attendance and Participation	150
Review One	150
Primary Source Analysis	150
Exam One	150
Exam Two	150
RTTP: Final	250
Total Points	1000

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	900
B	800 to 899
C	700 to 799
D	600 to 699
F	Less than 600

Assignments

All assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class time on the day due. All assignments should be submitted electronically on D2L.

Quizzes

I will not give quizzes as long as there is regular class participation.

Exams

There are two 'take-home exams' in the class over the first and second half of material covered. Each is worth 150 points, or 15% of the grade. More detailed information will be provided later.

Final Project

Graduate students will participate in an interactive final: Vikings Raid Iona. After surveying all content, we will immerse ourselves in the Age of the Vikings where students will compete on 'factions'. The project is worth 250 points, or 25% of the grade. More detailed information will be provided later.

Papers

Graduate students will write two reviews, one over a secondary source (topic of the student's choice) and one over a saga (primary source analysis). Each is worth 150 points, or 15% of the grade. The assignments are provided at the end of this syllabus.

Extra Credit

No extra credit assignments are provided.

Late Work

Late work is not permitted.

Make-up Work/Tests

All assignments are due the to D2L on the due date indicated. This includes 'take-home exams'. Because you will know of all assignments before hand, and because tests are take-home, there will be no make-up work or tests. Please plan accordingly; get your assignment in before you know you will miss. If you are ill, let me know and I will work with you on when/how to submit.

Important Dates

Last day for term schedule changes: 29 August 2024

Deadline to file for graduation: 23 September 2024

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" 25 November 2024

Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Attendance

I am assuming that you are an adult and that you can make your own decisions about coming to class. This is, however, an upper-division history course in which most information will be conveyed in person and in class. Your attendance grade is worth 150 points, or 15% of your grade. You will be given one unexcused absence; the total points allocated for attendance will drop by ten points for every additional time missed. You will also be counted as absent if you show up more than fifteen minutes late for class without an appropriate excuse or if you are consistently unprepared for class, fail to pay attention during class, and/or fail to participate in class discussion.

INCLEMENT WEATHER STATEMENT: If the university closes due to weather during our assigned class time, we will not meet. Assignments/meetings will be shifted accordingly.

Computer Requirements

While this is not an online class, we do rely rather extensively on D2L, which requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. ****Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered a reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.*** 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!!*** There are many places to access your class! Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world that is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. 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](#).

Instructor Class Policies

Please refrain from behavior disruptive to the conduct of class, including but not limited to arriving late, leaving early, making trips to the vending machines, talking with other students, and viewing videos on TikTok. Do not bring work unrelated to class. Do not watch soccer (or other games) in class. Think carefully about how you are spending your tuition money. If you sleep in class and if you snore, people are likely to laugh at you.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 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) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make an application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibit the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state, and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still

requires a License-to-carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by the MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled "Run. Hide. Fight." which may be electronically accessed via the University police department's webpage: ["Run. Hide. Fight."](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule:

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 1 8/26-8/30	<p>Background to the Study of the Vikings</p> <p>After getting to know each other, we will discuss myths and misconceptions. Then, we'll discuss geographical considerations and general European history from the end of the Roman era to the beginning of the Viking Age.</p> <p>TOPICS: Course Introduction; Climate and Geography; The European Context: Rome to the Carolingians</p>	<p>READINGS:</p> <p>Winroth, Chapter 1, "The Fury of the Northmen;" Chapter 5, "Coins, Silk, and Herring"</p> <p>Begin reading <i>Egil's Saga</i></p>

