HIST471: Viking-Age Ireland and Britain

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Office Hours: TTh 11-12, 2-3:30, or by appointment; Class meets in Monroe 211 TTh 12:30-1:45 PM

Course

With respect to the goals of the History major, students will gain an:

- ability to read critically primary sources and modern authorities
- ability to write with clarity about the past
- ability to utilize technological resources in research
- understanding of the discipline's methods and processes

Readings

Orkneyinga Saga: The History of the Earls of Orkney, trans. Hermann Palsson and Paul Edwards (Penguin, 1981).

Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources, trans. Simon Keynes and Michael Lapidge (Penguin, 1984).

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, trans. Michael Swanton (Routledge, 1998).

Julian D. Richards, *Viking Age England* (Tempus, 2004).

Additional readings can be reached through links on the syllabus. Many primary and secondary sources, as well as bibliographies and other related sources, can be found at Readings and Resources on this site.

Work

1. Proposal 10%
2. Research Paper (20-page minimum) 40%
3. Four short essays (about 3 pages each) 20%
4. Presentation 15%
5. Participation (measured principally by occasional short one-paragraph responses to readings, ungraded, but receiving a check, plus, or minus. Participation includes a peer review, due April 1) 15%.

The Significance of Participation

Participation, which counts for 15% of the grade, will be based on on attendance and contributions to discussions and, most importantly, on frequent short informal writing submitted in class. *You cannot submit a formal or informal writing assignment if you are not in class on the day it is due.* The level of written participation expected of students will decrease as the semester progresses, but my expectations for your oral participation will increase. It is imperative that students keep up with the reading. You will be called on to engage with issues raised by the readings throughout the term. Unless you have chosen to do one of the short formal essays, you will need to turn in a one-paragraph answer to all eight questions. For other class meetings, you may be assigned a question for that day's discussion, and will be expected to write a one-paragraph answer as well as speak on the subject if called upon. Whenever readings are due, you should bring the appropriate book to class. Since many of the readings are online, you will need to bring laptops to class.

Grading Principles

In this class, an A (93–100) or A- (90–92) mean that the work done is of excellent quality. B+ (88–89), B (83–87) and B- (80–82) mean that the work was well done, competent, even excellent in some ways, but that there is room for improvement. C+ (78–79), C (73–77), and C- (70–72) signify that the work was satisfactory in most respects, even good in some ways, but that there was much room for improvement. D+ (68–69) and D (60–67) are passing grades, but mean that much more could be done in most if not all areas of the work, but that it was not missing *in toto* any key aspect of the assignment. I assign grades based on a number of variables which, if they can be named (e.g., style, argument, research, etc.), cannot in reality be separated from each other. Each variable affects the others. Deficient style will vitiate argument; poor research will undermine argument, and so on. Students earning less than a C by mid semester will receive a notice of unsatisfactory performance.

As with all courses at UMW, this class will abide by the honor code. In particular, students must not commit plagiarism. Any questions concerning the boundary between legitimate and illegitimate appropriation and citation of sources should be brought to the professor before assignments are turned in.

Grade

The course grade will consist of the following elements: Proposal for research paper (10%); research paper (40%); presentation (15%); four short pieces (4 x 5%=20%); and participation (15%).

Students with Disabilities

The Office of Disability Services has been designated by the University of Mary Washington as the primary office to guide, counsel, and assist students with disabilities. If you receive services through that office and require accommodations for this class, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your approved accommodations. I will hold any information you share with me in strictest confidence unless you give me permission to do otherwise.

If you have not made contact with the Office of Disability Services and have reasonable accommodation needs, I will be happy to help you contact them. The office will require appropriate documentation of a disability.

Other Resources

If you are depressed or stressed out and finding it hard to cope with school, the people around you, or life in general, I recommend visiting the UMW Counseling and Psychological Services Center: the Center can be reached at (540) 654-1053 (M-F 8-5), or you can stop by Lee 106.

For events and announcements from the History Department, as well as useful pages on research and writing, see the Department's News and Resources website:
http://cas.umw.edu/historyamericanstudies/

Policy on Electronic Devices

You can use a laptop in class. In fact, during some class sessions, you will need one since so many of our primary sources are online. Unfortunately, too often laptops become a distraction, principally for the users, but also for those around them. You are not allowed to use your laptop for anything other than to access the sources under discussion. Phones must be turned off completely and not just set to vibrate. They cannot be used in any way during class and *must not even be visible* (off the table, in a bag or pocket, not in my sight or yours). It follows, then, that there will be no texting during class. To text at any point shows you do not respect me or your classmates, let alone the hard work of some who may be paying your tuition. If I see you texting, you will be asked to leave class that day.

Note: This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

Calendar

January 17 to Jan. 26: Lectures (1) Ireland, England, and the Vikings; (2) Ireland; (3) Scotland, Wales, and the Isles; (4) England.

Instructions and methods

Jan. 19 Research paper explained; How to find secondary sources

Read: G. Jones, History of the Vikings, part III, chap. 3.

Extra reading: Jones on the causes of the viking migrations.

Jan. 24 How to find primary sources

Jan. 26 How to frame a question for research

Pronunciation of names and words: you will encounter names in various early medieval traditions and may find yourself stuck on how to say them out loud. Here's a guide to help with the worst of the lot:

For Old Irish: Annie Loughlin's *Beginner's Guide to Old Irish Pronunciation*

For Old English and Old Norse, we can muddle our way through, since they are (with Old French) the major contributors to modern English. The vikings hardly set foot in Wales, so we don't have to worry overly much about pronouncing names and words in that language!

January 31 to February 7: The Irish, the vikings, and measuring the violence.

February 2 Short essay 1 due by the start of class.

February 7 Short essay 2 due by the start of class.

February 12 Proposal Due by 11:59 PM.

February 9 to February 21: Vikings and the 9th-century invention of England

February 14 Short essay 3 due by the start of class.

February 16 Read the Biddle's essay about the vikings at Repton.

Come prepared to discuss the interpretation of material remains.

February 21 Short essay 4 due by the start of class.

February 23 to March 2: The fall and rise of the Dublin-York kingdoms.

February 28 Short essay 5 due by the start of class.

March 2 Short essay 6 due by the start of class.

March 7, 9 Spring Break

March 14 to March 28: Genocide or assimilation in the Earldom of Orkney?

March 21 Short essay 7 due by the start of class.

March 28 Short essay 8 due by the start of class.

March 30 Open discussion on papers and issues.

April 1 Drafts of papers due to peer reviewers and professor (Saturday, April 1)

April 3 Drafts returned to authors from peer reviewers (Monday, April 3)

April 4 to April 6: King Cnut's North Sea Empire.

April 11 Workshop on presentations

April 13 The end of the age: Stamford Bridge, Hastings, and Ragnarök.

April 18 Citing evidence

April 20 3 presentations: Casey, Buffy, Addam.

April 25 3 presentations: Amy, Robbie, Daniel.

April 27 3 presentations: Eric, Neil, Lauren.

April 28 Department Symposium: You are required to attend at least one session.

April 30 Research Papers due by 11:59 PM

Final Exam: Thursday, May 4, noon to 2:30. 8 presentations: Ethan, Ian, Jake, Cooper, Kevin, Kris, James, Phillip.