

**VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
SCHOOL OF ENGLISH, FILM, THEATRE, AND MEDIA STUDIES**

ENGL 402 Medieval Studies: Icelandic Course Outline (2009 1+2/3)

Course organisation

Tutor Dr Christine Franzen (VZ 919; work phone: 463-6805 or home: 476-6126; christine.franzen@vuw.ac.nz)

Classes will be held in VZ 808 on Tuesday 10-12 [1/3] and Monday 10-12 [2/3]. Additional information or changes will be announced at classes and posted on the course's Blackboard site.

Course aims and objectives

The course aims to introduce students to the language, literature, and culture of medieval Scandinavia, and in particular, Iceland. Students will read a variety of texts, both poetry and prose, in the original language, as well as a number of texts in translation. Most of the texts studied fall into a few broad categories: mythological prose and poetry, heroic/legendary sagas, and family sagas. In addition to one required essay on the family sagas, students will choose another aspect of Old Norse in which to specialise.

By the end of the course students should be able to:

translate Old Norse demonstrating a good standard of accuracy and comprehension;
demonstrate familiarity with a range of texts read in the original as well as in translation;

discuss critical issues and themes arising from the texts;

show familiarity with a range of the secondary literature;

write critically on the texts in a formal academic essay; and

show familiarity with some important aspects of Norse/Icelandic culture and history.

Set texts and course content

Required:

An Introduction to Old Norse, ed. E. V. Gordon (Clarendon).

Snorri Sturluson, Edda, transl. Anthony Faulkes (Everyman).

Njal's Saga, transl. Magnus Magnusson.

Grettir's Saga, transl. Denton Fox and Hermann Palsson (University of Toronto).

[Other translations of these are available and probably acceptable. Check with me.]

Highly recommended:

The Poetic Edda, trans. Carolyne Larrington (Oxford World Classics).

The Sagas of the Icelanders: A Selection (Viking Penguin, 2000).

[The latter is an excellent collection and very reasonably priced, with useful background information. My 2006 class suggested I encourage classes in the future to purchase it.]

A range of other (mostly much shorter) texts will be studied in translation; we will agree on these collectively and individually. The Victoria Library has a good range of Norse texts in translation, and I have a number I can loan out. Many of the texts listed above are available second-hand on Amazon and other such sites.

At this stage I expect that we will translate from Gordon:

I (all), II, III, V (parts), VII, VIII, X, XII, XIII, XIV
The course will start with the mythological section: I and XIII.

Assessment

1. A three-hour final examination, not open-book, sometime during 23 Oct-14 Nov (worth 40% of the final mark versus 60% for in-term work) will consist of passages for translation, and one essay.
2. One essay of about 3000 words (worth 30% of the final mark) on some aspect of the family sagas to be discussed and agreed on an individual basis. This essay will be due no later than **Monday, 5 October, 5:00 p.m.**
3. One essay of no more than 2500 words (worth 20% of the final mark) on some aspect of Norse literature, language, society, or history (such as seafaring, marriage customs, etiquette, the laws, skaldic poetry, mythology, etc.) to be discussed and agreed on an individual basis. This essay will be due no later than **Monday, 13 July, 5:00 p.m.**
4. Two translation tests worth a total of 10% (on dates to be agreed, not during study break) which will be taken from texts in Gordon. The first of these will probably be around the beginning of May.

The tests are designed to check and encourage progress in translating Old Norse through attention to grammar and vocabulary learning. The method of marking translation will be described before the class tests. The essays will encourage you to think critically about the texts.

Due dates, extensions, and penalties for late work

- (i) If you need an extension beyond the due date for an essay, you must apply to me in writing **before** the due date providing supporting documentation (e.g. medical certificate, note from Counselling Service) if available.
- (ii) If an essay is handed in late **without an extension**, it will be penalized by lowering the grade one step. Written work submitted late **without an extension** will be accepted **only** if received by Monday, 12 October, 5:00 p.m.
- (iii) **In exceptional circumstances** extensions may be granted by me up to the last day of the examination period. The University does not permit the School to accept work after this date.

Mandatory course requirements

1. You must complete all the in-term written work noted above.
2. You must attend a minimum of 70% of the classes.

You are expected to come to class with your assigned weekly translation prepared, ready to contribute. You will be expected to present 2 or 3 short seminar papers to the class on aspects of Norse literature or culture to be agreed.

Workload is as for all 400-level full-year courses, about 12 hours per week including class contact hours.

GENERAL UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND POLICIES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the *Victoria University Calendar* or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

This website also provides information for students in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such MATERIAL.

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

TRIMESTER DATES

Monday 2 March – Friday 5 June 2009