

HISTORY 05.66.01

History of Iceland from the Settlement to the Present

University of Iceland - Department of History

Teachers:

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Office hours: Wednesdays, 13:00-15:00

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Nýi Garður, room 60 (on the top floor)

Spring 2004

Tuesdays Thursdays

15:15-17:00

Room 304, Árnagarður

Purpose:

This course will survey the political, social, and economic development of Iceland from the 10th century to the late 20th century. It will be divided into two parts: the first one covers the period from the 10th century to the 19th century (parts I-II in the textbook) and will be taught by Lára Magnúsardóttir. Guðni Th. Jóhannesson will teach the second part, focusing on the 19th and 20th centuries (parts III-IV in the textbook). Most required readings for this course will be on reserve (Námsbókasafn) on the third floor in the main university library building (Þjóðarþókhlaða).

Textbook: Gunnar Karlsson: *Iceland's 1100 Years. The History of a Marginal Society*, Hurst & Co. London / Mál og menning, Reykjavík (ISBN 9979-3-2052-4). Available in Bóksala stúdenta and the bookshop Mál og Menning on Laugavegur.

Course Requirements:

- 1) Final examination (70%)
- 2) One research paper (30%) about 8-10 pages long (2,500-3,500 words). Students should select their paper topic in consultation with the instructors. The paper must include footnotes and a bibliography.
- 3) Two short oral presentations (10-15 minutes).
- 4) Class participation.

PROVISIONAL COURSE OUTLINE
History of Iceland from the Settlement to the Present

Week 7

February 17+19 Reading Week, no classes

Weeks 8-13 PART II: END OF THE 18TH CENTURY TO THE PRESENT DAY

(pp. 195-366 in *Iceland's 1100 Years*)

The two-class sessions each day will be divided into a lecture and a seminar with questions, a student presentation and discussions. Suggestions for reading for each theme are not exhaustive. Further sources will be added during the course. Students are also encouraged to conduct their own search for sources, for instance at the Þjóðarbókhlaða, Reykjavík City Library, and in some cases on the Internet. The following issues will be discussed:

- 1) “National Awakening”: From Foreign Domination to Home Rule, 1809-1918
- 2) “Industrial Revolution”: Social and Economic Change in the 19th and early 20th centuries
- 3) Modern Iceland in the Making? The Birth of the Political Party System and Crisis in the 1930s
- 4) From Isolation to Importance: World Wars and Independence
- 5) Reluctant Ally: Iceland during and after the Cold War
- 6) Troubled Waters: The Cod Wars and the Struggle for Sovereignty in the Waters off Iceland, 1948-76
- 7) “Independent People”? Iceland and European Integration
- 8) “Iceland for Icelanders”? Nationalism and Attitudes towards Foreigners in the 20th Century
- 9) Coalitions and the “Four-Party System”: Party Politics after the Second World War
- 10) Conservation vs. Utilization: Whaling, Heavy Industry and Hydroelectric Power
- 11) Feminism and Women’s Rights in the 20th Century
- 12) Summary: Changes in Icelandic Society in the 20th Century

All these themes, as well as the themes for discussion in each session, can serve as essay titles (with the exception of the themes for discussion in the last session).

Week 8

February 24 “National Awakening”: From Foreign Domination to Home Rule, 1809-1918

Required reading:

Gunnar Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 195-223, 267-286

Supplementary reading:

Anna Agnarsdóttir, “Great Britain and Iceland 1800-1820” (PhD thesis, 1989)

Derek McKay, “Great Britain and Iceland in 1809.” *The Mariner's Mirror*, 59:1 (1973).

Hallgrímur Sveinsson, *The National Hero of Iceland, Jón Sigurdsson. A Concise Biography*. Translated by Hermann Pálsson (Hafnseyri, 1996).

Gudmundur Hálfðanarson, "Social Distinctions and National Unity: On Politics of Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Iceland," *History of European Ideas*, 21:6 (1995), pp. 763-79

Guðmundur Hálfðanarson, "Defining the Modern Citizen: Debates on Civil and Political Elements of Citizenship in Nineteenth-Century Iceland," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 24 (1999), pp. 103–16.

