

Department of Germanic & Slavic Studies, Medieval Studies program
University of Victoria

The Afterlife of Old Norse Literature in Post-Medieval Times

GMST 369 Topics in Scandinavian Studies
MEDI 360: Selected Topic in Medieval Culture

Time and Place: Mondays and Thursdays 10:00 - 11:20 am, CLE A303

Instructor: Dr. Jón Karl Helgason, CLE D250, 250-721-7320, jkh@hi.is

Office Hours: Mondays 12:30-13:30 pm and by appointment.

Course Materials:

Books (available in the bookstore):

- *The Sagas of Icelanders. A Selection.* Ed. Örnólfur Thorsson (Penguin Books 2000). (In it you find Egils Saga, The Saga of the People of Laxardal, The Vinland Sagas)
- Jón Karl Helgason. *Echoes of Valhalla. The Afterlife of the Eddas and Sagas.* (Reaktion Books, 2017).

Online resources will be distributed in class or through this webpage:

<http://uni.hi.is/jkh/english/the-afterlife-of-old-norse-literature-uvic/>

Course Description:

For the past two hundred and fifty years, Scandinavian myths and Icelandic sagas have had a huge impact on Western mentality, as well as on works of writers, visual artists, musicians, film-makers and designers of computer games all around the globe. In this course we will examine this dynamic creative process, looking with equal interest at playwright Henrik Ibsen who based his *The Vikings of Helgeland* (1857) on themes from Icelandic sagas and the modern Japanese comic artists Makoto Yukimura who in recent years has published thousands of pages of a Manga titled *Vinland Saga* (2005-present). Particular emphasis will be placed on American adaptations of Old Norse literature, involving among others Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Alexander Stirling Calder, Jack Kirby, and Kirk Douglas. You will choose a particular field of study to specialize in and write assignments accordingly.

Course Calendar:

Monday	Thursday
	INTRODUCTION (September 5) Longfellow. <i>The Skeleton in Armor</i> (1841) <i>Echoes of Valhalla</i> , pp. 7-15, 184-97.
RETELLINGS (September 9) The Völuspá (Prophecy of the Seeress) The Hávamál (Saying of the High One), stanzas 104-110.	RETELLINGS (September 12) Snorri Sturluson. <i>The Prose Edda</i> (13 th C) (Prologue, Gylfaginning, and section I of Skáldskaparmál, p. 1-65) <i>Echoes of Valhalla</i> , pp. 45-75.

<p>POEMS (September 16) <i>Njal's Saga</i>, chapters 32-48, 70-80 and 156</p>	<p>POEMS (September 19) Thomas Gray. <i>The Fatal Sisters</i> (1768) Richard Hole. <i>The Tomb of Gunnar</i> (1789) Jónas Hallgrímsson. <i>Gunnar's Holm</i> (1837)</p>
<p>DRAMAS (September 23) <i>The Saga of the People of Laxardal</i>, chapters 39-56</p>	<p>DRAMAS (September 26) Henrik Ibsen. <i>The Vikings of Helgeland</i> (1858) <i>Echoes of Valhalla</i>, pp. 77-86</p>
<p>CLASSICAL MUSIC (September 30) Snorri Sturluson. <i>Heimskringla</i>, <i>Saga of Olaf Tryggvason</i>, ch. 71-76, pp. 435-40 Henry Longfellow. <i>The Saga of King Olaf</i> (parts IV-VIII).</p>	<p>CLASSICAL MUSIC (October 3, 2019) Edgar Elgar. <i>Scenes from the Saga of King Olaf (The Challenge of Thor & The Wrath of Odin)</i> (1896) <i>Echoes of Valhalla</i>, pp. 133-143</p>
<p>VISUAL ART (October 7) Doepler's costumes for Wagner's <i>The Ring Egil's Saga</i>, chapters 1-29</p>	<p>VISUAL ART (October 10) The UVic Database of MyNDIR <i>Egil's Saga</i>, chapters 40-60</p>
<p>SAGAS (October 14) Thanksgiving Day (no class today)</p>	<p>SAGAS (October 17) <i>Egil's Saga</i>, chapters 61-90 Paper 1 due</p>
<p>MOVIES # 1 (October 21) <i>The Vinland Sagas (Eirik the Red's Saga, The Saga of the Greenlanders)</i></p>	<p>MOVIES # 1 (October 24) <i>The Viking</i> (1928) <i>Echoes of Valhalla</i>, pp. 153-171</p>
<p>COMICS (October 28, 2019) Prymskviða (The Lay of Thrym)</p>	<p>COMICS (October 31) Lee and Kirby, <i>The Mighty Thor</i> (1962) <i>Echoes of Valhalla</i>, pp. 17-45</p>
<p>MOVIES # 2 (November 4) <i>The Saga of Ragnar Lodbrok</i></p>	<p>MOVIES # 2 (November 7) <i>The Vikings</i> (1958) <i>Echoes of Valhalla</i>, pp. 144-152 Paper 2 due</p>
<p>EXAM WEEK (November 11) Reading Break (no class today)</p>	<p>EXAM WEEK (November 14) Written exam in class</p>
<p>FOLK & METAL MUSIC (November 18) Krákumál (Ragnar's Death Song) Led Zeppelin. <i>Immigrant Song</i> (1970) Led Zeppelin. <i>No Quarter</i> (1973)</p>	<p>FOLK & METAL MUSIC (November 21) Tyr. <i>The Lay of Thrym</i> (2011) Einar Selvik. <i>Ragnar's Death Song</i> (2017) <i>Echoes of Valhalla</i>, pp. 144-152</p>
<p>TELEVISION SERIES (November 25) <i>The Saga of the Jomsvikings</i> Poster and final versions of paper 1+2 due</p>	<p>TELEVISION SERIES (November 28) <i>Vinland Saga</i> (2005), chapter 1-2 <i>Vinland Saga</i> (2019), episodes 1-2</p>
<p>POSTER WEEK (December 1) Students present their projects/posters</p>	<p>POSTER WEEK (December 4) Students present their projects/posters</p>

