STUDENT MANUAL

FIELD SCHOOL IN NORTH ATLANTIC ARCHAEOLOGY

Vatnsfjörður, Northwest Iceland
June 27 - July 22, 2005

Offered by:

INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY, ICELAND
FORNLEIFASTOFNUN ÍSLANDS (FSÍ)

In cooperation with:

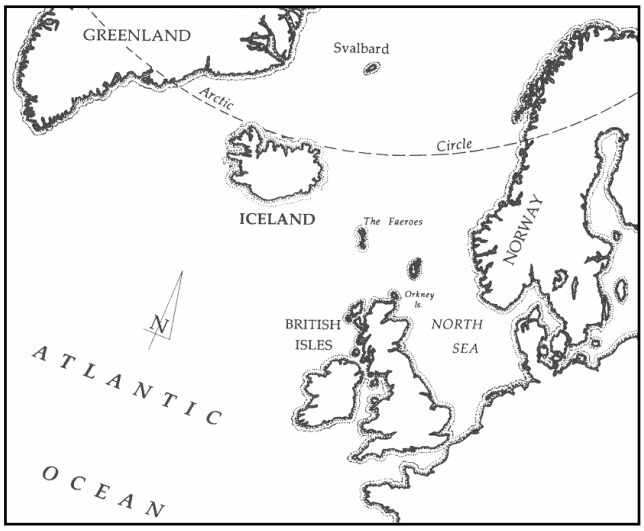
University of Iceland

Northern Science and Education Centre (NORSEC), City University of New York

Centre for Viking and Medieval Studies, University of Oslo

North Atlantic Biocultural Organization (NABO)

Welcome



Welcome to the international Field School in North Atlantic Archaeology! This course was established in 1997 by the Institute of Archaeology, Iceland, in partnership with the North Atlantic Biocultural Organization (NABO), an international research cooperative that sponsors interdisciplinary research throughout the North Atlantic region. The field school is now affiliated with the City University of New York, the University of Oslo, and the University of Iceland, all of which offer it as a credit course. Whichever institution you applied through, you have made it through a rigorous selection processes, so congratulations!

The students who attend the field school – as well the instructors and visiting specialists – come from all over Europe, North America, and the North Atlantic region, creating an international and dynamic learning environment. One of the most exciting aspects of the field school is that students gain hands-on experience with an internationally recognised team of experts who are actively conducting interdisciplinary research in Iceland and the North Atlantic region. This intensive and interactive learning experience has inspired many students to go on to do post-graduate research in North Atlantic archaeology. We hope that you will have a great time on the course, that you will learn a lot, and that you will feel inspired, too.

Introductions

Iceland and Icelanders

Iceland is a remarkably beautiful mid-Atlantic island with diverse landscapes that include rolling green hills, rugged mountains, glaciers, waterfalls, coastal cliffs, sandy deserts, peat bogs, and active volcanic hot spots. Places that look like Ireland and places that look like northeast Greenland may be only a few miles apart. Iceland served as the model for both Rivendell and Mordor for J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*.

Iceland's weather is highly variable – if you don't like it, wait 15 minutes. Summers are cool, with temperatures averaging around 10°C (50 F), highs of about 20°C (70 F) and lows of about 4°C (40 F). The south and west coasts get the most rain, but frequent rain and gales are a fact of life everywhere. Iceland is windy, and the best way to stay warm is to wear several insulating layers and a windbreaker.

Iceland's history has a rich and occasionally grim history. Major population loss due to volcanism, starvation, and epidemic disease, kept the pre-modern population at around 50,000 for centuries. Iceland was a colony of Denmark until 1944, and the long (peaceful) struggle for independence and national revival and modernization is a constant background to the modern culture. Since independence, both the population size and national prosperity have dramatically increased, transforming a poor, rural colony into a modern Scandinavian country

with a high standard of living. People whose grandparents lived in turf (sod) houses now own multiple computers and vacation in Florida, and Icelanders are well aware of the amount of hard work that went into this transition. Recent conflicts over cod are not trivial to a country where 70% of the national product comes from the sea, and some tensions remain over the NATO base at Keflavík, but you will generally be forgiven your nationality if you are polite.

The present population of Iceland is around 250,000, with the majority of people living in or around the capital of Reykjavik (c. 150,000). Reykjavik is a trendy, clean, safe, modern city, with malls, high street shopping, world-class restaurants, an active nightlife, and a high density of cultural centres, bookshops, art galleries, and museums. English is widely spoken (especially by people under 50), and there will be little communication problem in most places (which is good, as Icelandic is not an easy language to pick up). After Reykjavik, the next largest city is Akureyri (15,000), in northeast Iceland, and the rest of the population is spread around in small towns and farms around the country. For more information on Iceland, you will find both the www and travel guides (e.g. Lonely Plant) useful.

The Westfjords

The landscape of the Vestfirðir peninsula in northwest Iceland is among the most rugged and beautiful in Iceland. Its coastlines are dominated by narrow fjords and steep headlands (pictured below), while its interior areas, at elevations over 700 m, contain rocky tundra dotted with hundreds of ponds. The southern coast of the largest fjord, Ísafjarðardjúp ('ice fjord deep'), is cut by numerous smaller fjords, including Vatnsfjörður, where our site is located. The region's gravel highways follow this winding coastline, which results in beautiful views, but long driving distances. Reykjanes, where we will be staying, is a low-lying, finger-like peninsula jutting out between Reykjarfjörður and Ísafjörður, at the very base of Ísafjarðardjúp. The hot springs at Reykjanes ('smoke peninsula') heat an outdoor pool and greenhouses, and were used for salt extraction from 1770-1790.

