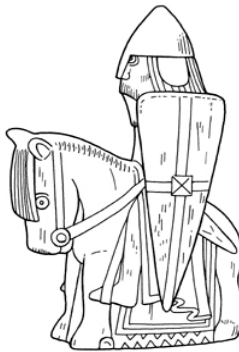


MEDI 401 (S01) 2005

SEMINAR IN MEDIEVAL CULTURE:

“The Viking North: Old Norse Sagas in Translation”

Seminar Room: Cle B415
Instructor: P. A. Baer
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or by appointment



Required Texts:

1. Sagas of the Icelanders, Penguin ed.
2. Saga of the Volsungs, Penguin ed.
3. Njal's Saga, Penguin
4. Coursepack

The extensive literary activity in Iceland during the 12th and 13th centuries has preserved for us a unique picture of medieval Northern Europe. From this period we have a wide range of unusually intriguing, varied and accessible works. These include the Sagas of Icelanders, which anticipate the narrative complexity, thematic richness and scope of the modern novel, the Kings' Sagas, recording the turbulent history of the Norwegian medieval monarchy, Snorra Edda, the central text of Northern Mythology and religion, and the Elder or Poetic Edda, which could be described as its verse counterpart. The course will aim at examining some representative sagas, including the Saga of Gísli, Njál's Saga and Laxdaela Saga, and selections from both Eddas. The works will be viewed with an eye to their contemporary and social and historical background. Students interested in literature, history and anthropology will find these texts open up new vistas.

Course Objectives

1. To read and discuss some outstanding examples of saga literature.
2. To provide an introduction to the social and historical context of saga literature.
3. To discuss concepts and theories relevant to saga literature.
4. To discuss the literary qualities of the sagas.
5. To develop or encourage seminar skills.



Course Outline

(S = Sagas of the Icelanders; C = Course pack; V = Volsung's Saga; N = Njal's saga.)

Week - --1---	Jan. 5 Jan. 7	- Intro to the course. Settlement of Iceland. - How to read a saga discussion: Novel vs. Saga, Historical vs. Fiction, Book Prose vs. Free Prose etc.	C: # 1 S: ix–liv & handout
Week - --2---	Jan. 11 Jan. 12 Jan. 14	- Prose Edda, Poetic Edda, mythology - Volsungs Saga (introduction pages 1 - 11) - Volsungs Saga	C: # 2 - 6 V: Ch. 1 - 15 V: Ch. 16 - 44
Week - --3---	Jan. 18 Jan. 19 Jan. 21	- Volsungs Saga (poems in course pack) - Egil's Saga - Egil's Saga	C: # 7 - 13 S: Ch. 1 - 27 S: Ch. 28 - 55
Week - --4---	Jan. 25 Jan. 26 Jan. 28	- Egil's Saga - Egil's Saga - QUIZ#1 & video clips from Viking movies	S: Ch. 56 - 69 S: Ch. 70 - 90
Week - --5---	Feb. 1 Feb. 2 Feb. 4	- Gisli's Saga - Gisli's Saga - Gisli's Saga & movie (last half of class)	S: Ch. 1 - 12 S: Ch. 13 - 21 S: Ch. 22 - 38
		Saturday, Feb. 5 - The Medieval Workshop: "The Medieval Family"	
Week - --6---	Feb. 8 Feb. 9 Feb. 11	- Gisli's Saga & movie (first half of class) - Hrafnkel's Saga - Hrafnkel's Saga	S: S: Ch. 1 - 16 S:
		READING BREAK - Feb. 14 - 18	
Week - --7---	Feb. 22 Feb. 23 Feb. 25	GUEST LECTURE: Keneva Kunz - Laxdaela Saga - Laxdaela Saga	room: Cle B415 S: Ch. 1 - 28 S: Ch. 29 - 45
Week - --8---	Mar. 1 Mar. 2 Mar. 4	- Laxdaela Saga - Laxdaela Saga GUEST LECTURE: Birna Bjarnadóttir	S: Ch. 46 - 56 S: Ch. 57 - 78 room: Mac D103 N: vii - xxxii
Week - --9---	Mar. 8 Mar. 9 Mar. 11	- QUIZ#2 & video clips from Viking movies - Njal's Saga - Njal's Saga	N: Ch. 1 - 45 N: Ch. 46 - 81
Week - --10--	Mar. 15 Mar. 16 Mar. 18	- Njal's Saga - Njal's Saga - Njal's Saga	N: Ch. 82 - 123 N: Ch. 124 - 158 N:
Week - --11--	Mar. 22 Mar. 23 Mar. 25	- The Saga of the Greenlanders - The Saga of the Greenlanders & Erik the Red's Saga GOOD FRIDAY	S: Ch. 1 - 8 S: Ch. 1 - 14
Week -	Mar. 29	- The Tale of Thorstein Staff-Struck	S: p. 677-84

-12--	Mar. 30 April 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Tale of Audun From the West Fjords - The Tale of Thorstein Shiver - QUIZ # 3 & video clips from Viking movies 	S: p. 715-22 S: p. 712-16
Week - -13--	April 5 April 6 April 8	GUEST LECTURER – Hannes Lárusson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Victorian Viking Novels - Summary, Review, Course evaluation ESSAY DUE (the items in red have been revised since the class started and therefore differ from the print version of the syllabus)	room: Mac D103