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
<p>Week 2 9/3-9/5</p> <p>University Closed 9/2 in observance of Labor Day</p>	<p>The Northern Peoples to 800 CE</p> <p>We'll look at what is known (and guessed) about the Scandinavian peoples 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.</p> <p>TOPICS: Written Sources from Outside Scandinavia; Written Sources from Scandinavia (including Runes); Archaeology/Material Culture</p>	<p>READINGS:</p> <p>Winroth, Chapter 9, "Arts and Letters;" Chapter 2, "Violence in a Violent Time"</p> <p>Start the <i>Edda</i>: Intro, Prologue, and <i>Gylfaginning</i>.</p> <p>Continue reading <i>Egil's Saga</i>.</p>
<p>Week 3 9/9-9/13</p>	<p>The Structure of Scandinavian Society</p> <p>We will be examining kings, jarls, karls, and slaves (thralls). We will look at how these groups interacted, and we will consider their roles in Scandinavian law and economics. We will also be asking how Scandinavian kingship relates to medieval kingship and how it differs.</p> <p>TOPICS: Kings and Jarls; <i>Hirds, Things, and Althings</i> Considered; The Scandinavian Household: Women?</p>	<p>READING: Winroth, Chapter 6, "From Chieftans to Kings;" Chapter 7, "At Home on the Farm"</p> <p>Jarman, "Chapter 5, "Valkyrie: River Queens?"</p> <p><i>The Lay of Rig</i> (D2L)</p> <p><i>Edda</i>, Intro, Prologue, and <i>Gylfaginning</i>.</p> <p>Finish reading <i>Egil's Saga</i></p>

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
<p>Week 4 9/16-9/20</p>	<p>Scandinavian Religious Systems</p> <p>This week we will examine and discuss various topics related to religion (native and Christian).</p> <p>TOPICS: Scandinavian Cosmology; The Aesir, Vanir, and Ragnarok; The Problem of Christianization</p>	<p>READING: Winroth, Chapter 8, "The Religions of the North"</p> <p><i>Skaldskaparmal</i> and as much of the rest of <i>Edda</i> as you are interested in.</p> <p>Paper One Due 9/16</p>
<p>Week 5 9/23-9/27</p>	<p>Scandinavian Culture</p> <p>We will continue our earlier discussions on kinship and turn to 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:</p> <p>Winroth, Chapter 4, "Ships, Boats, and Ferries to the Afterworld"</p> <p>Jarman, Chapter 4, "Buddha: The Allure of the Exotic"</p>
<p>Week 6 9/30-10/4</p>	<p>Scandinavian Political Systems</p> <p>This week, I will give some lectures based on the political history of the three mainland Scandinavian countries before we turn to expansion.</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: Review Winroth, Chapter 6, "From Chieftans to Kings"</p> <p>Exam One</p>

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
<p>Week 7 10/7-10/11</p>	<p>The Vikings in Britain</p> <p>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:</p> <p>Winroth, Chapter 3, "Röriks at Home and Away;" Review Chapter 2, "Violence in a Violent Time"</p> <p>Jarman, Chapter 1, "Hammer of Thor: Bones;" Chapter 2, "Dirham: Silver for a Slave;" and Chapter 3, "Ship Nail: River Kings"</p> <p>Asser, all.</p>
<p>Week 8 10/14-10/18</p>	<p>The Vikings in France</p> <p>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:</p> <p>Review Winroth, Chapter 3, "Röriks at Home and Away"</p> <p>Jarman, Chapter 1, "Hammer of Thor: Bones;" Chapter 2, "Dirham: Silver for a Slave;" and Chapter 3, "Ship Nail: River Kings"</p>
<p>Week 9 10/21-10/25</p>	<p>The Settlement of Iceland</p> <p>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</p>	<p>READING:</p> <p>Review Winroth, Chapter 3, "Röriks at Home and Away"</p> <p>Paper Two</p>

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
<p>Week 10 10/28-11/1</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:</p> <p>Review Winroth, Chapter 3, "Röriks at Home and Away"</p> <p>D2L readings</p>
<p>Week 11 11/4-11/8</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! 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>TOPICS: Trade Routes in the Baltic; The Problem of the Rus; The Rus and Byzantium</p>	<p>READING:</p> <p>Review Winroth, Chapter 3, "Röriks at Home and Away"</p> <p>Jarman, Chapter 6, "King Piece: Heading East;" Chapter 7, "Neck Rings: The Tales of the Rus';" Chapter 8, "Bead: Crossroads"</p> <p>RTTP: Prep 1</p>