Although land suitable for sheep husbandry is scattered around the Vestfirðir peninsula, the landscape has always lent itself to the exploitation of marine resources, and inhabitants have placed a great emphasis on fishing, stranded marine mammals (e.g. whale), and the rendering of shark liver oil. Many farms and fishing villages that were established in the more remote parts of the Vestfirðir up until the late 19th century underwent a drastic process of abandonment in the first decades of the 20th century. By 1950 the northernmost peninsula, Hornstrandir, was completely uninhabited, and the area is now a national park.

The largest settlement and commercial centre of the Vestfirðir is the pretty harbour town of Ísafjörður (population c. 3500), a 165 km (4 hour) drive northwest of Reykjanes. Ísafjörður is arguably the most beautifully situated town in Iceland, occupying a narrow spit of land

surrounded by the waters of the Skutulsfjörður (‘harpoon fjord’), and hemmed in by steep mountains (pictured right). The town contains restaurants, shops, and other amenities, as well as the Westfjords Maritime Museum, one of the finest small museums in Iceland.

The site of Vatnsfjörður

The farm of Vatnsfjörður (‘lake fjord’) is at the bottom of the fjord of the same name (see the map below). The farm is mentioned in written texts dating as far back as the 13th and early 14th centuries, including *Landnámabók*, *Eyrbyggja Saga*, *Laxdæla Saga*, and *Grettir’s Saga*, where it was the home of such colourful characters as Vermundur the Lean and his forceful wife Þorbjörg the Stout. In these texts, which purport to describe events in the late 9th and 10th centuries, Vatnsfjörður is depicted as a wealthy and important farm, inhabited by chieftains who control large parts of the Westfjords. In the 13th and 14th centuries, the Vatnsfirðingar clan, named after the farm that was its main seat of power, was one of the richest and most powerful families in Iceland. They owned farms and received rents in the form of dried fish and other marine products from farms all over the Vestfjirðir peninsula, and the location of Vatnsfjörður gave them control over lucrative trade routes. A church was built on the farm in the 12th century, which was extremely wealthy and influential until the Reformation in the mid-16th century. Vatnsfjörður was the site of the parish church until the late 20th century, and still remains a productive farm.

In 2003, a programme of historical research, regional archaeological survey and excavations at the site of Vatnsfjörður were initiated by the Institute of Archaeology, Iceland, directed by Ragnar Edvardsson. Within its homefield boundary wall, the farm contains ruins of Viking Age buildings, a 2-3 m high mound made up of a sequence of buildings dating from the medieval period through the 19th century, ruins of numerous outhouses (e.g. animal buildings and smithies), and a circular graveyard next to the church. The two turf buildings excavated in 2004 contained artefacts datable to the 10th century, including glass beads and a spindle whorl, as well as less diagnostic artefacts such as

a whetstone, a worked whale bone, a loom weight, an iron door lock, and iron nails. The earlier of the two buildings was a typical Viking Age house, measuring 16 m long by c. 6 m wide, with curved long-walls, a large central hearth, and evidence for platforms or benches along its sides (pictured above). The later building partially reused the foundations of the earlier building, but shortened it at the southern end; it measured only 9 x 6 m. This later building had a small hearth at its southern end, and a large circular pit filled with small, fire-cracked stones. In 2005, we will extend the excavation to include another building and an associated midden deposit, which we expect to be rich in faunal remains. We will also be conducting further tests on the farm mound, and the soils of the homefield.

Meet your instructors

The field school is staffed by the Institute of Archaeology, Iceland (FSÍ), which has been carrying out excavations and field surveys throughout Iceland since 1995. Each of your core instructors has had twelve or more years of experience on research and developer-funded excavations and survey projects, and is actively engaged in archaeological research projects in Iceland. In addition, the field school will be visited by a number of specialists who will teach you about the research they are conducting in Iceland in their field of expertise.

Your core field instructors are:

Karen Milek, Director of the Field School, FSÍ. Karen has been excavating in Canada, the United Kingdom, and Iceland since 1992, and was an instructor on the field school for three years. She is a specialist in geoarchaeology, and in the archaeology of Viking Age settlements and houses, and is close to finishing her PhD project, 'Houses, Households, and Societies in Viking Age Iceland: Geoarchaeology and the Interpretation of Social Space'.

Ragnar Edvardsson, Archaeologist and Illustrator, FSÍ, and Head of Archaeology, Natural History Institute of Northwest Iceland. Ragnar has been excavating and surveying in Iceland for 15 years, and has been an instructor on the field school since it started in 1997 (pictured left). Ragnar is a specialist in field survey, excavation, archaeological illustration, and the archaeology of the Westfjords, and is close to finishing his PhD project, 'The Development of Fishing and Fishing Communities in NW Iceland'.

Oscar Aldred, Project Manager and Digital Data Manager, FSÍ. After completing his MA in Landscape Studies, Oscar worked for many years as a professional archaeologist in the United Kingdom. He has been surveying and excavating in Iceland, and teaching at the field school, since 1999. He is a specialist in landscape archaeology and computer applications that use GIS and databases. He is currently conducting research in aerial archaeology and remote sensing, and is directing the 'Northwest Landscape Project'.

Your other instructors include:

Adolf Friðriksson, Director of FSÍ, and Director of the Vatnsfjörður Project. Adolf is a specialist in the history of Icelandic archaeology, popular archaeology, and the culture of Viking Age Iceland, and is currently conducting research on Viking Age mortuary practices.

Hildur Gestsdóttir, Palaeopathologist, FSÍ. Hildur is a specialist in human palaeopathology, and is engaged in research on human skeletal remains, health in medieval Iceland, and migration to Iceland using strontium isotope analysis of teeth.

