

# Iceland: Sagas, Science and Society

May 17 through June 4, 2010



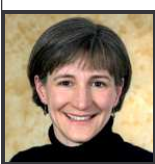
*Aldeyjarfoss, one of the greatest tourist attractions near Svartárfkot  
photo by Axel Kristinnsson*

**Program Descriptions:** Iceland possesses a landscape like no other, with lava fields, geysers, waterfalls, jagged mountains and coastlines, green fields, and glaciers. The island had no indigenous population, and when the Norse settled it beginning around 900, their effect on the land quickly became apparent. The literature, culture, and environmental impact of the early inhabitants of Iceland form the focus of this course, with readings from Iceland's medieval sagas as well as from modern scientific studies of the impact of human habitation on the land. The course will take place in Iceland's capital city, Reykjavik, as well as at a sheep farm, Svartárfkot, in northern Iceland, and will run from May 17 to June 2, 3, or 4.

Students will spend the first week in Reykjavik, with classes focused on the medieval sagas and with contextualizing tours of the National Museum of Iceland, which houses a rich collection of artifacts from the settlement period, and the Árni Magnússon Institute, with its major collection of saga manuscripts. Excursions from Reykjavik will include a visit to Thingvellir, the plain where the Icelandic parliament began meeting in the first half of the 10th century and where evidence of the continental drift between the North American and Eurasian Plates can be clearly seen. We will also visit other prominent geographical locations, including a large thermal spring and a huge waterfall. Another day-trip will take the class south of Reykjavik to the area in which the most famous of medieval Icelandic sagas, *Njals Saga*,

takes place, and another, optional and less academic, trip will be a visit to the well-known sulphur pool and spa known as the Blue Lagoon. Class meetings will be held most mornings, and students will have ample time to explore the city of Reykjavik.

The second week, the class will move to northern Iceland and to a focus more dedicated to landscape and science. Svartárfkot is a working sheep farm at the edge of human habitation, a perfect place to learn about the intricate and dynamic relationship between culture and nature. At this educational and research center—which is still under development—we will study the history of climate change in Iceland and the impact of human settlement. The site, on the shores of Svartarvatn lake, provides a spectacular view of the surrounding vista of lava fields, dormant volcanoes and mountains, all the way to Vatnajökull (the largest glacier in Europe) to the south. This portion of the course will include Icelandic guest lecturers, local tours, and time to explore the area.



**Faculty Profiles:**

**Janet Schrunck Ericksen**, Associate Professor of English, regularly teaches a course on the sagas (in translation), as well as courses on Old English and the history of the English language, and a May Session course to York, England. Her research mostly focuses on Old English poetry, although she has also given conference papers and published articles on *Gunnlaug's Saga* and on the medieval Icelandic biblical compilation known as *Stjórn*. She took a summer course in Iceland while in graduate school, and the experience significantly affected her understanding of Iceland's medieval literature and her interest in the land.

**Christopher Cole** is a professor of biology at the University of Minnesota, Morris. His work in studying the effects of climate change goes back to the mid-1970's; his current research looks at how changing climate and atmosphere interact with genetics to influence growth rates of northern forest trees. His teaching includes courses in conservation, molecular biology, genetics, plant biology, and related fields. Dr. Cole is a recipient of the UMM Alumni Award for Teaching.



*photo by Thrandur Arnthorsson*



*Glacier in Iceland*

**Course Description: IS 2022 Iceland: Sagas, Science and Society (4 cr., Evt)**

On site exploration of Iceland's literary and physical record of society from its settlement and through the centuries of subsequent environmental degradation. The course will take place in Reykjavik, with visits to museums and some nearby major saga sites, and in northern Iceland, at a culture–nature educational and research center.

This study abroad program is offered for academic credit which applies to UMM degree requirements and is transferable to other colleges and universities. Open to students of all majors and students from other colleges and universities.

**Application Deadline:**

**Early:** Friday, December 11, 2009  
(receive a \$100 program fee discount.)

**Final:** Friday, January 29, 2010

**Budget:** (Costs are subject to change. Check our website for updates on program costs)

**Program Cost**

Includes: tuition, fees, room/board, all travel in Iceland, lectures and international health insurance. **\$3,450.00**

**Airfare: \$1,000.00**

Estimated Extra Costs: Some meals, Personal spending money . **\$500.00**

**For more information, contact:** Academic Center for Enrichment, Room 5, Student Center, 600 E 4th St, Morris, MN 56267

**Telephone:** 320-589-6464

**Email:** [abroad@morris.umn.edu](mailto:abroad@morris.umn.edu)

**Website:** [www.morris.umn.edu/studyabroad](http://www.morris.umn.edu/studyabroad)

### ***Refund Policy***

In order to be officially cancelled from this programs, the Academic Center for Enrichment must receive a written Letter of Cancellation from you. The Refund Policy will take effect from the date we receive the letter in our office. No verbal cancellations will be accepted.

<b>Cancellation Period</b>	<b>Minimum Amount Due</b>	<b>Plus additional Non-Recoverable Costs up to</b>
90 days or more <b>December 12, 2009</b>	\$250 non-refundable deposit	Full program fee
89-55 days <b>January 16, 2010</b>	\$900	Full program fee
54-40 days <b>January 31, 2010</b>	\$1,250	Full program fee
39-15 days <b>February 25, 2010</b>	\$1,600	Full program fee
14 days or less before start date of program	\$3,000	Full program fee
Begin date of program	Full program fee	