



CIEE Global Institute - Copenhagen

Course name:	Vikings in the Conquest of Europe
Course number:	HIST 2101 CPDK
Programs offering course:	Copenhagen Open Campus
Open Campus Track:	Language, Literature, and Culture
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. semester credits:	3
Contact hours:	45
Term:	Fall 2019

Course Description

From the 9th to the 11th century, Vikings from Northern Europe made large impacts on many European cultures. Some visits were plundering, some regular trade, and some to establish new settlements: Iceland, Greenland, and even in North America. They plundered all over Europe and made hostile visits in large cities such as Paris, Rome and Constantinople. This course will introduce students to the Viking culture, its religion, and language. There are more than 1000 Viking words in the English language due to their activities in England. Students will visit the Viking ship museum in Roskilde, and participate in active workshops providing knowledge about Viking society, shipbuilding, weapons, rope making etc. Students will also analyze how the Viking culture still affects modern Danish culture.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the social, religious and political developments which formed Viking Age Scandinavia
- Examine how the Vikings acted abroad and how the Vikings entered and influenced the political scenes in several European countries.
- Evaluate the variety of methods which can be used in Viking Age/Historical studies
- Articulate orally and in writing how the Viking Age has affected and still is affecting modern Europe.
- Interpret and critically assess aspects of Viking Age culture

Course Prerequisites



Students should have previously completed a course in history or cultural studies.

Methods of Instruction

This class will be taught using a PowerPoint based series of lectures combined with guest speakers, discussion seminars, museum visits, homework and student presentations. The students are expected to come prepared to class and take active part in the discussions.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Reflection Paper	20%
2. Short Essays (2)	20%
3. Presentations	20%
4. Final Research Paper	20%
5. Class Participation	20%

Course Requirements

Reflection Paper

During the course, the students are expected to complete one reflection paper. The reflection paper will be on a topic handed out the week before together with more detailed instructions. This paper should be typed, double-spaced, and 2500 words, and include references.

Short Essays

Students will complete two short essays, each worth 5%. Each paper will focus on a topic selected by the student and linked to the themes for the week(s) in which they are due. Each essay should be 750-1500 words each, typed and double-spaced.

Presentation

In assigned groups, the students will prepare a presentation on a topic related to the readings for the seminar-day (reading due for that particular day), and present and discuss the arguments in class. Students will be assessed on their ability to analyze, challenge, and defend the primary foci of the readings.

Final Research Paper

Students will complete a research paper of 1500-3000 words, excluding references. In their paper, students must show that they are capable of formulating, analyzing and evaluating a



research question of their own choice related to one or more of the topics discussed during this course. The research paper should include at least three primary resources.

Participation

Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

Attendance Policy

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all unexcused absences will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for Open Campus and Short Term programs, unexcused absences that constitute more than 10% of the total course will result in a written warning.

Unexcused absences will impact upon the final grade.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

For CIEE classes, excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students must be marked absent. Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as to Internship, Service Learning, or required field placement. Students who miss class for personal travel, including unforeseen delays that arise as a result of personal travel, will be marked as absent and unexcused. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.

Attendance policies also apply to any required class excursion, with the exception that some class excursions cannot accommodate any tardiness, and students risk being marked as absent if they fail to be present at the appointed time.



Unexcused absences will lead to the following penalties:

<i>Percentage of Total Course Hours Missed</i>	<i>Equivalent Number of Open Campus Semester classes</i>	<i>Minimum Penalty</i>
Up to 10%	1 content classes, or up to 2 language classes	Participation graded as per class requirements
10 – 20%	2 content classes, or 3-4 language classes	Participation graded as per class requirements; written warning
More than 20%	3 content classes, or 5 language classes	Automatic course failure , and possible expulsion



Weekly Schedule

Orientation Week

Class 1:1 Introduction

This week will focus on an orientation and an introduction to the course and requirements. We will go through the historical background of Viking Age Scandinavia and touch upon the variety of interdisciplinary approaches which can be used in Viking Age studies. Since the popularity of the Vikings and their fascinating world through modern times has urged many misunderstandings we will also in this first week look into 'Facts and Fiction' of the Viking World.

