



Velkommen to the Scandinavian Program!

SCAN 335: Vikings and Norse Mythology (in English)

Acknowledgement

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) people. The land upon which it is situated has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

COURSE INFORMATION

Title: Vikings and Norse Mythology **Code:** SCAN 335 **Section:** 001 **Credit Value:** 3

Meeting Times: Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays from 11:00 am -12:00 pm (PT)

UBC Schedule: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?page=deadlines>

Meeting Locations: Buchanan B 210

CONTACTS

Instructor: Ann-Kathrine Havemose

Contact: Make sure to check Announcements on Canvas regularly. This will be our main tool to communicate but you can also email me at ann-kathrine.havemose@mail.ubc.ca (disclaimer: I will not be answering mails on weekends)

Office hours: Mondays 3:30-4:30 pm in Buchanan Tower 905

Fika (the Swedish word for having coffee/tea together):

Drop-in Wednesdays 3:00-4:00 pm in Cenes Lounge (Room 910), 9th floor, Buchanan Tower <https://cenes.ubc.ca/events/event/fika/>

PANDEMIC UPDATES

Due to the pandemic, expect updates from UBC regarding changed regulations etc. Here are two good places to start:

<https://students.ubc.ca/campus-life/returning-to-campus>

and

<https://covid19.ubc.ca/latest-updates/>

We will all have to be flexible since we might need to make changes to the schedule or course format.

COVID-19 Safety

You are currently required to wear a non-medical mask during our class meetings, for your own protection and the safety and comfort of everyone else in the class. For our in-person meetings, it is important that all of us feel as comfortable as possible engaging in class activities while sharing an indoor space. Non-medical masks that cover our noses and mouths are a primary tool for combating the spread of COVID-19. Further, according to the provincial mandate, masks are required in all indoor public spaces including lobbies, hallways, stairwells, elevators, classrooms and labs. There may be students who have medical accommodations for not wearing a mask. Please maintain a respectful environment.

DISCLAIMER

The material in this course includes content that might be offensive and upsetting to some readers, such as strong language, reference to and consumption of alcohol and drugs, violence, graphic and sexual imagery. Some may also deal with sensitive issues, such as death, racism, and sexual abuse.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITIES

The aim of this course is to introduce the student to Norse Mythology and the field of Viking studies through topics presented through myths and tales as well as through archaeological and historical sources. We will highlight themes such as the Norse pantheon, heroes of the North, Viking Society and medievalism as re-enactment and as popular culture (read: *Thor* and *Tolkien*).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course (i.e. with active attendance and participation, completion of reading and writing assignments, and exams) students will be individually and cooperatively able to:

- **Describe** the concepts of Norse mythology, and **assess** the impact it has had on both Viking society and present day practices (in and outside of Scandinavia).
- **Define** important concepts and **identify** historical and cultural contexts surrounding their emergence and development.
- **Recognize** aspects of gender, sexuality and social standing in the periods and cultural products discussed.

- **Analyse** the uses of mythology and cultural heritage and **compare** the uses and cultural contexts with other cultural products (Scandinavian or other).
- **Respond** concisely to thematic questions in clear and concise form.

LEARNING MATERIALS

Secondary sources are not announced on the syllabus. These will be published on Canvas in the respective module.

Required Texts (available through UBC Bookstore):

- Gaiman, Neil. (2018) *Norse Mythology*, W.W. Norton & co.
- Larrington, Carolyn. (2014) *The Poetic Edda*, Oxford University Press.

Other course material

- Gylfaginning / Prose Edda
(available here: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Prose_Edda/Gylfaginning)
- Acker, Paul and Larrington Carolyn (2002). *The Poetic Edda: Essays on Old Norse Mythology*, Taylor and Francis (available as e-book through UBC Library)
<https://ubc.summon.serialssolutions.com/search?spellcheck=true&s.q=larrington+acker#!/search?ho=t&l=en&q=larrington%20acker>
- Other secondary texts (available on Canvas)

ASSESSMENT

Participation	20%
Group presentation (and feedback)	20%
Midterm exam	25%
Final exam	35%

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND CLASSES (subject to change)

Monday 09.06:	Labour day, no class
Wednesday 09.08:	Course orientation
<i>Reading:</i>	Syllabus
Friday 09.10	When, what, where – the Viking age

Reading: Brink, Stefan (2008). “Who were the Vikings?” in *The Viking World* ed. Brink, Stefan and Price, Neil, Routledge (available online through UBC resource Taylor and Francis)

Module 1: The world of the gods (week 2-7)

Week 2

Monday 09.13: Ginnungagap: creation of the world

Reading: Gylfaginning chapters 1-19

Larrington, Carolyn (2014): “The Seeress’ Prophecy” stanza 1-42 and “Grimnir’s song” *The Poetic Edda*, Oxford University Press

Wednesday 09.15: Kings of the gods (part 1) – Odin, the god of war

Reading: Larrington, Carolyn (2014): “Sayings of the High-one” stanza 132-164 and “Grimnir’s song” stanza 9-10; 19-20 in *The Poetic Edda*, Oxford University Press

Friday 09.17: Kings of the gods (part 2) – Thor, the god of weather

Reading: Gaiman, Neil (2018): “Hymir and Thor’s Fishing Expedition” in *Norse Mythology*, W.W. Norton & co.

