This course Scandinavian 132A teaches the Old Norse language of the Icelandic Sagas and the runic writing of the Vikings. The student learns to sagas, myths and runes. We use a new textbook series Viking Language 1 and 2, which includes original Old Norse readings and grammar exercises. The course includes specially designed MP3 download pronunciation exercises and Quizlet web exercises. The lessons in the Viking Language textbook include cultural sections teaching the history and literature of the Vikings. The Icelandic sagas are one of the world’s great literatures. We will read short and long passages that take you deep into the world of Old Scandinavia and Viking Age Iceland.

Beginning Old Norse serves as an entry level class for advanced study of Old Norse language, literature, Viking history, mythology, archaeology, and sagas. There are no prerequisites for this course. The student needs no previous knowledge of other languages; all necessary information
is provided. In addition, Old Norse is taught in a way that prepares the student to learn Modern Icelandic. One almost gets two languages for the study of one.

**Grading:**
Based primarily on class preparation, grammar homework, cumulative quizzes, and vocabulary quizzes:
15% Translation preparation and vocabulary
15% Grammar homework
60% Quizes
10% Participation

**Required Texts:**
- Viking Language 1: Audio Lessons 1-8 (MP3 download). The two MP3 Audio Lesson albums (Lessons 1-8 and 9-15) are available for download on Amazon (search Amazon under "all", "Music", and "Digital Music"), itunes, and [www.cdbaby.com](http://www.cdbaby.com)
- *Viking Language learning modules on Quizlet* (see [https://quizlet.com/class/1806241/](https://quizlet.com/class/1806241/))

**Readings and Homework (HW)** are due on the appointed day (meeting) as noted on the syllabus. Students should be prepared to translate in class the reading passages in the assigned lessons for each meeting and to do all grammar exercises ready for review in class.

- **Viking Language Audio Files.** Use the respective audio file each time you begin a new reading passage. This is a great help, as the audio files teach both pronunciation and vocabulary.
Viking Language learning modules on Quizlet ([https://quizlet.com/class/1806241/](https://quizlet.com/class/1806241/)). For each meeting, study the vocabulary list on Quizlet. The Viking Language Quizlet lessons are prepared by Prof. Lee Forester working with the Viking Language Old Norse Project. The Quizlet vocabulary lists concentrate on teaching the 246 most frequent „saga words“ taught in the Viking Language lessons. We suggest starting with the Quizlet Flashcards, followed by Speller, Learn, and then take the Test. Have fun with the games.

**Scandinavian 132A, Beginning Old Norse Schedule of Meetings**

| MEETINGS 1 & 2 (Jan 8 and Jan 10) | Meeting 1 & 2. Introduction to Old Norse.  
| MEETINGS 3 & 4 | Meeting 3 & 4. Lesson 1: Sailing West.  
Readings: Lesson 1, including ON Passages, Grammar Explanations, and Exercises. Learn about cases and complete all exercises.  
Homework: Audio Lessons tracks 1-3; Quizlet Vocabulary List 1 |
| MEETINGS 5 & 6 | Meeting 5. Lesson 2: Norse Settlers in Greenland and Vinland.  
Readings: Lesson 2.1-2.14  
Homework: Audio Lessons track 4: Quizlet Vocabulary List 2  
Meeting 6.  
| MEETINGS 7 & 8 | Meeting 7. Lesson 3: Denmark: Runes and the First Viking State.  
In class, Quiz 1 on lessons 1-2.  
Readings: 3.1-3.13  
Homework: Audio Lessons tracks 5-8; Quizlet Vocabulary List 3  
Meeting 8.  
Readings and Exercises: 3.14-3.26 |
| MEETINGS 9 & 10 | Meeting 9. Lesson 4: Kings and Heroes.  
Readings: 4.1-4.16  
Homework: Audio Lessons tracks 9-11; Quizlet Vocabulary List 4  
Meeting 10.  
Readings and Exercises: 4.17-4.27 |
Readings: 5.1-5.15  
Homework: Audio Lessons tracks 12-13; Quizlet Vocabulary List 5  
Meeting 12. Reading Chapter 1  
Homework: Audio Lessons track 14  
Readings and Exercises: 5.16-5.30  
Reading Handout, found on digital class portal: *Feud in the Icelandic Saga*, pp. 1-23. |
| Feb 12 and Feb 14 |  |
Readings: 6.1-6.10  
Homework: Audio Lessons track 15; Quizlet Vocabulary List 6  
QUIZ 2: lessons 1-5  
Meeting 14. Reading Chapter 2  
Readings and exercises: 6.11-6.25  
Homework: Audio Lessons track 16  
Reading Handout, found on digital class portal: *Feud in the Icelandic Saga*, pp. 24-47. |
| Feb 19 and Feb 21 |  |
| MEETINGS 15 & 16 | Meeting 15. Lesson 7: Norway’s Harald Fairhair and His Son Eirik Bloodaxe.  
Readings: 7.1-7.11  
Homework: Audio Lessons tracks 17 and 18; Quizlet Vocabulary List 7  
Meeting 16.  
Readings: 7.12-7.25  
Homework: Audio Lessons track 19 |
| Feb 26 and Feb 28 |  |
| MEETINGS 17 & 18 | Meeting 17. Lesson 8: Harald Hardradi in Constantinople.  
Readings: 8.1-8.11  
Homework: Audio Lessons track 20; Quizlet Vocabulary List 8  
QUIZ 3: lessons 3-7  
Meeting 18.  
Readings: 8.12-8.26  
Homework: Audio Lessons tracks 21 and 23 |
| March 5 and March 7 |  |
| MEETINGS 19 & 20 | Meeting 19. Review Lessons 1-8  
Meeting 20. Quiz 4: Lessons 6-8 |
| March 12 and March 14 |  |
| **Extra Credit for the course:** 1) Hand in the exercises for Lesson 9 before taking Quiz 4. | Lesson 9: Raiding in the West  
Readings: 9.1-9.13  
Quizlet Vocabulary List 9 |
2) **Further Extra Credit:** Hand in exercises for Lesson 10 before taking Quiz 4.

Readings: 9.14-9.25

Audio Lessons, tracks 9.25a and 9.25b

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**Runes**

Scandinavian 132A, Beginning Old Norse, teaches the runes of the Viking Age

The sagas tell us:

‘A man should not carve runes, but that he well knows how to control them’

(Skalat maðr rúnar rísta, nema ráða vel kunni).

**THE YOUNGER FUTHARK (16 LETTERS WITH VARIANTS)**

Ancient Scandinavians wrote in runes, and surviving runic inscriptions are a main source of social, historical, and linguistic information about the Viking Age. Runes are an alphabet, not a pictographic or a syllabic script. Just as we might call our alphabet the ABCs, the runic alphabet was composed of runic letters. Called the futhark (ᚠᚢᚦᚩᚬᚦ), it was named after the first six runes.
or runic characters. Runes were carved on wood, stone, bone, antler, and metal. They are found on runestones, weapons, jewelry, everyday items, and on surviving pieces of wood and bark. Runes were used for identification, commemoration, messages, and magic. Runic inscriptions are the closest written sources to the language of the Viking Age (From the textbook, Viking Language 1). For additional readings in sagas, myths, runes, and eddic and skaldic poems, see Viking Language 2: The Old Norse Reader.