Class 2:1 Before the Viking Age

During this week, we will dive into the general sociopolitical structures which formed Viking Age Scandinavia. However, in order to gain the best introduction for understanding the societal development and trends of the highly complex Viking Age, this first class deals with the preceding period known as the late Germanic Iron Age. In the centuries leading up to the Viking Age great social, economic, religious and political changes occurred within Scandinavian settlement structures – changes without which the Vikings would not have been able to achieve such success on an international level as they did.

Reading:

Ashby 2015, 89-106
Barrett 2008, 671-685
Hedeager 2009, 11-22

Jørgensen, L. 2001, 73-82
Simek, R 2004, 9-21

Class 2:2 Peasant Households and Rural Economy

Obviously not all Vikings were explorers, warriors and travelling merchants, and most of the Viking population lived their entire life in rural districts serving smaller functions in village communities or in farms. In this class, we will explore how life unfolded in the villages in the countryside during the Viking Age. Women, men and children all served important roles in the making and development of Viking



Age Scandinavia and we will discuss how the diversity of life in the countryside and village communities contributed to the overall economy of Scandinavia in this period.

Reading:

Bender Jørgensen 2002, 129-245 and the following discussion 145-152

Fallgren 1993, 59-86

Hvass 1985, 211–228

Kaldal Mikkelsen 1999, 177-193

Magnus 2002, 5-33 and the following discussion 33-44

Class 3:1 Aristocracy and Power

During the Viking Age the aristocracy grew stronger and gained more solid power foundations in society. By gradually assembling more and more of the fundamental societal functions under them, the aristocratic families slowly, but firmly formed new and more permanent positions and institutions. In this class, we will investigate who the aristocratic families were and how they expanded their authoritative positions – in this matter we will discuss how the elite performed their power and how they managed to sustain the most comprehensive platforms for utilizing their power over the people.

Reading:

Fabech 1999, 37-47

Ringtved 1999, 49-63

Sindbæk 2011, 41-66

Sundqvist 2009, 223-226

❖ Short Essay 1 due

Class 3:2 Nordic Mythology – The Making of Social Order

Religion or religious ideas was a highly central aspect of the Viking life. The creation of Nordic mythology and the fascinating stories centered around Odin, Thor, Freya etc. all gives insight into how the Gods and the Nordic religion were an important player in the making of social order. In this class, we will work with the main lines of the complex mythological world and dive into the functions of the Viking gods within a sociopolitical frame.

Reading:

Andrén 2005, 105-138



Steinsland 2009, 227-230

Schjødt 2012, 263-287

Gräslund 2009, 249-256

Class 3:3 Feasting with the Gods

Classroom seminar on rituals and cultic practices. One way of securing world order was through sacrifices or offerings. The Vikings celebrated their gods during different times over the yearly cycle and today, due to intense research and a growing archaeological material, we begin to get glimpses of how these feasts took form and what their functions were. In this class, each student will make a presentation based on the readings due for today. The main aim of the seminar is to reflect on and discuss the possibilities of multiple meanings behind the archaeological evidence of sacrificial customs.

Reading:

Gotfredsen & Thomsen 2011, 211-220

Jørgensen 2009, 329-354

Jørgensen 2014, 129-150

Larson 2006, 248-253

Nielsen 2006, 243-247

❖ Presentation due

Class 4:1 Magic and Powerful Women

A fascinating part of the myth and beliefs of the Vikings is connected to the group of women identified as the so-called Vǫlur-figures, known from the early medieval written sources. These women from the archaeological record possessed magical skills which made them both very feared but also highly respected in Viking Age society. We will look into how they functioned, how they deployed their magical gifts and discuss what their social role were in the societies. Furthermore, we will examine if these women are connected to the later medieval witches and if so, how these women went from highly powerful individuals to social 'losers' who did not deserve anything but to end their days in bonfires or drowned in bogs.

Reading:

Price 2002, 111-161

Mitchell 2001, 59-81

Sanmark 2014, 85-100



Class 4:2 The Emergence of Towns in Scandinavia

Beginning in the Viking Age – maybe a little bit before – towns or urban societies emerged at many different places in Scandinavia. These new communal structures probably emerged due to economic growth, the early formation of political institutions by the elite families and increasing trade and exchange patterns in Northern Europe. In this class, we will explore how the early towns, fx Birka in Sweden and Ribe in Jutland, Denmark, were structured, how they functioned and what life could be like in an urban society in Scandinavia during this time.