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
<p>Week 12 11/11-11/15</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>READING:</p> <p>D2L readings: Ib'n Fadlan</p> <p>Review Winroth, Chapter 5, "Coins, Silk, and Herring"</p> <p>Jarman, Chapter 9, "Dragon's Head: To Miklagard and Beyond;" Epilogue: "Gujarat"</p> <p>EXAM TWO</p> <p>RTTP: Prep 2</p>
<p>Week 13 11/18-11/22</p>	<p>RTTP</p> <p>Tues: Game day 1</p> <p>Thurs: Game day 2</p>	
<p>Week 14 11/25-11/26</p> <p>Last day to drop for a "W": 11/25</p> <p>11/27-12/1: Thanksgiving Holiday</p>	<p>RTTP</p> <p>Tues: Game day 3</p>	
<p>Week 15 12/2-12/6</p> <p>Last Day of Classes 12/6</p>	<p>RTTP</p> <p>Tues: Game day 4</p> <p>Thursday: Postmortem</p>	
<p>Finals Week 12/7-12/13</p>		<p>READINGS:</p> <p>Winroth, "Epilogue"</p>

Sample Review (please use in-text citations; cite book at top; 3-4 pages total)

Nicole R. Rice. *The Medieval Hospital: Literary Culture and Community in England, 1350-1550*. 408 pp., illus.. Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame Press, 2023. 95 (paper); ISBN 9780268205119.

Hospital historians have done well to provide histories of individual hospitals (e.g., Carol Rawcliffe, *Medicine for the Soul* [Alan Sutton, 1995], Miri Rubin, *Charity and Community* [Cambridge University Press, 1987]); similarly, literary historians have made strides regarding the literary practices of hospitals (e.g., Theresa Coletti, "Social Contexts," *Medieval East Anglia*, 2005: 287-301). Until Nicole R. Rice's *The Medieval Hospital: Literary Culture and Community in England, 1350-1550*, however, no book considered where English literary and cultural practices intersected, let alone a juncture during the much-avoided period of the Reformation and the Dissolution.

Rice has heeded both calls, producing an engaging study of the hospital as a flashpoint—be it on debates on charity, poverty, and begging—and as a unique and neglected source "for late medieval English literary and cultural history" (1). Through a survey of three English hospitals—St. Leonard's (York), St. Bartholomew's (London), and St. Mark's (Bristol)—and their rich archives, including but not limited to Latin and Middle English pageants, medical compendia, Augustinian devotional practices, poetry, wills and more, Rice proves the hospital to be a "porous site whose practices translated into textual engagements with some of urban society's most pressing concerns: charity, health, devotion, and commerce" (1).

It takes Rice nearly four hundred pages and six chapters to complete her investigation. Each chapter, unique in its analysis, connects to previous or subsequent chapters. The first two chapters both consider the role of women. Chapter one examines St. Leonard's hospital as a site of cultural production: through a careful reading of the *Purification* pageant and the changes that occurred to its composition and its hosting, Rice demonstrates that the pageant expressed institutional identity and

feminine concerns within the civic sphere. Although fantastically argued, connection to similar activities in Italy (see, for example, John Henderson, *Piety and Charity* [University of Chicago Press, 1994]) would have made for a useful continental comparison given especially Rice's note in the introduction that such comparisons can be illuminative (277).

The second and third chapters consider St. Bartholomew's, first in an exploration of women's treatments in a foundational text and Latin compendia and then through a reading of wills of the residents of the hospital close and of John Shirley's anthology. These two chapters are perfect examples of what this book does so well: it uses the hospital as the focal point for mapping various practices related to society and community via the textual evidence. The wills, for example, show the hospital as a "site for deep friendships, spiritual expression, and an extended if sometimes fractious family," (101) while "Shirley's final anthology may have intervened into this web of relationships with texts promoting particular modes of conducts for the hospital's varied constituencies" (101-02). The examination of St. Bartholomew's continues in chapter four, which impressively constitutes hospitals as lay-clerical spaces where shared practices—such as penance, meditation, and charity—brought the two groups together.