Garðar Guðmundsson, Head of Palaeoenvironmental Research, FSÍ, and President of the Society of Icelandic Archaeologists. Gardar is an archaeobotanist, and conducts research on plant remains and cereal cultivation in medieval Iceland.

Professor Christian Keller, Centre for Viking and Medieval Studies, University of Oslo. Christian is a specialist in landscape archaeology and the Viking Age and medieval archaeology of Norway and the North Atlantic region. He is currently collaborating on the project 'Transformation in the Viking and Norse Middle Ages c. 750-1350'.

Ruth Maher, Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York. Ruth specializes in GIS applications, and is conducting PhD research on Viking Age burials and the Norse cognitive landscape in order to further understand migration and settlement.

Professor Tom McGovern, Director of the Hunter College Bioarchaeology Lab, City University of New York. Tom is a specialist in zooarchaeology and medieval archaeology in the North Atlantic region. He is currently collaborating on the 'Landscapes of Settlement Project', and the 'Landscapes circa Landnám Project' on the Faeroes, Iceland, and Greenland.

Professor Ian Simpson, School of Biological and Environmental Sciences, University of Stirling. Ian is a soil scientist, and he specialises in human and animal ecology in the North Atlantic region. He is currently collaborating on the 'Landscapes of Settlement Project', and the 'Landscapes circa Landnám Project' on the Faeroes, Iceland, and Greenland.

Mjöll Snæsdóttir, Senior Archaeologist, FSÍ, and Editor of the *Yearbook of the Archaeological Society*. Mjöll is an expert in the archaeology of medieval Iceland and farm mound archaeology, and was the director of the 'Stóraborg Farm Mound Project' (1978-1990), the largest salvage excavation project ever carried out in Iceland.

Dr. John Steinberg, Research Associate, UCLA Institute of Archaeology. John is an expert in the application of geophysical survey techniques to archaeology, and is director of the 'Skagafjörður Archaeological Settlement Survey Project'.

Dr. Orri Vésteinsson, Lecturer in Archaeology, University of Iceland. Orri is a specialist in the social and economic history of medieval Iceland, settlement archaeology, and the history and archaeology of the Icelandic church. He is collaborating on numerous projects, including the 'Landscapes of Settlement Project' in northeast Iceland.

Logistics

What to bring

✓ **Passport:** It is a good practice to make a photocopy of the first page (with your picture) and carry this separately in case you lose the original. No special visa is required for Iceland.

✓ **Travel & health insurance:** It is essential to have travel and health insurance coverage while you are in Iceland. EU/EEA students should bring a European Health Insurance Card, which entitles you to full medical care in Iceland.

✓ **Personal medication:** Bring an adequate supply of any prescription medication you are taking. Many over-the-counter drugs are not available in Icelandic pharmacies, including decongestants and most cold remedies, so it is a good idea to bring an emergency supply.

✓ **Money:** Your food and accommodation will be provided from June 27-July 22, but you will need Icelandic kronur (ISK) for food and transportation on your travel days, and your days off. Iceland's prices are similar to Scandinavia's (i.e. high). Credit and debit cards are accepted everywhere, and it is easy to withdraw money from automated teller machines.

✓ **Suitable clothes:** Come prepared for all weather conditions, and to wear multiple layers.

- ✓ **Waterproofs:** Full body coverage, including both tops and bottoms. Goretex is not recommended; heavy-duty rubberized waterproofs of the kind worn by fishermen and construction workers are better.
- ✓ **Windbreaker:** Windproof over-jacket, preferably loose enough to layer beneath.
- ✓ **Insulation:** A fleece jacket/vest, a heavy sweater, wool shirts, and thermal socks and underwear are all useful.
- ✓ **Hats:** Both a wool hat and a billed/brimmed hat (e.g. baseball cap) are useful, the former for particularly cold days, the latter for sunny or rainy days.
- ✓ **Boots:** Sturdy, waterproof boots.
- ✓ **Work clothing:** Long trousers, long-sleeved shirts, T-shirts, and work gloves. Think old and sturdy.
- ✓ **Recreational clothing:** Lighter clothing to wear indoors and on your days off. Shoes are not worn inside, so you may want to bring slippers or Birkenstocks for indoor wear. If you intend to do any sports (there is a gymnasium at Reykjanes), you should come equipped for that as well.

✓ **Sleeping bag:** You will be using this inside, but in case you want to go camping during your stay, we recommend a sleeping bag that is suitable for conditions as low as +10°F/-10°C.

✓ **Knapsack & water bottle:** You will need to carry extra clothes and your lunch to the field. We provide coffee and tea; if you want anything else you could bring your own thermos.

✓ **Journal, writing & reading materials:** You should come prepared to write a personal journal (compulsory assignment), and to take notes during the lectures. Books and papers on archaeology will be available, but you may also want to bring recreational reading material.

✓ **Eye mask and earplugs:** You will be sharing a room with other students, and may find that these accessories help you sleep. Remember: there will be nearly 24 hours of daylight!

✓ **Towel, toiletries, and rubber-soled footwear for the shower:** The showers are clean, but wet floors can become slippery, and rubber-soled footwear can prevent accidents.

✓ **Bathing suit:** There is a naturally heated outdoor pool and sauna at Reykjanes (pictured right), which you may want to use. You may also want to visit the pools in Reykjavik or the Blue Lagoon.

✓ **Sunscreen and insect repellent**

✓ **Vitamin supplements**

✓ **Personal trowel:** We have spares, but you may want to bring your own (preferably 3").