Reading:

S. Brink & N. Price (eds.) 2009, 83-145
Sindbæk 2007, 119-132

Class 4:3 Ship Technology

According to many researchers, one of the more significant technological achievements of the Vikings were the ship and sailing technologies. In this guest lecture by Ole Kastholm from Roskilde Museum (TBC), we will explore how the Viking ship functioned and how it helped create the means to which it became possible to cross for example the rough North Atlantic sea.

Reading:

Bill 2009, 170-180
Kastholm 2011, 175-183
Pentz 2014, 202-227
Wallace 2009, 604-612

❖ Reflection Paper due

Class 5:1 Artisans and Fine Arts

With the flow of merchants, diplomats and travelling artisans from around Europe different technologies and crafting improvements reached Scandinavian societies. This class will take place in the permanent exhibition at the National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen, where we will start with a guided tour in the Viking Age exhibition and the 'Danefæ' room. We will explore the exhibited artifacts and discuss crafting skills and the arts of the Viking artisans as expressed through the archaeological finds. Guided visit to the National Museum of Denmark.



Reading:

As preparation for today, please look through the exhibition catalogue 'Vikings – Life and Legend' where a lot of the exhibited objects are displayed.

Vikings in Popular Culture

This session will approach how and why the Vikings are so popular in the modern world – not only in exhibitions, but in movies, series, in company names etc. - and how Vikings continue to affect contemporary articulations of heritage and identity in Europe.

Viewing:

Beowulf (2007)

How To Train Your Dragon (2010)

Vikings (2013-)

The Last Kingdom (2015-)

The 13th Warrior (1999)

Class 5:2 Queens, Kings and Vassals?

How the political structures were formed in the Viking Age is still up for much debate – some researchers argue that an established royal kingdom were already present during the late Germanic Iron Age in Southern Scandinavia or in the beginning of the Viking Age, while others believe that Viking Age society was build up around smaller chieftains and that a more established or centralized kingdom first emerges during the early middle ages. In this class, we will approach and discuss the different perceptions found in academia.

Reading:

Hedenstierna-Jonson 2009, 89-104 Jørgensen

et al. 2011, 95-112.

Jessen 2014, 42-64

Näsman 1999, 1-10

Viking Age Early State Formation

Based on a series of written sources and archaeological comparative studies of settlement structures, this class will focus on the formation of the state in Denmark and some comparative studies of the Frankish Empire in the south. We



will also discuss the coming of Christianity and the impact this had on the formation of the state.

Reading:

Brink 1999, 423-437

Brink 2009, 621-629

Dobat 2009, 65-104

❖ Short Essay 2 due

Class 6:1 Military Organization

This class will examine military organization of Southern Scandinavia and how it influenced the Viking success in diplomatic deals with for example the Frankish empire. By discussing written sources who mentions the Viking armies we will explore the complex nature of a militarized social order. We will also review a handout with a sample of translated written sources concerning Vikings on the continent.

Reading:

Dobat 2009, 27-67

Jesch 2010, 165-173

Viking Age and Nationalism

The Vikings are popular and has been so for a very long time. In this guest lecture, we will explore and discuss how archaeology and particularly the Vikings have been used in nationalistic constructions and identity building.

Reading:

Byock 1994, 163-187

Müller-Wille 1996, 156-171

Class 6:2 Summary

In this final class, we will revisit the learning objectives and primary themes of the course.