Course Requirements and Class Participation:

This is a seminar-style course, and both instructor and students are responsible partners in class discussions. This means that your regular attendance is required, as well as your preparation and participation.

Assignments:

- **An open book exam:** After the reading break there is an open book exam, testing your comprehension of the material we deal with in the course..
- **Papers, posters and presentations:** You are expected to write two papers (5-8 pages each) in this course and to give a short presentations in class that relates to a poster that you prepare. The first paper is an analysis of an Icelandic a medieval text and the other an analysis of a post-medieval adaptation of material relevant to that text. Your poster will focus on the same topic as you second paper.

Grade Breakdown:

An open book exam	30%
2 Papers (30% each)	60%
Poster and presentation (10%)	10%

Grading Scale:

Passing Grades	Grade Point Value	Percentage *	Description
A+	9	90 – 100	An A+, A, or A- is earned by work which is technically superior, shows mastery of the subject matter, and in the case of an A+ offers original insight and/or goes beyond course expectations. Normally achieved by a minority of students.
A	8	85 – 89	
A-	7	80 – 84	
B+	6	77 – 79	A B+, B, or B- is earned by work that indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student's full engagement with the course requirements and activities. A B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application of the course material. Normally achieved by the largest number of students.
B	5	73 – 76	
B-	4	70 – 72	
C+	3	65 – 69	A C+ or C is earned by work that indicates an adequate comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and/or participating in class activities.
C	2	60 – 64	
D	1	50 – 59	A D is earned by work that indicates minimal command of the course materials and/or minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree.

Departmental Course Policies:

Accessibility Statement

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (RCSD) as soon as possible. RCSD staff members are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Concessions and Documentation

Students may ask for an academic concession, such as the rescheduling of a quiz or test or an extension for an assignment, upon providing proper documentation of a personal or medical affliction or of a time conflict. Proper documentation would include a doctor's note or a memo from Counseling Services, or a memo from a coach, employer, or faculty member. It must be dated before or close to the time of the missed work or classes.

Withdrawals and Deferrals

Students who miss substantial amounts of class and assignments without documentation will be asked to withdraw or will receive an 'N' at the end of the semester. Even when the reasons for failing to meet course requirements are valid, it is not academically sound to allow students missing significant amounts of work to continue in the course. Students are to familiarize themselves with the withdrawal dates in the current academic calendar.

A Note on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Actions such as plagiarism, multiple submissions, falsifying materials used in academic evaluations, cheating, or aiding others to cheat violate University policies on academic integrity and are considered serious offence. You must inform yourself about the university regulations (see UVic Policy on Academic Integrity).

Add/Drop Deadlines

It is the student's responsibility to attend to ADD/DROP dates as published in the Calendar and the Undergraduate Registration Guide and Timetable. You will not be dropped automatically from a class that you do not attend.

Classroom Conduct

Since the quality of the learning environment is paramount, every student has the right to learn and your instructor has the duty to perform her or his teaching duties in a cooperative, distraction-free, and effective manner. Activities that could disrupt the learning environment for you and your instructor would include the non-academic use of electronic devices. Students are expected to turn off their cell phones, mp3 players, and other electronic devices during class. The use of laptops is not necessary in the dynamic and participatory environment of a discussion-based course.

Commitment to Inclusivity and Diversity:

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing, and protecting a positive, supportive, and safe learning and working environment for all of its members.

Course Experience Surveys

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term you will have the opportunity to complete a confidential course experience survey (CES) regarding your learning experience. The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. When it is time for you to complete the survey, you will receive an email inviting you to do so. If you do not receive an email invitation, you can go directly to <http://ces.uvic.ca>. You will need to use your UVic NetLink ID to access the survey, which can be done on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device. I will remind you nearer the time, but please be thinking about this important activity, especially the following three questions, during the course.

1. What strengths did your **instructor** demonstrate that helped you learn in this course?
2. Please provide specific suggestions as to how the **instructor** could have helped you learn more effectively.
3. Please provide specific suggestions as to how this **course** could be improved.