✓ **International phone card & student ID:** Some discounts are available.

✓ **Camera:** If you bring a camera, remember to bring a waterproof/dust-proof bag for it.

What not to bring under any circumstances

✖ Firearms
✖ Knives larger than a Swiss army knife
✖ Recreational drugs of any kind

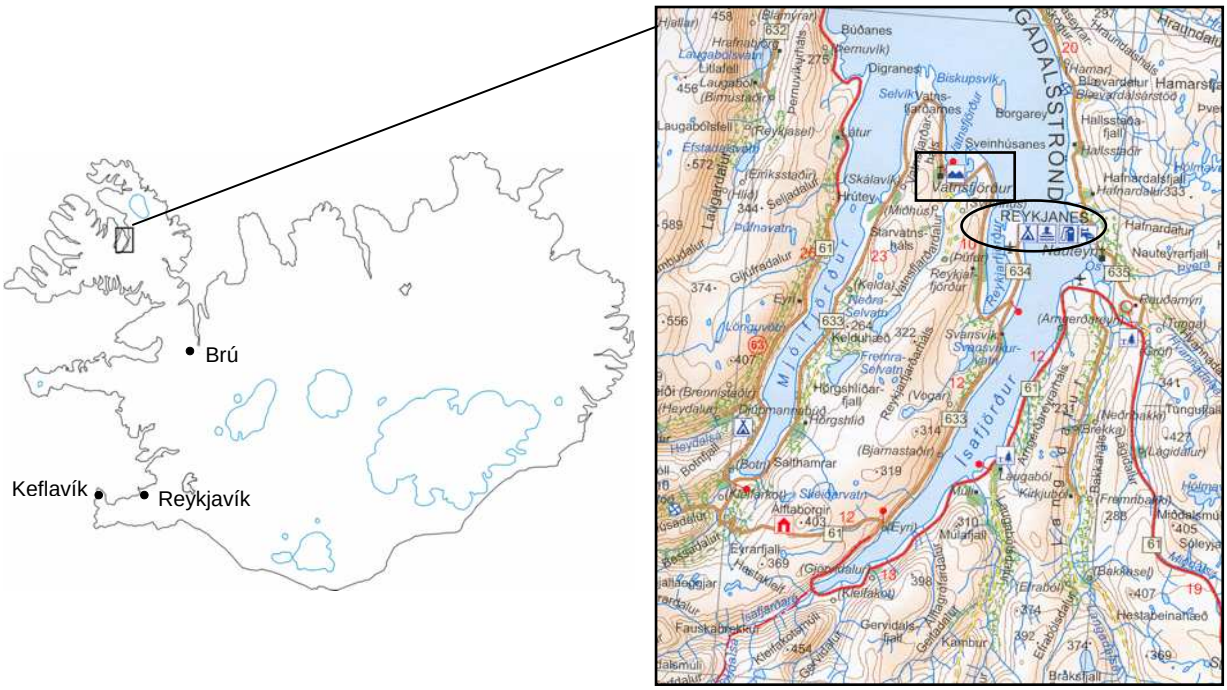
Warning: There is a zero tolerance policy towards drugs and weapons, and any student in position of one of these items will be immediately removed from the field school.

Travel itinerary

If you are coming to Iceland from abroad, you should book your flight to Keflavík international airport as soon as possible. All other tickets (e.g. bus) can be purchased en route.

Fly to Keflavík airport no later than Saturday June 25.
• Take the Flybus to Reykjavík city centre, which takes about 45 minutes (1150 ISK).
• Accommodation in Reykjavík will be provided for students on the night of June 25 (details about where you are staying and how to get there will be provided nearer the date).

Sunday June 26: bus from Reykjavík to school accommodation at Reykjanes.
• Take the 8:30 am bus from the BSA bus station in Reykjavík to Brú, to arrive at 11:00 am (2100 ISK with the group discount). Have lunch in Brú.
• Take the 2:00 pm bus (marked 'Stjörnubílar') from Brú to Reykjanes, to arrive at 4:30 pm (3300 ISK with the group discount).



Accommodation

The field school will be housed at Hótel Reykjanes – formerly a school (pictured below) – on the Reykjanes peninsula, about 20 minutes away from the excavation site at Vatnsfjörður. Here we will have:

- Shared accommodation, bathroom, and shower facilities (2-3 students per room).
- Meals provided (students take turns to help set up for breakfast and clear up after dinner).
- A lecture room and lab facilities.
- A sitting room (pictured right).
- A gymnasium, pool, and sauna (pictured above).
- A small shop (the only one in the vicinity).
- Email facilities.

✉ **Postal address at Reykjanes:**
Ferdaþjonustan Reykjanesi
c/o Fornleifastofnun Íslands
401 Ísafjörður
Iceland

✆ **Telephone at Reykjanes (for emergencies only):**
(+354) 456 4844

There is no mobile telephone coverage in the area.

Health and Safety

On-site hazards and preventative measures

Archaeological fieldwork has inherent health and safety risks. It is important to be aware of these potential risks, and to take common-sense actions to try to prevent them. Most accidents on site happen because of careless handling of tools, or because people fail to keep an eye out for trip hazards. Please remain diligent and help to prevent injury to yourself and others!

We are also at risk from colds and flu because we are working outside, sometimes in bad weather, and because we are living in shared accommodation. Please take every precaution to prevent illness by being prepared for rapid weather changes while we are on site and on field trips (i.e. having warm clothing and full waterproofs with you at all times). We also recommend that you bring a supply of vitamin supplements with you in order to keep your immune system strong, and a supply of cold/flu medication – just in case.