Chapters five, six, and the epilogue consider the years of hospital critique before the Dissolution, as well as the period of the Dissolution itself. Looking at a variety of critiques (from the lollards to the House of Commons), Rice argues that writers saw the hospital as problematic but not hopeless: hospitals could be salvaged as places of spiritual and medical care. This was the case for St. Bartholomew's, which was revised, and for St. Mark's, which reemerged as a civic chapel. St. Leonard's, however, disappeared. Rice briefly concludes that "each of the three hospitals considered here persisted in some ever-shifting configuration of text, practice, and space" in which "older

literary traditions continued to intersect with reformed practices, reshaping the care and the “soule heale” that these hospitals had long performed” (276).

Rice’s concluding two sentences of the epilogue manage to close the work neatly and succinctly but certainly leave the reader wanting more. Remarkably written and researched and refreshingly argued, *The Medieval Hospital* should be the model to which hospital and literary historians turn. Although a literary history of the hospital, the author does not alienate non-literary historians. The literary analysis is there but is also furthered by the social, cultural, religious, and economic connections made by Rice. Moreover, the focus is not only on the text and textual evidence but rather on a history of the community in which the hospital was located. Rice demonstrates how we can use a variety of texts to better understand the institution, the people, and the community. Finally, Rice’s work is refreshing in its complicated, and yet simple, connections. This is a work about the literature associated with three medieval English hospitals, but each chapter is related to the next or to the previous through interconnected themes that bind all three: women, charity, and devotion. Hospital studies continue to advance (Adam Davis and economics; Sethina Watson and law), and as they do, this study will become the go-to for hospitals and literary culture.

Tiffany A. Ziegler, PhD

Primary Source Analysis

Age of the Vikings: History 5555

As you should know by now, historians use primary sources to write history. Primary sources—items created by those who participated in or witnessed an event—are our closest link to the past. Primary sources are real, personal, and emotional. Yet, because they are the humanized past, they are also subjective. Primary sources are key to what we do as historians, but they must be interpreted, analyzed, contextualized, and evaluated.

For the Age of the Vikings, some of the best (and worst) sources we have are the sagas. This assignment teaches you how to properly work with the sagas to better understand the Vikings and the world in which they lived.

Task: Read a saga of your choice. As you are readings, jot down initial thoughts and reactions. Below you will find four fillable tables that will aid in the organization of your thoughts. Fill in as much as you can.

Once you have filled in the tables, pull everything together and write a 3-4 page in-depth analysis of a primary source. *The first half* of the analysis should be descriptive and use the information from the first two tables. *The second half* should be analytical and should use the last two tables. The analysis should be typed in a reasonable 12 point font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins all around.

General Questions	
Source Title	
Author(s) or creator(s)	
Type of source	
Date of source	
Original source location	
Physical description	

Author and Audience			
Author		Intended Audience	
Race/Background		Race/Background	
Age		Age	
Gender		Gender	
Other information (job, social status, family, etc.)		Other information (job, social status, family, etc.)	

Context	
Why was this source/document created?	
What opinions and/or unintentional implications are conveyed by this source?	
What is the historical context of the source (i.e., political, social, economic, or environmental)?	
What do you still not know, and where can you find that information?	
What contextual information should be noted about you, the researcher—how might your background influence your interpretation of the source?	

Conclusions

What is one historical statement that can be made using the source as evidence?

What can be concluded about the validity of the source and about its place in the broader historical/social context of the time?

Where might historians look next to continue the discussion?

History 4555: The Age of the Vikings

Paper One (Grad students do not write, but I kept in for citation reference)

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to compare and contrast sources for understanding the Vikings, both before and during the Age of Expansion. It is also meant to compare and contrast interpretations.

