

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

<https://uofa.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

**2016-2017 SCAND 341 A1: Old Norse Mythology and Legends
(Fall Term)**

Time: TR 11:00am-12:20pm

Place: T B 45

Instructor: Dr Natalie Van Deusen
Office: Arts 316-D
Telephone: (no office phones)

E-mail: vandeuse@ualberta.ca
Office Hours: TR 10:00am-11:00am or by appt.
Fax: 780-492-9106

TA: Mary Catherine Lawler

E-mail: mlawler@ualberta.ca

Course Prerequisite: None

Course-based Ethics Approval in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes No, not needed, no such projects involved

Community Service Learning component

Required Optional None

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available

Exam registry – Students' Union
http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services_and_businesses/services/infolink/exams
 See explanations below
 Document distributed in class
 Other (please specify)
 NA

Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors)

Yes No

Course Description and Objectives:

This course provides an introduction to the religious beliefs, mythology, and legends of pre-Christian Scandinavia. It examines literature of the period from ca. 900-1250, which deals with these subjects. It also covers modern retellings of Old Norse mythology, specifically Neil Gaiman's *American Gods*. By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- define and classify key figures, places, time periods, and events from Norse mythology and legends
- discuss the historical and cultural contexts of the myths, legends, and other primary texts covered in the course
- describe and critically analyze the sources of information for Viking Age religious beliefs and legends
- identify and analyze manifestations and appropriations of Norse mythology and legend in modern popular culture

Texts:*

E = Snorri Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, trans. Jesse Byock. Penguin Classics (2005).
P = *The Poetic Edda*, ed. and trans. Jackson Crawford. Hacket Publishing Co. (2015).
L = Lindow, John. *Norse Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Heroes, Rituals, and Beliefs*. Oxford University Press (2001).
V = *The Saga of the Volsungs*, trans. Jesse L. Byock. Penguin Classics (2000).
 Articles and excerpts on eClass (indicated by *)
H = *The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki*, trans. Jesse L. Byock. Penguin Classics (1998).
A = Neil Gaiman, *American Gods*

*You may use electronic (Kindle, iBooks, etc.) versions of these books as long as the translations are the same.

Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):

Attendance	10%
Exam 1 (October 6)	30%
Exam 2 (November 3)	30%
Exam 3 (December 12, 9:00a)	30%

Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable): February 21, 2017

Required Notes:

“Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) of the University Calendar.”

Academic Integrity:

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx>) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

Learning and Working Environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#). Information about the [University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) is described in [UAPPOL](#).

Academic Honesty:

All students should consult the information provided by the [Office of Judicial Affairs](#) regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the [Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook](#) and [Information for Students](#)). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

Students involved in language courses and translation courses should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.” **Students in languages courses** should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, **excessive editorial and creative help** in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the content author(s) or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the instructor.

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

In this course attendance is required in order for the student to get full benefit from the course, and counts for 10% of the final grade. Attendance will be monitored by a daily sign-up sheet.

Out of respect for the instructor and other students, texting and other cell phone use is not allowed in the classroom.

Policy for Late Assignments:

Students who consult in advance with an instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension. Otherwise, assignments may be handed in with a 2%-per-class-day penalty assessed for each subsequent class-day of lateness.

Student Accessibility Services:

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If

you are not already registered with [Student Accessibility Services](#), contact their office immediately (1-80 SUB; Email sasrec@ualberta.ca; Email; phone 780-492-3381).

Grading:

Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%
Excellent. A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students.	A+	4.0	97-100
	A	4.0	93-96
	A-	3.7	90-92
Good. B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.	B+	3.3	87-89
	B	3.0	83-86
	B-	2.7	80-82
Satisfactory. C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.	C+	2.3	77-79
	C	2.0	73-76
	C-	1.7	70-72
Poor/Minimal Pass. D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.	D+	1.3	65-69
	D	1.0	60-64
Failure.	F	0.0	0-59