Please read the Vatnsfjörður Excavation Risk Assessment, below, and take careful note of the actions that should be taken to prevent accidents or illness.

Vatnsfjörður Excavation Risk Assessment 2005

Hazard	Effect	Severity	Likelihood	Risk	Preventative Actions
Trenches, uneven ground	Injury to self: tripping, falling	Medium	Low	Low-Medium	• Awareness of trip hazards at trench edge (e.g. crumbling sections, strung lines, grid points) • Sturdy footwear to prevent twisted ankles
Deep excavations, test pits, ditch sections	Injury to self: section collapse	Medium	Low	Low	• Stepped access and shoring • Use of fencing, hazard tape or railings to mark and enclose deep excavations • Protective clothing, sturdy footwear
Hand tools	Injury to self and others	Medium	Low	Low-Medium	• Proper handling of tools, with awareness of proximity to other people • Shallow slope barrow runs and wheelbarrows not over-filled • Solid shovelling platforms • Tools kept centralised, not lying around site, and stored at the end of the day • Shovels, spades, and other tools laid point down
Severe weather	Illness	Low	Medium	Low-Medium	• Wearing appropriate clothing layers, including waterproof and windproof outer clothing and footwear

Scales are from low to very likely/serious

Off-site hazards and preventative measures

There are, of course, off-site hazards as well, and although it is impossible to mitigate against all of them, we would like to draw your attention to a few issues in particular:

Driving: You must wear seatbelts at all times.

Swimming: The pool at Reykjanes, which is geothermically heated, may sometimes become too hot, and it must be used with caution. It is too shallow to dive in, but deep enough to drown in! The pool may not be used by anyone who has been drinking.

Showers: Wet floors become slippery, and rubber-soled footwear can prevent accidents.

Hiking: If you go walking, please take a friend, a map, a compass or GPS, food, and appropriate clothing. Tell a member of staff where you are going and when you will be back, and then stick to your route and schedule.

Behaviour: Excessive drinking and other irresponsible behaviour can endanger yourself and the people around you. You are expected to behave safely and responsibly at all times.

Important Health and Safety Information

- A health and safety manual and first aid kit will be available on site at all times
- At least one trained first-aider will be available on site at all times
- Trained first-aiders: Oscar Aldred, Ragnar Edvardsson, Garðar Guðmundsson, Karen Milek
- The nearest hospitals are at Hólmavík (100 km away) and Ísafjörður (165 km away)
- Emergency telephones are at the Vatnsfjörður farmhouse and the hotel in Reykjanes

The emergency telephone number in Iceland is 112

Warning: dangerous behaviour will not be tolerated

We will be living and working in a remote area, where conditions can be harsh, and where medical assistance may be hours away. It is therefore essential that everyone behave safely and responsibly at all times. Ignoring the safety procedures set out in this manual, or the instructions of staff members, may endanger yourself and the people around you. Dangerous behaviour will not be tolerated, and any student who acts irresponsibly will be immediately removed from the field school.

Confidential Health and Safety Form

Please print, complete, and sign the Confidential Health and Safety Form below, and send it to Ólöf Þorsteinsdóttir, Fornleifastofnun Íslands, Bárugata 3, 101 Reykjavík, Iceland.

Field School in North Atlantic Archaeology 2005
Confidential Health and Safety Form

Name:	University:
Email:	Address:
Telephone number(s):	

Next of Kin Contact Information

Name of someone who can be contacted in case of emergency:	
Relationship:	Address:
Telephone number(s):	

Medical Information

Do you have a medical condition that might affect your work on the field school? If yes, and you think we should be aware of your condition, please provide details:	Yes ☐ No ☐
Do you have any allergies? If yes, please check the box to confirm that you are bringing antihistamines, epinephrine, or other medication that you normally use to treat these allergies. If yes, and you think we should be aware of your allergies, please provide details:	Yes ☐ No ☐ I confirm ☐
Are you taking any prescription medication? If yes, please check the box to confirm that you are bringing sufficient medication for the duration of the field school.	Yes ☐ No ☐ I confirm ☐
Are your vaccinations up to date (especially against tetanus)? Please check the box to confirm that your tetanus vaccination is up to date.	I confirm ☐
Do you have health insurance to cover you while you are on the field school? (e.g. if you are from an EEA state, do you have a European Health Insurance Card?) Please check the box to confirm that you have adequate health insurance.	I confirm ☐

Statement of Informed Consent

I have read and understand the written health and safety information and the risk assessment presented to me in the student manual for the field school. I recognize that archaeology has inherent hazards that cannot be fully mitigated by any set of safety procedures, and I accept the risks inherent in participating in this field school.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Field School Programme

Aims of the course

The field school will give you:

• an overview of Viking Age and medieval archaeology in the North Atlantic region

• insight into the technical and theoretical issues pertinent to Icelandic archaeology, including past and present trends in field work and interpretation, current research debates, and the use of written records

• thorough grounding in archaeological field methods, including survey, excavation, recording, and sampling

• knowledge of a range of post-excavation methods, including the processing of artefacts, faunal, botanical, and sediment samples, and field data

• a certificate of participation upon completion

Pre-Course Work

You are all expected to have done some reading in preparation for the field school – at the very least the readings that have been marked with a star (see the reading list below) – but preferably more. Those students who are registered with the University of Oslo will find information and articles on the web, and will have access to the student-teacher dialogue programme known as 'Classfronter'. These students should contact Professor Christian Keller for the web site addresses and the on-line access codes (j.c.keller@mellomalder.uio.no).

Fieldwork

Working day: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday. Please make sure that you are packed and ready to leave Reykjanes promptly at 8:00 am.