❖ Final Paper due



Course Materials

Readings

- Andrén, A. "Behind Heathendom: Archaeological studies of Old Norse Religion". *Scottish Archaeological Journal* 27 (2005): 105-138
- Ashby, S.P. "What really caused the Viking Age? The social content of raiding and exploration". *Archaeological Dialogues* 22 (2015): 89-106
- Barrett, J.H. "What Caused the Viking Age?". *Antiquity* 82 (2008): 671-685
- Bender Jørgensen, L. "Rural economy: Ecology, Hunting Pastoralism, Agricultural and Nutritional aspects". In: J. Jesch (ed.) *The Scandinavians – from the Vendel Period to the Tenth Century – An ethnographic perspective*. (2002): 129-245 and the following discussion 145-152
- Bill, J. "Viking ships and the sea". In: S. Brink & N. Price (eds.) *The Viking World*. Routledge (2009): 170-180
- Brink, S. "Social order in the early Scandinavian landscape". In: C. Fabech and J. Ringtved (eds.) *Settlement and Landscape*, Jutland Archaeological Society (1999): 423-437.
- Brink, S. "Christianization and the emergence of the early Church in Scandinavia". In: S. Brink & N. Price (eds.) *The Viking World* (2009): 621-629
- Byock, J. "Modern nationalism and the medieval sagas." In Andrew Wawn (ed.) *Northern Antiquity: The Post-Medieval Reception of Edda and Saga*, London, (1994): 163-187
- Dobat, A.S. "The State and the Strangers: The Role of External Forces in a Process of State Formation in Viking Age South Scandinavia (c. AD 900-1050)". *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 5 (2009): 65-104
- Dobat, A.S. "Danevirke Revisited: An investigation into military and socio-political organization in South Scandinavia (c AD 700 to 1100)". *Medieval Archaeology* 52, (2009): 27-67
- Fabech, C. "Organising the Landscape. A matter of production, power, and religion. In: *The making of kingdoms*, Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History 10 (1999): 37-47
- Fallgren, J.-H. "The Concept of the village in Swedish Archaeology". *Current Swedish Archaeology* I (1993): 59-86
- Gotfredsen, Anne Birgitte & Thomsen, L.G. "Three pit houses at the magnate's residence at Lake Tissø". In: L. Boye (ed.) *The Iron Age on Zealand. Status and Perspectives*. Nordiske Fortidsminder, Series C, volume 8, (2011): 211-220



Gräslund, A.-S. "The Material Culture of Old Norse Religion".
In: S. Brink & N. Price (eds.) *The Viking World*. Routledge

(2009): 249-256

Hedeager, L. "Scandinavia before the Viking Age". In: S. Brink & N. Price (eds.) *The Viking World*. Routledge (2009): 11-22

Hedenstierna-Jonson, C. "Social and political formations of Scandinavian areas, 8th to 10th century, the martial perspective". In: *Territorio, Sociedad y Poder*, Anejo No. 2 (2009): 89104

Helle, K. (ed.) "*The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*" (2003) Cambridge

Hvass, S. "Viking Age villages in Denmark – new investigations". In: S. Lindquist & B. Radhe (eds.) *Society and trade in the Baltic during the Viking Age*. (1985): 211–228

Jesch, J. "The warrior ideal in the late Viking Age". In: J. Sheehan & D. Ó Corrain (ed.) *The Viking Age. Ireland and the West*. Proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress. Dublin. Four Courts Press. (2010): 165-173

Jessen, Mads Dengsø et al., "A Palisade Fit for a King: Ideal Architecture in King Harald Bluetooth's Jelling" *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 47, (2014): 42-64

Jørgensen, Anne Nørgård, Lars Jørgensen & Lone Gebauer Thomsen "Assembly Sites for Cult, Markets, Jurisdiction and Social Relations". In: *Historic-ethnological analogy between North Scandinavian church towns, Old Norse assembly sites and pit house sites of the late Iron Age and Viking Period*. In: *Archäologie in Schleswig-Sachsen Symposium Haderslev 2010*, (2011): 95-112.

Jørgensen, L. "From tribute to the estate system, 3rd-12th century. A proposal for the economic development of the magnates' residences in Scandinavia based on settlement structure from Gudme, Tissø and Lejre". In: B. Arrhenius (ed.): *Kingdoms and Regionality*. Transactions from 49th Sachsen Symposium 1998 in Uppsala. Theses and papers in *Archaeology B:6*. Stockholm (2001): 73-82

Jørgensen, L. "Pre-Christian cult at aristocratic residences and settlement complexes in southern Scandinavia in the 3rd-10th centuries AD". In: *Glaube, Kult und Herrschaft. Phänomene des Religiösen im 1. Jahrtausend n. Chr. in Mittel- und Nordeuropa*. Hrsg.: Uta von Freedten, Herwig Friesinger, Egon Wamers. Kolloquien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte Band 12, Frankfurt, (2009): 329-354

