

# The Vikings



## HISTORY 254A

T. Gross-Diaz (Semester)  
(Days) (Location)

Office: Crown 545

Office hours: (TBA)

and by appointment : Please make all appointments by e-mail.

NOTE ON REGISTRATION: Before June 1, 2018, students register for HIST 311: The Vikings. Their registration will automatically be switched to HIST 254A for Fall 2018. The class will cover the same requirements as HIST 311.

NOTE: Assignments and other materials will be posted on SAKAI and through your LUC email account, which you must check frequently.

## GOALS OF THIS COURSE:

The vikings are popularly thought of as invaders, marauders, destroyers of civilized peace: “outsiders”. At the same time, popular culture also attributes them with ideas of democracy, gender equality, and technical superiority over their

contemporaries. In this course we will not only discover the real medieval Scandinavian society we call “viking”, but also continually evaluate modern preconceptions, interpretations and uses of viking history and culture.

You will come out of this course with:

- understanding of historiographical issues concerning the vikings;
- knowledge of main events and persons relevant to early medieval history and culture;
- experience in analyzing and interpreting various types of primary sources

## READING LIST:

The following are available at LU Bookstore:

*Penguin Historical Atlas of the Vikings*. Ed. John Haywood, Penguin, 1995

*The Viking Age: A Reader* Somerville and McDonald, eds. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, U. Toronto Press, 2014

(There will also be items available via the Internet or on Sakai)

## EVALUATION:

Of course this would be a lot more fun without grades, but that's not how the system works.

Website analysis essay	20%
Quizzes (6 in-class, short answer)	40%
Final (take-home essay)	30%
Participation	10%

All assignments will receive a letter grade. A=4.0, A-= 3.67, B+ = 3.33 etc.  
Averages will be computed accordingly.

The website analysis will guide you through a process of *critical evaluation* of your choice of Viking-related websites. Assignment details on Sakai. (4 pages)

The in-class quizzes will test your knowledge of the historical facts, issues and developments which will be the focus of the first half of the semester. It will include a map quiz! Study guides will be available on Sakai. The quizzes will take the first 10 minutes of class.

The take-home final exam will test your accumulated knowledge of Viking history and culture. It will be due by the end of class time on the scheduled exam day. (5-7 pages)

A gentle but forthright reminder:

In this class, plagiarism or cheating of any kind in any course work will result in an **F for the course** and a report to the dean. See

[http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg\\_academicintegrity.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml)

**ABSENCES:** Frequent absences will adversely affect your participation grade;  
for details see “Participation” on Sakai.

If you are absent it is your responsibility to get notes, handouts and any assignments from your colleagues in class.

**Schedule:** “A” = Atlas; “V” = Viking Age Reader

Week 1 Introduction  
Background: A 8-12  
Sources: A 94-95, 78-79; V “Introduction”  
Geography: A 16-23; V “Chapter 1”

Week 2 Kingdoms and kingship:  
A 28-35; V # 100, 101  
Saga of Hakon the Good in *Heimskringla* -- Sections 1-9 only  
<http://omacl.org/Heimskringla/>  
Focus question:  
what is the relationship between “state” (kings) and “vikings”?

- Week 3      Vikings in France:  
 A 46-61(focus on France), 64-65, 80-83  
 V #46 [Frankish Annals], 47 [St-Bertin], 48 [St-Vaast], 49 [Abbo], 58 [Dudo]  
 Focus questions:  
 How are the raiders identified by the various authors?  
 In what ways do the raids have lasting impact on Francia?
- Week 4      in Scotland: A 76-77  
 in Ireland: A 72-75;  
 V #42 [Ulster], 53 [Ulster], 44[St Findan] 45[Cogad], 107 [Clontarf] 54  
 [Eyrbyggja saga], 55 [Orkneyinga saga]  
 Focus question:  
 In what ways do the Ulster annals differ from the accounts of Viking activities in the sagas?
- Week 5      in England: A 46-54 (review),  
 A 62-63, 66-71, 78-79, 118-127  
 V #39 [AS Chronicle], #40 [Alcuin], #41 [re:Codex Aureus]  
 Focus questions:  
 Identify various stages and developments of Viking activity in England  
 In what ways is Viking history in England different from that in France?
- Week 6      In the New World:  
 A 86-100; *Vinland Saga* excerpts (on Sakai); Vinland Map reading (Sakai)  
 Focus question:  
 Why are there so many ‘Vikings in N America’ hoaxes?
- Week 7      In Byzantium and Russia:  
 A 100-109; V #61, #62, #66  
 Focus question: Does this alter our preconceptions of “West “ and “East”?
- Week 8      Trade, towns and piracy:  
 A 46-56, 42-43; Neil Price, “Ship-Men and Slaughter-Wolves: Pirate Polities in the Viking Age”, on Sakai  
 Focus question:  
 how does the concept of “piracy” help us evaluate viking activity?

- Week 9 Viking ethos:  
Read *Havamal* and prepare study questions on Sakai  
Focus question:  
Do the values reflected in *Havamal* seem to be embraced by the vikings we have met in our readings?
- Week 10 The ‘Old Religion’  
A 26-27; V #7, 8, 13, 15, 18  
WEBSITE ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS TODAY  
Discussion of your findings!
- Week 11 Ships and Navigation; technology (Ulfberht swords):  
A 26-27, 38-41, 84-85, V #32-37; video in-class
- Week 12 Viking Women, fact and fiction:  
A 44-45; V #20-23, 25, 27, 28  
Selections from *Saga of Eric the Red* (on Sakai)  
Focus question:  
How do current popular images of “viking women” compare to the ones in the historical record?
- Week 13 Christianization:  
A 110-117, 132-135; V #88-90, 93  
Focus question:  
In what ways and to what extent was the Christianization process a factor in the end of the Viking Era?
- Week 14 \* **Viking Games Night**: If weather allows, after the presentation will be we will retire to Sean Field to play the [allegedly] Viking lawn game of Kubb, which recreates sea battles. Strategy, skill, and luck! : **FINAL EXAM** handed out today!

\* NOTE: if course is taught in the **Fall semester**, KUBB will be scheduled for earlier in the semester

**Final exam** – take-home essay **due on official Exam Day**, uploaded to Sakai