Background: "*Vikings*. Say the word and we think of robbery, rape and pillage, assault, battles [...]."¹ We think of violence. *Vikings*. Read the word in the sources and we find violence: "Thus they burned all that was before them, killed every man's son, and moreover killed all those who were living."² We see violence. Violence is expected in a violent age,³ but was violence really the end-all and be-all of Viking life?⁴

Instructions: In your paper, question the idea of violence and the Vikings, both before and during the Age of Expansion and in both primary and secondary sources. Was violence all the Vikings knew? Was everyone violent all the time? If not violent all the time, what other pastimes consumed their days? When violent, what was their justification? Finally, if they were not as violent as history has painted them to be, why do we remember the Vikings as those who raped, murdered, robbed, raided, pillaged, burned, battled, assaulted (I'm running out of words...), and not those who created beautiful and complicated poetry?:

*"I have risked my famous life, beautiful woman;
fifteen winters old
And I vanquished the earth fish.⁵
Near misfortune, a swift
Death for me—save
I have pierced well to the heart
The ringed salmon-of-the-heath."⁶*

For this paper, use *Egil's Saga*,⁷ the *Prose Edda*,⁸ Winroth,⁹ and Jarman.¹⁰ You may also use any sources distributed in class or from D2L, i.e., the *Lay of Rig*. Finally, I challenge

¹ Caroline Ahlström Arcini, *The Viking Age: A Time of Many Faces* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2018), 1

² *Ragnars Saga Loðbrokar*, Chris Van Dyke, trans (Denver: Cascadian Publishing, 2003), 44.

³ Violence, yes, the Spanish Inquisition, no.

⁴ 'Violence in a Violent Time' is the title of chapter two of Cat Jarman's work. You should probably read it. Cat Jarman, *River Kings: A New History of the Vikings from Scandinavia to the Silk Roads* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2022), 15-44.

⁵ *foldar fiski* – "fish of the land," a kenning for "dragon."

⁶ *Hringleginn heiðar lax* – "ringed salmon-of-the-heath," another kenning for "dragon." Poetry and explanation of kennings from *Ragnars Saga Loðbrokar*, Chris Van Dyke, trans (Denver: Cascadian Publishing, 2003), 13

⁷ Cite as follows: *Egil's Saga*, Bernard Scudder, trans. (London: Penguin, 2005), page number(s). If you wish to include something that the author of the introduction wrote, cite as follows: Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, in *Egil's Saga*, Bernard Scudder, trans. (London: Penguin, 2005), page number(s).

⁸ Cite as follows: Snorri Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, Jesse L. Byock, trans. (London: Penguin, 2006), page numbers. To cite something from the introduction, cite as Jesse L. Byock, in *The Prose Edda*, Jesse L. Byock, trans. (London: Penguin, 2006), page numbers.

⁹ Cite as follows: Anders Winroth, *The Age of the Vikings* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), page number(s).

¹⁰ Because I have already cited Jarman, I can shorten my citation like this: Jarman, *River Kings*, page number(s).

you to go back to the first day and think about myths and misconceptions: might modern trends/sources have had an impact on this version of 'Vikings'?

Other Items of Consideration:

1. Typed.
2. Reasonable, 12-point font.
3. At least three pages; no more than four pages.
4. Must cite all sources in Chicago/Turabian—don't screw this up! I have modeled this above.
5. Must use footnotes.
6. Due at the beginning of class to the dropbox on D2L.



#Olympics #Paris2024 #ragnarlothbrok

History 4555: The Age of the Vikings

Paper Two (Grad students do not write, but I kept in for citation reference)

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to consider the historiography, the deeds of 'great white men', and cases of 'erasure' in history.

