

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

<https://uofa.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

2017-2018 SCAND 399 B1 (Special Topics): Literature of Medieval Iceland
(Winter Term)

Instructor: Natalie Van Deusen
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Time: T/Th 12:30-1:50
Place: TBA
Office Hours: TR 10:00-11:00,
or by appointment

Course Prerequisite: None

Course-based Ethics Approval in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes No, not needed, no such projects approved.

Community Service Learning component

Required Optional None

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available

- Exam registry – Students' Union
<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>
- See explanations below
- Document distributed in class
- Other (please specify)
- NA

Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors)

Yes No

Course Description and Objectives:

The course is intended to give students an overview of Old Norse-Icelandic literature from the earliest times until the Reformation in the mid-sixteenth century. It seeks to familiarize students with the vast body of Old Norse-Icelandic literature through a chronological study of the major literary genres: eddic poetry, skaldic poetry, religious literature (homilies, saints' lives, biblical translations), early historical writings, contemporary sagas (bishops' sagas and Sturlunga saga), sagas of Icelanders, mythical-heroic sagas, romances, and rímur). Representative texts from each genre will be read and analyzed in class.

At the end of this course, successful students will be able to:

- identify the primary genres of Old Norse-Icelandic literature
- define and classify key figures, places, events in medieval Iceland
- discuss the historical and cultural contexts of Old Norse-Icelandic literature
- describe and critically analyze the sagas, poems, and ballads covered in class
- conduct a comparative analysis of two works of medieval Icelandic literature of a single genre

Texts:

- Snorri Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*. Penguin Classics.
- Herman Palson, trans. *The Book of Settlements: Landnamabok*. University of Manitoba Press.
- *The Saga of Grettir the Strong*. Penguin Classics
- *Seven Viking Romances*. Penguin Classics
- Marianne Kalinke, ed. *Norse Romance I: The Tristan Legend*. D.S. Brewer
- Jackson Crawford, trans. *The Saga of the Volsungs: With the Saga of Ragnar Lothbrok*.
- Additional readings on eClass

Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):

Participation	10%
Weekly responses	10%
Midterm exam (February 15)	25%
Term paper (due April 12)	25%
Final exam (April 26, 2:00pm)	30%

Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable):

June 7, 2:00p. Please consult the following site:

[http://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=806#Examinations_\(Exams\)](http://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=806#Examinations_(Exams))

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:

Participation

The course utilizes a combination of lecture and discussion, and requires your presence and active participation at each class meeting. It is expected that you will show through class discussion and small group work in class that you have read the material, given careful thought to the meaning of the readings, and prepared responses to study questions. Each individual contribution is important to learning in the class. Your daily participation grade is based on the degree to which you:

- Attend class regularly and arrive at class on time;
- Are engaged and focused during lectures, class discussion, and group work;
- Demonstrate you have read the material through your contribution of well-informed and reflective comments and questions in class;
- Show respect for your classmates’ contributions to class;
- Take responsibility to ask for clarification or further discussion of an assignment when necessary

Weekly Responses

This course requires that you have access both to the Internet and to a University of Alberta email account. Your weekly response will be posted on our discussion board at our class's eClass site.

You will be asked to write one response per week to the works that we read (starting the second week of classes), for a total of **10 responses in all**. Your response (a half page to one page in length--that is, approximately 250-500 words--once a week) should be posted to our class discussion board before **either** our Tuesday or Thursday class meeting by **no later than 9:30 a.m.** Late submissions will not be given credit (i.e. if you miss a class, you may not comment retrospectively on readings that we have already discussed).

To locate the topics for the discussion board on our eClass webpage, log on to eClass and select our course from the menu; select "Weekly Responses" from the left-hand navigation bar; then select the appropriate topic and date. Then click on "Add a new discussion topic" and post your response. When you are finished, click "Post to forum."

A good weekly response will do the following:

- mention at least one specific passage from the week's reading that you would like to discuss in class
- critically analyze the passage (your comment should not just summarize its content or make vague noises about its "importance")
- relate the week's reading to other readings or discussions in the course
- be made in a timely fashion
- be grammatically correct and proofread

Responses are assigned a letter grade based on the extent to which they meet the above criteria, and follow the grade descriptors below. Our class discussion will be guided by your postings, so please write on something that interests you and that will (hopefully) also interest the rest of us. *Make sure that you print out a copy of your response and bring it to class with you, since you should always assume that you will be asked to elaborate on the points you made prior to class.*

Midterm and Final Exams

The midterm (February 15) and final (April 26) exams are a combination of matching, short answer, and essay questions. A study sheet for both will be distributed in advance.

Term Paper

The format of the term research paper (5-7 pages) will be addressed during the second week of classes.

Required Notes:

“Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) of the University Calendar.”