Transportation: From Reykjanes to Vatnsfjörður and back, by car and/or minibus.

Breaks: 30 minute coffee breaks in the morning and afternoon, and a 45 minute lunch break.

Facilities: At Vatnsfjörður, there is a shelter where we can store our equipment, and where we can take our breaks and lunches if the weather is bad. The farmer has graciously agreed to let us use his bathroom, but remember to take your shoes off before entering the house, and to keep the bathroom clean!

ⓘ **Learning Programme:** The fieldwork programme covers both excavation and survey techniques, including field survey, soil survey, and geophysical survey. This programme will progress through a series of stages, but the speed and timing of these stages will remain flexible because students often come with different levels of experience.

Excavation Programme at Vatnsfjörður

Stage 1: Preparing for the excavation

- Surveying: topographical survey, field walking, geophysics, soil auger survey
- Evaluating a site: identify archaeological objectives
- Choosing where to dig: site tour, and rationale for digging location
- Laying out the site grid: basic surveying techniques (total station, triangulation using tapes: 1x1x1.41; 2x2x2.83; 5x5x7.07; 10x10x14.14, etc.)
- Defining the excavation area: open area vs. trench vs. test pit
- Handling and care of tools: what to use, when, and how
- Deturfing and removing topsoil

Stage 2: Introducing vertical stratigraphy and how to record it

- Introducing the site hut and the site records: registers, recording forms, finds processing, sample processing
- Introducing vertical stratigraphy: observation of a test pit
- Drawing a section
- Describing soils and sediments: filling out context sheets
- Constructing a stratigraphic matrix
- Taking samples from vertical sections

Stage 3: Introducing horizontal archaeology and how to record it

- Sequence: clean, photo, draw, measure, excavate
- Cleaning the site
- Taking photographs
- Identifying and recording units: layers, cuts, fills, features, structures
- Drawing multi-context and single-context plans
- Taking elevations
- Keeping track of multiple relationships between layers
- Taking samples from horizontal units: when to sample and how to do it

Stage 4: Introducing excavation methods

- Excavating: spading and trowelling techniques
- Moving dirt off the site
- Screening: when to sieve sediment and how to do it
- Dealing with finds: recording finds, lifting and storing fragile finds
- Interpreting contexts

Stage 5: Beginning unsupervised excavation

- Recording and excavating a unit on your own, then another, then another…

Stage 6: Closing down the excavation

- Covering, returfing, and protecting the site

Landscape Survey Programme in the Vatnsfjarðardalur and Surrounding Area

Observing the landscape

- Landscape representations: maps, photos, paintings, descriptions, place-names
- Geomorphology: bedrock, glacial deposits, rivers, fluvial deposits, beaches
- Water: ground water, surface water, water management, erosion
- Resources: homefields, pastures, remote pastures, fuel, coastal resources
- Plants: indicator plants for archaeologists, edible and usable plants
- Archaeological sites: main settlements, farm mounds, boundary walls, shielings
- Landscape use: prehistoric, historic, modern

Recording the landscape

- Field survey: integrating oral histories, documents, place-names, field observations
- Aerial survey: studying landscapes using aerial photographs
- Soil survey: augering and soil test pitting
- Geophysical survey: soil resistivity and magnetometry
- Sketching landscape features and earthworks
- Mapping landscape features and earthworks using the plane-table
- Computer mapping of landscape features and earthworks using GPS

Analysing the landscape

- Inclusivity in landscape analysis: applying methods equally to all periods and components of the landscape, no matter how transient or modern
- Concepts of scale: analysing and integrating data from local, regional, and national perspectives
- Relationships between past and present landscapes: dialogues between geography, history, archaeology, and anthropology
- Understanding processes of landscape creation, change, and continuity

Post-Excavation Work

On weekday evenings, you will help the staff with post-excavation work. The nature and quantity of this work will vary at different stages during the field season, so the schedule will remain flexible, but you will rotate through the following post-excavation activities:

Digitisation of the site archive

- downloading and registering of digital photographs
- database entry of registers and context sheets
- scanning and tracing of plans and section drawings

Artefact processing

- field conservation of artefacts (stabilizing)
- cleaning artefacts if appropriate (washing or dry-brushing)
- weighing, measuring, describing artefacts and entering data in the digital register
- bagging and boxing artefacts safely

Bone processing

- laying bones out to dry to make them more robust
- preliminary sorting

• bagging and boxing bones safely

Sediment processing

• flotation of bulk sediment samples to recover organic remains
• laying flotation samples out to dry
• preliminary sorting
• bagging and boxing organic remains safely

Lectures

On Saturday mornings and some weekday evenings you will attend lectures on the archaeology of Iceland and the North Atlantic region. These will be given by the core teaching staff as well as a number of visiting archaeologists and specialists. The lecture schedule will be provided when you arrive at the field school, and may be somewhat flexible depending on the schedules of the lecturers. Topics will include:

Introductory lectures

• Welcome and general orientation (Karen Milek)
• Introduction to the Vatnsfjörður project (Ragnar Edvardsson)

Archaeological overviews

• Viking Age archaeology in Scandinavia and the North Atlantic (Christian Keller)
• Medieval archaeology in Scandinavia and the North Atlantic (Christian Keller)
• The history of Icelandic archaeology (Adolf Friðriksson)
• Current issues in Icelandic archaeology (Orri Vésteinsson)
• The archaeology of the Westfjords (Ragnar Edvardsson)
• The excavation of turf buildings and farm mounds in Iceland (Mjöll Snæsdóttir)

