



EUH 4185 - The Viking Experience / Archaeology, History and Heritage
Spring semester 2026
Elie Pinta

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M/W/F - Period 6, 12.50-13.40 pm

Location: Little Hall (LIT) 0237

Office hours: TBD

Course objectives

The course examines the everyday life experiences of the medieval Norse diaspora, spanning from the 8th to the mid-14th century, across Arctic Scandinavia, the Mediterranean shores, Eastern Europe, and North America. examines the everyday life experiences of the medieval Norse diaspora, spanning related to migrations, socio-economic organization, material culture, beliefs, and other aspects examines the everyday life experiences of the medieval Norse diaspora, spanning from the 8th to the mid-14th century, from Arctic Scandinavia to the Mediterranean shores, will be explored through archaeological and paleoenvironmental evidence, as well as historical references.

Beginning with an overview of Vikings and the Viking Age, we will concentrate on the movements of people and the shared heritage and culture that connected them. Specific examples of Norse everyday activities and interactions with their environments will take us from modern-day Russia to the North American shores. We will also explore several craft activities and techniques relying on wood use or textiles. Different aspects of the Norse economy will be tackled, including agropastoralism and hunting practices. A final element of the class will cover the interactions between Vikings/Norse and other populations living at the edge of their world.

Students will become familiar with the following themes:

- Diversity of the Norse lands (Scandinavia, the British Isles, Continental Europe, the North Atlantic)
- Norse economy (agriculture/agropastoralism, hunting/fishing, food and beverages)
- Materiality of the Norse (building techniques, material culture)
- The Norse and their neighbors (Pagans, Christians, and the Others)

Textbooks (selected chapters are used throughout the semester)

- Fitzhugh, W.H. and E.I. Ward, 2000, *Vikings, the North Atlantic Saga*, Smithsonian Institution Press, 532 p. (available at UF Library West General Collection)
- Brink S. and N.S. Price, 2008, *The Viking World*, Routledge, 717 p. (available at UF Library West - Circ Desk/ available online)

Class Policies

- There is no attendance policy, but students are responsible for staying up to date with all lectures and reading the required texts. Class participation will be taken into consideration when determining the overall participation grade.
- Computers and tablets are accepted for taking notes on, but not smartphones. Recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.
- Tests or papers will not be accepted late without proper medical documentation.

Course requirements (will be explained in detail during the first week of class)

- Overall Participation (10%)
- Weekly readings (10%)
- 1 oral (PowerPoint) presentation with supporting text (20%)
- In-class midterm evaluation (20%)
- Final Project (40%)

The Numerical Grading Scale is as follows

A	96-100	A-	93-96
B+	88-92	B	81-87
C+	68-74	C	61-67
D+	48-54	D	41-47
E	<30		

Grading Criteria are as follows

- A-range – 90s -- Excels – Full command and facility with material with the ability to place it within a larger historical/literary context and to make arguments based upon it.
- B-range – 80s – Good – Solid understanding of the material but without a complete facility or ability to make arguments based on it.
- C-range – 70s -- Fair – Some understanding of major themes, lack of command with detail, or some understanding of detail but lack of contextual understanding.
- D-range – 60s -- Poor – Enough factual understanding to pass, but little to no contextual clarity.
- E-range and under – Fails – Lack of university-level quality.

For the grading policies of the University of Florida in general, follow this link: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Note: A minimum grade of C is required for General Education credit.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodation should contact the [Disability Resource Center](#). Students must share their accommodation letter and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (January 12-16)

- Overview of the main topics
- Explanation of the course requirements/Introduction to the Great Viking Survey
- Friday, January 16: Guest Lecture - Library Resources for Anthropology and History Grad and Undergrad Courses, Dr. Ginessa J. Mahar (UF Anthropology Librarian) & Jennifer Hofer (UF History Librarian)

Week 2 (January 19-22)

- Monday, January 19: HOLIDAY
- Wednesday, January 21: Lecture - The Vikings and their Scandinavian Homelands: an Introduction
- Friday, January 23: Lecture - The Vikings: Myths, Representation & Political Exploitation

Week 3 (January 26-30)

Part 1 - The Norse expansion and diaspora

- Monday, January 26: Lecture - The British Isles: from the first raids to the establishment of Viking states
 - Real Viking, Episode 1: 8'10-10'38 (Lindisfarne) / 11'10-16'20 (Anglo-Saxon politics to face the Vikings)
- Wednesday, January 28: Case Study - Evidence of Scandinavian placenames and language
- Friday, January 30: Case study - Paleomobility and paleodiet: moving across the Northern Isles
- Readings: Fitzhugh & Ward 2000, Chapter 8 / Brink & Price, Chapters 6, 27(1), 28, 30, 31