Academic Integrity:

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.governance.ualberta.ca) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

Learning and Working Environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#). Information about the [University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) is described in [UAPPOL](#).

Academic Honesty:

All students should consult the information provided by the [Student Conduct & Accountability Office](#) regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the [Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook](#) and [Information for Students](#)). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

Students involved in language courses and translation courses should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.”

Students in languages courses should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, **excessive editorial and creative help** in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

In this course attendance and active participation are required.

Out of respect for the instructor and other students wanting to learn, texting and other cell phone use is not allowed in the classroom.

Policy for Late Assignments:

Students who consult **in advance** with an instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension just one time throughout the course with no penalty. However, if a second excuse will be granted for late assignments, half of the mark assigned for this particular work will be deducted. Otherwise, all assignments should be handed in on the stated deadline. Any assignment not handed-in in time or unexcused late assignments will not be given any marks. Late excuses will **not** be accepted for any reason.

Student Accessibility Services:

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with [Student Accessibility Services](#), contact their office immediately (1-80 SUB; Email sasrec@ualberta.ca; Email; phone 780-492-3381).

Grading:

Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The

University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%
Excellent. A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students.	A+	4.0	97-100
	A	4.0	93-96
	A-	3.7	90-92
Good. B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.	B+	3.3	87-89
	B	3.0	83-86
	B-	2.7	80-82
Satisfactory. C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.	C+	2.3	77-79
	C	2.0	73-76
	C-	1.7	70-72
Poor/Minimal Pass. D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.	D+	1.3	65-69
	D	1.0	60-64
Failure.	F	0.0	0-59

Note: *Grades of A+ are very rarely awarded.*

Course Schedule
NB: Subject to change

Week 1

January 9: Introduction

January 11: Mythology. Reading: *The Prose Edda*, pp. 3-50 (up to ch. 42)

Week 2

January 16: Mythology. Reading: *The Prose Edda*, pp. 50 (from ch. 42)-108

January 18: Skaldic poetry. Reading: *The Prose Edda*, pp. 108-18; *Ragnarsdrápa* (eClass); poetic excerpts from *Egil's saga* (on eClass)

Week 3

January 23: An age of learning. Reading: *The Book of Settlements*, pp. 15-91 (up to ch. 200)

January 25: An age of learning. Reading: *The Book of Settlements*, pp. 91 (from ch. 200-147)

Week 4

January 30: Hagiography. Reading: *The Saga of Stephen* and *The Saga of Barbara* (eClass)

February 1: Hagiography. Reading: *The Saga of Martha and Mary Magdalen* (eClass)

Week 5

February 6: Kings' sagas. Reading: *Prologue* and *The Saga of the Ynglings* in *Heimskringla*, pp. 3-47 (eClass); *The Saga of St. Olaf Tryggvason* in *Heimskringla*, pp. 137-66 (up to ch. 32) (eClass)

February 8: Kings' sagas: *The Saga of Olaf Tryggvason* in *Heimskringla*, pp. 166 (from ch. 32)-233 (eClass)

Week 6

February 13: Review

February 15: MIDTERM EXAM

Week 7

NO CLASSES - READING WEEK

Week 8

February 27: Contemporary sagas. Reading: *The Saga of the Hvamm-Sturla* (eClass)

March 1: Contemporary sagas. Reading: *The Saga of Bishop Thorlak* (eClass)

Week 9

March 6: Sagas of Icelanders. Reading: *The Saga of Grettir the Strong*, pp. 1-150 (up to ch. 65)

March 8: Sagas of Icelanders Reading: *The Saga of Grettir the Strong*, pp. 108 (from ch. 65)-208

Week 10

March 13: Chivalric sagas. Reading: *The Saga of Tristram*, pp. 39-149 (up to ch. 58)

March 15: Chivalric sagas. Reading: *The Saga of Tristram*, pp. 149 (from ch. 58)-226

Week 11

March 20: Romances. Reading: *The Saga of Sigrgard the Valiant* (eClass)

March 22: Romances. Reading: *Nitida saga* (eClass)

Week 12

March 27-29: **NO CLASS**; use the class time to work on research papers in e-mail consultation with instructor. You are encouraged to make appointments at the Centre for Writers (<http://c4w.ualberta.ca/>).

Week 13

April 3: Heroic sagas. Reading: *Seven Viking Romances*, pp. 25-137

April 5: Heroic sagas. Reading: *The Saga of Ragnar Lothbrok*, pp. 85-133

Week 14

April 10: Ballads, *rímur*, and verse. Reading: *Tristrams kvæði*, pp. 227-40; *Ólafur liljurós* (eClass); *Agnesar kvæði* (eClass)

April 12: Review and concluding discussion. Term papers due.

FINAL EXAM: April 26, 2:00pm