Jørgensen, L. "Norse Religion and Ritual Sites in Scandinavia in the 6th - 11th century". In: H.C. Gulløv (ed.): *Northern Worlds - Landscapes, Interaction and Dynamics - Proceedings of the Northern Worlds Conference*, Copenhagen 28-30 November 2012 (2014): 129150

Kaldal Mikkelsen, D. "Single farm or village? Reflections on the settlement structure of the Iron Age and the Viking period" In: C. Fabech and J. Ringtved (eds.) *Settlement and*

Kastholm, O.T. "The rigging of the Viking Age warship – The Skuldelev finds and the ship motifs". In: L. Boye (ed.) 2011: *The Iron Age on Zealand. Status and Perspectives*. Nordiske Fortidsminder, Serie C, vol. 8 (2011): 175-183

Larson, L. "Building and ritual space". In: *Old Norse religion in long-term perspectives. Origin, changes, and interactions* (2006): 248-253

Magnus, B. "Dwelling and Settlements: Structure and Characteristics". In: J. Jesch (ed.) *The Scandinavians – from the Vendel Period to the Tenth Century – An ethnographic perspective*. (2002): 5-33 and the following discussion 33-44

Mitchell, S. "Warlocks, Valkyries and Varlets: A Prolegomenon to the Study of North Sea Witchcraft Terminology". *Cosmos* 17 (2001): 59-81

Müller-Wille, M. 1996: The political misuse of Scandinavian prehistory in the years 1933-1945. In: E. Roesdahl & P. Meulengracht Sørensen (eds.), *The Waking of Angantyr. The Scandinavian Past in European Culture*. Aarhus. Aarhus University Press. 156-171

Nielsen, A.-I. "Rituals and power". In: *Old Norse religion in long-term perspectives. Origin, changes, and interactions* (2006): 243-247

Näsman, U. "The ethnogenesis of the Danes and the making of a Danish kingdom". In: *The making of kingdoms*, Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History 10 (1999): 1-10

Pentz, P. "The ship and the Vikings". In: G. Williams, P. Pentz, & M. Wernhoff (eds.) *Vikings: Life and Legend* (2014): 202-227

Price, N. "*The Viking Way: Religion and War in Late Iron Age Scandinavia*". The Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University (2002): 111-161

Ringtved, J. "The Geography of power: South Scandinavia before the Danish Kingdom". In: *The making of kingdoms*, Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History 10 (1999): 49-63

Sanmark, A. "Women at the Thing". In: N. Coleman and N.L. Løkka (eds.) *Nordic women in the Viking Age* (2014):85-100 Schjødt, J.P. "Reflections on Aims and Methods in the Study of Old Norse Religion". In: C. Raudvere & J.P. Schjødt (eds.) *More than Mythology: Narratives, Ritual Practices and*

Regional Distribution in Pre-Christian Scandinavian Religions (2012): 263-287

Simek, R. "The emergence of the Viking Age: reasons and triggers". In: R. Simek & U. Engel (eds.) *Vikings on the Rhine: recent research on early medieval relations between the Rhineland and Scandinavia* (2004): 9-21

Sindbæk, S.M. "Networks and nodal points: the emergence of towns in early Viking Age Scandinavia". *Antiquity* 81 (2007): 119-132

Sindbæk, S. M. "Silver Economies and Social Ties: Long-Distance Interaction, Long-term Investments – and why the Viking Age happened". In: J. Graham-Campbell, S. M.



Sindbæk, and G. Williams (eds.) *Silver Economies, Monetisation & Society in Scandinavia, 800-1100*. Aarhus.

(2011): 41-66

Steinsland, S. "Rulers as Offspring of Gods and Giantesses: On the Mythology of Pagan Norse Rulership". In: S. Brink & N. Price (eds.) *The Viking World*. Routledge (2009): 227-230

Sundqvist, O. "Cult Leaders, Rulers and Religion". In: S. Brink & N. Price (eds.) *The Viking World*. Routledge (2009): 223-226

Various authors in: Brink, S. & N. Price (eds.) *The Viking World*. Routledge (2009): 83-145

Wallace, B. "The discovery of Vinland". In: S. Brink & N. Price (eds.) *The Viking World*. Routledge (2009): 604-612

Williams, G. P. Pentz & M. Wemhoff (eds.) *Vikings: Life and Legend*. British Museum (2014)