Week 4 (February 2-6)

- Monday, February 2: Lecture - Continental Europe and the Mediterranean
 - Real Viking, Episode 1: 16'20-22' (Carolingian weakness)
- Wednesday, February 4: Case study – Vikings in Frankia: from the Sieges of Paris to the establishment of the Duchy of Normandy
 - Real Viking, Episode 1: 30'51-37'32 (Sieges of Paris)
 - Real Viking, Episode 1: 37'29-43'16 (Rollo & Normandy)
- Friday, February 6: Guest Lecture – 'Vikings in the East', Dr. Florin Curta (Professor, Department of History, UF)

- Readings: Fitzhugh & Ward 2000, Chapters 6, 7; Brink & Price, Chapters 33(1), 34, 36, 37, 38

Week 5 (February 9-13)

- Monday, February 9: Great Viking Survey
- Wednesday, February 11: Lecture - The North Atlantic Saga
- Friday, February 13: Lecture/Case Study - The Faroe Islands: stepping-stone to the North Atlantic
- Readings: Fitzhugh & Ward 2000, Chapters 9, 10 / Brink & Price 2008, Chapters 41, 42(1)

Week 6 (February 16-20)

- Monday, February 16: Lecture/Case Study - Iceland (from *landnám* to the Age of the Sturlungs)
- Wednesday, February 18: Lecture - The Norse Greenlandic settlements: Viking Peasants in the Arctic
- Friday, February 20: Case Study - Norse Greenland & Vínland Sagas
- Readings: Fitzhugh & Ward 2000, Chapters 11, 12, 22, 23, 25 / Brink & Price 2008, Chapters 42, 43

Week 7 (February 23-27)

- Monday, February 23: Lecture - Viking presence in North America: L'Anse aux Meadows and the Vínland Sagas
- Wednesday, February 25: Great Viking Survey
- Friday, February 27: Pre-Midterm exam in-class discussions
- Readings: Fitzhugh & Ward 2000, Chapters 14, 15 / Brink & Price 2008, Chapters 44

Week 8 (March 2-6)

Part 2 - The Norse lived spaces

- Monday, March 2: Great Viking Survey
- Wednesday, March 4: Midterm in-class
- Friday, March 6: Lecture - Norse Farmsteads and their Surroundings

Week 9 (March 9-13)

- Monday, March 9: Great Viking Survey
- Wednesday, March 11: Lecture - Viking towns (Ribe, Kaupang, Hedeby, Birka)
- Friday, March 13: Case Study - Craft (in town and beyond)

- Readings: Brink & Price 2008, Chapters 8, 8(1-9), 13

Week 10 (March 16-20)

SPRING BREAK

Week 11 (March 23-27)

- Monday, March 23: Case study - Walrus ivory (trade routes from Greenland to Kyivan Rus)
- Wednesday, March 25: Case study - Dairy products (butter, skyr, sýra) / Case study - Brewing: then and now
- Friday, March 27: Case Study - Women Roles in the Viking lands; Portraits of Viking Women (Guðríður Þorbjörnsdóttir)

Week 12 (March 30-April 3)

Part 3 - Norse materials and technology

- Monday, March 30: Lecture - Norse building traditions (timber, stone, turf)
- Wednesday, April 1: Case study - Norwegian Stave-Churches
- Friday, April 3: Lecture - Norse ships and shipbuilding (langskip, knörr, boat burials)
 - Real Viking, Episode 1: 4'25-8'10
- Readings: Fitzhugh & Ward 2000, Chapter 5 / Brink & Price 2008, Chapter 11

Week 13 (April 6-10)

- Monday, April 6: Case study - Experimental Viking Archaeology
- Wednesday, April 8: Case study - Norse textiles

Part 4 - Norse Encounters with Others

- Friday, April 10: Lecture - Encounters at the Margins (Arctic, Mediterranean, Caucasus)
- Readings: Fitzhugh & Ward 2000, Chapter 24, 26 / Brink & Price 2008, Chapters 3, 34, 39, 40, 44(1)

Week 14 (April 13-17)

- Monday, April 13: Case study - Imported products in the Norse lands
- Wednesday, April 13: Final Project discussions
- Friday, April 15: Final Project discussions

Week 15 (April 20-24)

- Final Project presentations