COURSE SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTION		
Week 1	Introduction	Sept. 1: (No reading assignment)
NORSE MYTHOLOGY: FROM CREATION TO RAGNARÖK		
Week 2	Definitions, Historical Background, and Sources	Sept. 6: <i>L</i> , pp. 1-38 (Introduction) Sept. 8: *Tacitus, <i>Germania</i> (eClass)
Week 3	Creation and the Pantheon	Sept. 13: <i>P</i> , pp. 1-16 (The Prophecy of Ragnarok) <i>E</i> , pp. 9-53 (Gylfaginning, chs. 1-43) [<i>L</i> , pp. 317-318 (<i>Völuspá</i>)] ¹ Sept. 15: <i>P</i> , 145-155 (The Tale of Rig) [<i>L</i> , pp. 260-261 (<i>Rígsthula</i>)]
Week 4	Odin	Sept. 20: <i>L</i> , pp. 247-252 (Odin) <i>P</i> , pp. 17-47 (The Counsel of Odin the One-Eyed), 39-49 (Odin's Contest with Riddle-Weaver), 48-59 (The Words of Odin in Disguise) [<i>L</i> , pp. 150-151 (<i>Grímnismál</i>), 164-165 (<i>Hávamál</i>), 304-307 (<i>Vafthrúdnismál</i>)] Sept. 22: *Odin and Human Sacrifice, The Temple at Uppsala <i>E</i> , pp. 83-86 (Skaldskaparmal, ch. 2) [<i>L</i> , pp. 224-227 (Mead of Poetry)]
Week 5	Thor and Loki	Sept. 27: <i>L</i> , pp. 287-291 (Thor) <i>E</i> , pp. 53-65 (Gylfaginning, ch. 44-48), 86-89 (Skaldskaparmal, ch. 3) <i>P</i> , pp. 81-90 (The Taunting of Thor by Odin), pp. 91-99 (The Fetching of the Cauldron), pp. 115-122 (The Theft of Mjollnir) [<i>L</i> , pp. 161-162 (<i>Hárbarðsljóð</i>), 185-186 (Hrungnir), 189-191 (Hymir), 191-193 (<i>Hymiskvida</i>), pp. 293-296 (<i>Thrymskvida</i>), 302-304 (Útgarda-Loki)] Sept. 29: <i>L</i> , pp. 216-220 (Loki) <i>P</i> , pp. 100-114 (Loki's Taunts) <i>E</i> , pp. 90-94 (Skaldskaparmal, chs. 4-5) [<i>L</i> , pp. 214-216 (<i>Lokasenna</i>), 137-138 (Geirröd)]
Week 6	Exam 1 Review	Oct. 4: --
	Exam 1	Oct. 6: --
Week 7	Gods of Fertility	Oct. 11: <i>L</i> , pp. 121-126 (Frey), 126-128 (Freya) <i>P</i> , pp. 72-80 (The Journey of Skirnir on Behalf of Frey) <i>E</i> , pp. 80-83 (Skaldskaparmal, ch. 1) [<i>L</i> , pp. 138-139 (Gerd), 198-199 (Idun)]

¹ Square brackets ([]) indicate optional, but strongly recommended, reading.

	The Enigmatic Gods	Oct. 13: <i>L</i> , pp. 167-172 (Heimdall), 258-259 (Rán)
Week 8	Baldr and Ragnarök	Oct. 18: <i>L</i> , pp. 65-69 (Baldr), 254-258 (Ragnarök) <i>P</i> , pp. 1-16 (The Prophecy of Ragnarok), 141-144 (Balder's Dreams)
GODS AND MORTALS: HEROIC EPIC		
Week 8	The Two Helgis	Oct. 20: <i>P</i> , pp. 114-141 (The Lays of Helgi)
Week 9	The Völsungs	Oct. 25: <i>V</i> , pp. 33-75 <i>P</i> , pp. 234-259 (The Tale of Regin – The Meeting with Brynhild)
	Sigurd, Brynhild, and the Niflungs	Oct. 27: <i>V</i> , pp. 75-93 <i>P</i> , pp. 260-292 (Fragment of a Poem about Sigurth – Brynhild's Ride to Hel)
Week 10	Gudrun's Revenge; Exam 2 Review	Nov. 1: <i>V</i> , pp. 93-109 <i>P</i> , pp. 293-340 (The Death of the Niflungs – The Tale of Hamthir)
	Exam 2	Nov. 3: --
Week 11	FALL BREAK—NO CLASS	Nov. 8-10: --
Week 12	King Hrolf Kraki	Nov. 15: <i>H</i> , pp. 1-42 Nov. 17: <i>H</i> , pp. 43-78
NORSE MYTHOLOGY IN MODERN LITERATURE		
Week 12	Neil Gaiman's <i>American Gods</i>	Nov. 17: <i>A</i> , Part One
Week 13	Neil Gaiman's <i>American Gods</i>	Nov. 22: <i>A</i> , Part One Nov. 24: <i>A</i> , Part Two
Week 14	Neil Gaiman's <i>American Gods</i>	Nov. 29: <i>A</i> , Part Three Dec. 1: <i>A</i> , Part Four
Week 15	Concluding Discussion; Exam 3 Review	Dec. 6: --