Scientific applications in archaeology

• Aerial archaeology, field survey, and landscape studies in Iceland (Oscar Aldred)
• Archaeological dating methods in Iceland and the North Atlantic region (staff)
• Zooarchaeology in Iceland and the North Atlantic region (Tom McGovern)
• Zooarchaeology in the Westfjords (Kate Krivogorskaya)
• Human biology and bioarchaeology in Iceland (Hildur Gestsdóttir)
• Archaeobotany in Iceland and the North Atlantic region (Garðar Guðmundsson)
• Geoarchaeology in Iceland and the North Atlantic region (Karen Milek)
• Geophysics and remote sensing in Iceland (John Steinberg)
• GIS applications in the archaeology of Iceland and the North Atlantic (Ruth Maher)
• Human and animal ecology and landscape degradation in Iceland (Ian Simpson)

Assignments

You will be evaluated based on your participation in the field and in post-excavation practical work, your attendance at lectures, and the quality of your assignments. These assignments are designed to be flexible, to allow you to concentrate on the subjects that interest you most, and to allow you to obtain official course credits (e.g. ECTS credits through the University of Oslo) or a Certificate in North Atlantic Archaeology if you would like this additional certification.

Compulsory field journal: All students must keep a journal in which you should record what you have done, the concepts you have learned, the deposits or features that you are excavating, your on-going thoughts about interpretations, and so on. This journal should be maintained on a daily basis, but only in your spare time (e.g. evenings), not while you are working on site! Please feel free to include drawings or photographs as part of your journal. It will be marked periodically during the course, and should include the following:

- information about the site (name, location, setting, date, type of site)
- aims and approach of the project
- the methods used by this project to excavate, record, and sample in the field
- your thoughts on the pros and cons of these methods
- the types of features and contexts you are excavating on site
- the rationale behind the selection of particular methods on site (i.e. Why are you excavating or sampling a deposit in a certain way? What do you hope to achieve?)
- your thoughts on the interpretation of the deposits and features you are excavating
- the methods you are using in your post-excavation practical work
- the sites and landscapes you are encountering during your survey work and field trips
- a self-evaluation (i.e. What skills have you learned? Have you made improvements?)
- comments about any experiences that you find especially interesting or difficult (e.g. certain lectures, field trips)

Compulsory hands-on group project: Every student must sign up for a practical group project, in which you are expected to co-operate as a team member and actively contribute to an oral and/or written presentation. Group projects will be guided by a member of staff, and will include options in aerial photography, artefacts, and environmental archaeology.

Additional site report or essay: Those students wishing to receive a Certificate in North Atlantic Archaeology, or who are registered at the University of Oslo and desire ECTS credits, must also submit an essay or site report by November 1, 2005. This may be written either in English or a Scandinavian language, and should be approximately 10 pages long (where a page has 2300 characters without spacing). Students interested in writing a site report on the 2005 field season at Vatnsfjörður will find examples of interim site reports in the field school library. The Vatnsfjörður site archive will be posted on the web site of the Institute of Archaeology, Iceland, as soon as the excavation is finished (at http://www.instarch.is). A list of recommended essay topics will be provided on request.

Excursions

Every weekend there will be organised excursions to the most interesting natural features, sites, and museums in the region. These are being organised with the help of the Natural History Museum of the Westfjords, and are designed to enrich your experience and broaden your understanding of the environment and history of the Vestfirðir peninsula. They are likely to include visits to Hólmavík and the reconstructed turf house at Bakki, the glacier Drangajökull and the abandoned farms on Snæfellaströnd, and the town of Ísafjörður and the Westfjords Maritime Museum.

Reading List

It is essential that you read the Institute of Archaeology's Excavation Manual in advance. You will find it at http://www.instarch.is/instarch/utgafa/handbok/ – click on 'uppgraftarhandbok'. In addition, the list below will provide you with the most important background information on the archaeology of Iceland and the North Atlantic region. To help you prioritise your reading, we recommend that you begin with those references marked with a star (✶), but please do as much reading as possible to prepare for the course in advance. All 'in press' references, and a few others that might be difficult for you to find, will be sent to you electronically in pdf format. The length of each reading has been included in this list, as required by the University of Oslo.

North Atlantic Region	**Pages**
Amorosi T., Buckland P., Dugmore A., Ingimundarson J. & McGovern T. H. (1997) Raiding the Landscape: Human impact in the North Atlantic, in: B. Fitzhugh & T.Hunt (eds.) *Island Archaeology*, a special edition of *Human Ecology* 25(3): 491-518.	28
Amorosi, T., Buckland, P., Edwards, K., Mainland,I., McGovern, T. H., Sadler J. & Skidmore, P. (1998) They did not live by grass alone: the politics and paleoecology of animal fodder in the North Atlantic region. *Environmental Archaeology* 1: 41-54.	14
Barrett, J. H. (2003) Culture contact in Viking Age Scotland. In J. Barrett (ed.), *Contact, Continuity, and Collapse: The Norse Colonization of the North Atlantic.* Turnhout: Brepols. Pp. 73-111.	39
Barrett, J., Beukens, R., Simpson, I., Ashmore, P., Poaps, S., & Huntley, J. (2000) What was the Viking Age and when did it happen? A view from Orkney. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 33(1): 1-39.	40
Bigelow, G. F. (1989) Life in medieval Shetland: an archaeological perspective. *Hikuin* 15: 183-192.	10
Buckland, P. C., Amorosi, T., Barlow, L. K., Dugmore, A. J., Mayewski, P. A., McGovern, T. H., Ogilvie, A. E. J., Sadler, J. P. & Skidmore, P. (1996) Bioarchaeological and climatological evidence for the fate of Norse farmers in medieval Greenland. *Antiquity* 70: 88-96.	9
✶ Fitzhugh, W. & Ward, E. (eds.) (2000) *Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press. Chapter 1: Scandinavia in the Viking Age (pp. 27-30), Chapter 2: Farming and Daily Life (pp. 42-54), Chapter 3: Religion, Art, and Runes (pp. 55-71), Chapter 4: Political Organization and Social Life (pp. 72-85), Chapter 5: Ships and Navigation (pp. 86-97), Chapter 9: The North Atlantic Environment (pp. 146-153), Chapter 10: Vikings in the Faeroe Islands (pp. 154-163), Chapter 14: The Viking Settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows (pp. 208-224), Chapter 21: Life and Death in Norse Greenland (pp. 285-294), Chapter 22: The Farm Beneath the Sand (pp. 295-303), Chapter 25: The Demise of Norse Greenland (pp. 327-339), Chapter 30: Sagas and Science: Climate and Human Impacts in the North Atlantic (pp. 385-393).	136

