

The Viking Age

GERM 216

Spring 2018

Dr. Paul Roberge

TTH 11:00 - 12:15

Gen Eds: HS, NA, WB



Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures



We will discuss Viking culture, mythology, exploration, and projection of power in northern Europe (approx. 750-1050 C.E.) as represented in the literature of medieval Iceland.

In Iceland, which is itself a product of Norse exploration and colonization, the age of the Vikings is also called the Saga Age. Though composed between 1120-1400, the so-called 'family sagas' relate events during the time of the Vikings: from the settlement of Iceland (from 870) through the conversion to Christianity (officially in 1000).

These sagas are to varying degrees fictionalized accounts of earlier events and persons, the purport of which was as much to entertain as to inform. However, the saga writers used these prose narratives to consider the history and current situation of their own people.

We shall seek to extrapolate from this literature -- supplemented by historical and archeological information -- a composite picture of Viking culture and society.

Readings & Class Discussions
in English.