Between 700 and 1050 CE Scandinavian traders, settlers, pirates, and conquering armies left a permanent mark on the history, populations, and landscapes of Europe. Viking Age traders connected silver mines in Afghanistan with cattle markets in Ireland and fostered the creation of new trading towns from Novgorod to Dublin. They also sacked innumerable villages, towns, and cities and their sea-borne raids spread terror widely, leading to many hostile mentions in surviving documents. Escalating warfare across the North Sea in the 10th and 11th centuries contributed to state formation on both sides, creating the later medieval kingdoms of England and Denmark. Viking age settlers also made more peaceful use of new seafaring technology and colonized the Atlantic islands from the Shetlands and Orkneys westwards to the Faroes, Iceland, Greenland, and (for a brief moment) to North America/Vinland. In recent years archaeology has come to provide a rich record of the Viking Age and this course provides an overview of the new evidence for this critical period in world history, placing the Vikings in their wider social and environmental context.

Text Books


Requirements: Class Participation, 20 pp research Paper, Saga Commentary (5 pp).

Website to check out: www.nabohome.org