Forster, A. & Bond, J. M. (2004) North Atlantic networks: preliminary research into the trade of steatite in the Viking and Norse Periods. In R. A. Housley & G. Coles (eds.), *Atlantic Connections and Adaptations: Economies, Environments and Subsistence in Lands Bordering the North Atlantic.* Oxford: Oxbow Books. Pp. 218-229. 12

McGovern, T. (1992) Bones, buildings, and boundaries: paleoeconomic approaches to Norse Greenland. In C. D. Morris & D. J. Rackham (eds.), *Norse and Later Settlement and Subsistence in the North Atlantic*. Glasgow: Department of Archaeology, University of Glasgow. Pp. 193-230. 38

✶ McGovern. T., Perdikaris, S. & Tinsley, C. (2001) The economy of landnám: the evidence of zooarchaeology. In A. Wawn & Þ. Sigurðardóttir (eds.), *Approaches to Vínland.* Reykjavík: Sigurður Nordal Institute. Pp. 154-165. 12

Myhre, B. (1998) The archaeology of the early Viking Age in Norway. In H. B. Clarke, M. Ní Mhaonaigh & R. Ó Floinn (eds.), *Ireland and Scandinavia in the Early Viking Age.* Dublin: Four Courts Press. Pp. 3-36. 34

Perdikaris, S., McGovern, T. H. (in press) Cod fish, walrus, and chieftains: economic intensification in the Norse North Atlantic. Submitted to Thurston et al (eds.), *New Perspectives on Intensification.* 16

✶ Rafnsson, S. (1997) The Atlantic islands. In P. Sawyer (ed.) *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. 110-133. 24

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Simpson, I., Barrett, J. & Milek, K. (2005) Interpreting the Viking Age to medieval period transition in Norse Orkney through cultural soil and sediment analysis. *Geoarchaeology: An International Journal* 20(4): 355-377. 23

Stummann Hansen, S. (2003) The early settlement of the Faroe Islands: the creation of cultural identity. In J. Barrett (ed.), *Contact, Continuity, and Collapse: The Norse Colonization of the North Atlantic.* Turnhout: Brepols. Pp. 33-71. 39

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Berson, B. (2002) A contribution to the study of the medieval Icelandic farm: the byres. *Archaeologia Islandica* 2: 34-60. 27

✶ Dugmore, A., Newton, A. J., Larsen, G. & Cook, G. T. (2000) Tephrochronology, environmental change and the Norse settlement of Iceland. *Environmental Archaeology* 5: 21-34. 14

Einarsson, Á., Hansson, O. & Vésteinsson, O. (2002) An extensive system of medieval earthworks in northeast Iceland. *Archaeologia Íslandica* 2: 61-73. 13

✶ Fitzhugh, W. & Ward, E. (eds.) (2000) *Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press. Chapter 11: The Archaeology of Landnám (pp. 164-174), Chapter 12: The Icelandic Commonwealth Period (pp. 175-187). 24

Friðriksson, A. (1994) *Sagas and Popular Antiquarianism in Icelandic Archaeology*. Aldershot: Avebury Books. Chapter 1: Introduction (pp. 1-16), Chapter 5: Farms (pp. 146-180) & Chapter 6: From Sagas to Archaeology (pp. 181-192). 64

Friðriksson, A., Vésteinsson, O. & McGovern, T. H. (2004) Recent Excavations at Hofstaðir, northern Iceland. In R. A. Housley & G. Coles (eds.), *Atlantic Connections and Adaptations: Economies, Environments and Subsistence in Lands Bordering the North Atlantic.* Oxford: Oxbow Books. Pp. 191-202. 12

Horsely, T. & Dockrill, S. (2002) A preliminary assessment of the use of routine geophysical techniques for the location, characterisation and interpretation of buried archaeology in Iceland. *Archaeologia Islandica* 2: 10-33. 24

✶ McGovern, T. H. et al. (in press) Landscapes of settlement in northern Iceland: historical ecology of human impact and climate fluctuation on the millennial scale. Submitted to *American Anthropologist.* 27

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Smith, K. (1995) Landnam: the settlement of Iceland in archaeological and historical perspective. *World Archaeology* 26(3): 319-347. 29

Sveinbjörnsdóttir, A., Heinemeier, J. & Guðmundsson, G. (2004) ^{14}C dating of the settlement of Iceland. *Radiocarbon* 46(1): 387-394. 8

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✶ Edvardsson, R., Perdikaris, S., McGovern, T. H., Zagor, N. & Waxman, M. (2004) Coping with hard times in NW Iceland: Zooarchaeology, history, and landscape archaeology at Finnbogastaðir in the 18th century. *Archaeologia Islandica* 3: 20-47. 28

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