Background: Asser's *Life of King Alfred the Great* and the excerpts from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (ASC)* greatly inform us of the events in England under the reign of King Alfred (r. 871-899 CE), especially those events related to the Viking attacks. We must, however, be careful when reading these sources, Asser's *Life* in particular. To quote F. Donald Logan, notable Viking historian, Asser's "fawning,"¹¹ in addition to later historiography, "leave us with the fame of a good local king inflated into majestic national greatness."¹² Logan goes as far to argue that "this is not the place to assess the reign of Alfred: much transpired during his twenty-eight-year reign other than the two periods of Viking attacks (871-9, 892-6)."¹³ Finally, Logan contends that Alfred did *not* save England and that [Alfred] was *not* a military genius.¹⁴

Traditionally, Alfred, according to his *Life*, has been credited with the England. Rather than use Alfred as *the* basis for the creation of England, let's use him as the starting point; we will make King Eadred (d. 955) our end point.¹⁵ By the time we come to King Eadred's death in 955, we find that the "meaningless permutations of the phases of Viking history in England came to an end. Harassed Wessex, partitioned Mercia, subjugated regions of the Danelaw south of the Humber, and now at last that political quicksand of the kingdom of York, had been made into one kingdom."¹⁶ We have one kingdom, but is it truly 'English'?

Let's reconsider Alfred; let's reconsider the English: England was not the creation of one man or by one group of people. Rather, it was formed over many years and by many hands, of which the Vikings must be included.

Instructions: In a paper, question the role of Alfred and even the other 'kings' of England; ask instead, "what have the Vikings ever done for [England]?"¹⁷ Be sure to start with Alfred and the *Life of King Alfred the Great*.¹⁸ Make sure to take this up to

¹¹ F. Donald Logan, *The Vikings in History*, Third Edition (New York: Routledge, 2005), 121

¹² Logan, *The Vikings in History*, 122.

¹³ Logan, *The Vikings in History*, 132.

¹⁴ Logan, *The Vikings in History*, 132.

¹⁵ After the death of Eirik Bloodaxe at Stainmore (954), Eadred became the king of all England.

¹⁶ Gwyn Jones, *A History of the Vikings*, Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 240.

¹⁷ "Well, yeah. Obviously the roads. I mean, the roads go without saying, don't they?" This is a hint, by the way!

¹⁸ Cite as follows: Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, Simon Keynes, trans. (London: Penguin Group, 1983), page number(s). Not, if I want to include something that the translator has to say, perhaps in the introduction, I would cite as follows: Simon Keynes, in Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, page number(s). Note that this is a shortened version, which I can do because I have already cited.

Eared (ASC).¹⁹ Then, use Winroth.²⁰ Use Jarman.²¹ Use the *Prose Edda*²² and *Egil's Saga* (Eirik, anyone?)²³ where you see fit. Conclude with a discussion of acculturation: Just how much did England rely on English traditions and how much did they borrow from the Vikings? What did they integrate into their own culture, and what did they choose to leave to the Norsemen and their culture?

Other Items of Consideration:

1. Typed.
2. Reasonable, 12-point font.
3. At least three pages; no more than four pages.
4. Must cite all sources in Chicago/Turabian—don't screw this up! I have modeled this above.
5. Must use footnotes.
6. Due at the beginning of class to the dropbox on D2L.

¹⁹ Cite as follows: *The Anglo Saxon Chronicle* in *Life of King Alfred*, Simon Keynes, trans. (London: Penguin Group, 1983), page number(s). NOTE: I dropped Asser because he didn't write the ASC. You would do the same for Alfred's own writings but add him as the author.

²⁰ Cite as follows: Anders Winroth, *The Age of the Vikings* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), page number(s).

²¹ Cat Jarman, *River Kings: A New History of the Vikings from Scandinavia to the Silk Roads* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2022), page number(s).

²² Cite as follows: Snorri Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, Jesse L. Byock, trans. (London: Penguin, 2006), page numbers. You know the drill by now: to cite something from the introduction, cite as Jesse L. Byock, in *The Prose Edda*, Jesse L. Byock, trans. (London: Penguin, 2006), page numbers.

²³ Cite as follows: *Egil's Saga*, Bernard Scudder, trans. (London: Penguin, 2005), page number(s). If you wish to include something that the author of the introduction wrote, cite as follows: Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, in *Egil's Saga*, Bernard Scudder, trans. (London: Penguin, 2005), page number(s).