Larrington, Carolyn (2014): “Hymir’s poem” in *The Poetic Edda*, Oxford University Press

Presentation: Group 1, Odin

Week 3

Monday 09.20: Loki – the God of Change

Reading: Larrington, Carolyn (2014): “Loki’s Quarrel” *The Poetic Edda*, Oxford University Press

Gylfaginning chapter 33

Presentation: Group 2, Thor

Wednesday 09.22: The Vanir (Freyja, Freyr and Njord) – Gods of fertility, love and peace)

Reading: Larrington, Carolyn (2014): “Loki’s Quarrel” and “Skirner’s Journey” *The Poetic Edda*, Oxford University Press (for specific stanzas see Canvas)

Gaiman, Neil (2018): “The story of Gerd and Frey” and “Freya’s Unusual Wedding” in *Norse Mythology*, W.W. Norton & co.

Presentation: Group 3, Loki

Friday 09.24: Idun, Sif, Frigg and Eir – Goddesses of Nature

Reading: Gaiman, Neil (2018): “The Apples of Immortality” in *Norse Mythology*, W.W. Norton & co.

Research: the four Asynja. What are their functions in the mythology?

Presentation: Group 4, Freyja, and group 5, Freyr

Week 4

Monday 09.27: The War of the Asir and Vanir

Presentation: Group 6, Idun

Wednesday 09.29: Giants – The necessary evil

Reading: Gylfaginning chapters 43-47

Friday 10.01: Dwarfs – The magnificent craftsmen

Reading: Larrington, Carolyn (2014): “All-wise’s Sayings” *The Poetic Edda*, Oxford University Press

Presentation: Group 7, The Giants

Week 5

Monday 10.04: The Children of Loki

Reading: Gaiman, Neil (2018): “The Children of Loki” in *Norse Mythology*, W.W. Norton & co.

Gylfaginning chapters 33-34

Presentation: Group 8, the Dwarfs

Wednesday 10.06: The Death of Balder – the beginning of the end

Reading: Larrington, Carolyn (2014): “Baldr’s Dream” *The Poetic Edda*, Oxford University Press

Gaiman, Neil (2018): “The Death of Balder” in *Norse Mythology*, W.W. Norton & co.

Presentation: Group 9, The Children of Loki

Friday 10.08: Ragnarok – the end

Reading: Larrington, Carolyn (2014): “The Seeress’ Prophecy” stanza 43-55 *The Poetic Edda*, Oxford University Press

Presentation: Group 10, Balder

Week 6

Monday 10.11: Thanksgiving, no class

Wednesday 10.13: The new beginning

Reading: Larrington, Carolyn (2014): “The Seeress’ Prophecy” *The Poetic Edda*, Oxford University Press

Friday 10.15: **Midterm, in-class test?**

Module 2: Viking Society and Culture (Week 7-10)

Week 7

Monday 10.18: Introduction to Viking society / recap of history

Wednesday 10.20: Viking Settlements

Friday 10.22: Law, society and slavery

Week 8

Monday 10.25: The Game of Power part 1

Reading: Larrington, Carolyn (2014): “The List of Rig” *The Poetic Edda*, Oxford University Press

Wednesday 10.27 The Game of Power part 2

Friday 10.29: Guest lecturer, post. Doc. Timothy Bourns on Environment, Climate, Crisis, and Sustainability in Old Norse Myth and Culture

Week 9

Monday 11.01: Viking raids – where and why

Wednesday 11.03: Blót and worshipping

Reading: Larrington, Carolyn (2014): “Grimnir’s sayings” *The Poetic Edda*, Oxford University Press

Friday 11.05: Sejd and Runes

Week 10

Monday 11.08: Christianity and the Norse Myths – Balder and Idun

Reading: Larrington, Carolyn (2014): “Baldr’s Dream” *The Poetic Edda*, Oxford University Press

Gaiman, Neil (2018): “The Death of Balder” in *Norse Mythology*, W.W. Norton & co.

Wednesday 11.10: Midterm break, no class

Friday 11.12: Midterm break, no class

Module 3: Medievalism (week 11-13)

Week 11

- Monday 11.15: Medievalism: what is it?
- Wednesday 11.17: Viking re-enactment and fairs
- Friday 11.19: Case: Moesgaard Viking Moot (w/ guest lecturer Historian Anna Lund (maybe))
- Reading:* Jensen, Sara Heil and Lund, Anna Bech (2017). *Moesgaard Viking Moot*, Moesgaard Museum

Week 12

- Monday 11.22: Fakes: guest lecturer Geoffrey Winthrop-Young
- Wednesday 11.24: Jim Lyngvild: when cultural heritage becomes *too* popular
- Friday 11.26: Neopaganism

Week 13

- Monday 11.29: Tolkien, heroes and LARP
- Reading:* Excerpts from *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*
- Wednesday 12.01: Marvel's Thor and Thor in *Valhalla*
- Reading:* Marvel (2016). *Thor – The Goddess of Thunder*
- Friday 12.03: Viking heritage: How Scandis use and connect with their cultural heritage

Module 4: Midwinter solstice (week 14)

Week 14

- Monday 12.06: Drinking Jul and celebrating light

Giants group: feedback on ODIN