Guðmundur Hálfðanarson, "Iceland: A Peaceful Secession," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 25 (2000), pp. 87-100.

Gunnar Karlsson, "Icelandic Nationalism and the Inspiration of History," in Rosalind Mitchison (ed.), *The Roots of Nationalism* (Edinburgh, 1980), pp. 77-89.

Gunnar Karlsson, "Folk og nation på Island," *Scandia*, 53 (1987), pp. 129-45.

Gunnar Karlsson, "The Emergence of Nationalism in Iceland," in Sven Tägil (ed.), *Ethnicity and Nation Building in the Nordic World* (London, 1995), pp. 33-62.

Oral presentations and themes for discussion:

- The "phony revolution" of 1809 and Iceland's ties with Britain and Denmark
- How important was the individual role of Jón Sigurdsson in the Icelandic struggle for increased autonomy?
- What were the basic tenets of Icelandic nationalism in the 19th century?

Week 8

February 26 "Industrial Revolution": Social and Economic Change in the 19th and early 20th centuries

Required reading:

Gunnar Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 224-266, 287-296

Supplementary reading:

Gudmundur Hálfðanarson, "Old Provinces, Modern Nations: Political Responses to State Integration in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Iceland and Brittany" (Dissertation: Cornell University, 1991).

Helgi Skúli Kjartansson, "Emigrant fares and emigration from Iceland to North America, 1874-1893," *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 28:1 (1980).

Jón Þ. Þór, "The Beginnings of British-Steam Trawling in Icelandic Waters," *Mariner's Mirror*, 74:3 (1988).

Jón Þ. Þór, *British Trawlers in Icelandic Waters* (Reykjavík, 1992).

Magnús L. Magnússon, *Iceland in Transition. Labour and Socio-Economic Change before 1940* (Lund, 1985).

Gudmundur Jónsson, "Changes in Food Consumption in Iceland ca. 1770-1940," in J. Söderberg and L. Magnusson (eds.), *Kultur och konsumtion i Norden 1750-1950* (Helsingfors, 1995).

Oral presentations and themes for discussion:

- What caused the crisis in rural society at the end of the 19th century?
- The emigration to America
- How, when and why did the "Industrial revolution" take place in Iceland?

Week 9

March 2 Modern Iceland in the Making? The Birth of the Political Party System and Crisis in the 1930s

Required reading:

Gunnar Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 292-312

Supplementary reading:

Magnús L. Magnússon, *Iceland in Transition. Labour and Socio-Economic Change before 1940* (Lund, 1985).

Stefán Hjartarsson, *Kampen om Fackföreningsrörelsen. Ideologi och politisk aktivitet på Island 1920-1938* (Stockholm, 1989).

Ingólfur V. Gíslason, *Enter the Bourgeoisie: Aspects of the Formation and Organization of Icelandic Employers, 1894-1934* (Lund, 1990).

Sigfús Jónsson, "Newfoundland and Iceland. A Comparative Development," in Haraldur Bessason, (ed.), *Líf undir leiðarstjörnu* (Akureyri 1994).

Oral presentations and themes for discussion:

- Describe the beginnings of class politics in Iceland
- The Great Depression in Iceland: Was the country close to bankruptcy?

Week 9

March 4 From Isolation to Importance: World Wars and Independence

Required reading:

Gunnar Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 313-324

Supplementary reading:

Sólrún B. Jensdóttir, *Anglo-Icelandic relations during the First World War* (Dissertation, 1986)

Sólrún B. Jensdóttir, "The Republic of Iceland 1940-1944: Anglo-American attitudes and influences," *Journal of Contemporary History*, IX (1974).

Donald Bittner, *The Lion and the White Falcon. Britain and Iceland in the World War II Era* (Hamden, Conn., 1983).

Bára Baldursdóttir, *This rot spreads like an epidemic: policing adolescent female sexuality in Iceland during World War II* (Dissertation: College Park, Maryland, 2000).

Inga Dóra Björnsdóttir, "Public View and Private Voices", in Paul Durrenberger and Gísli Pálsson (eds.), *The Anthropology of Iceland* (Iowa City, 1989), 98-118.

George R. Wren, *Iceland in World War Two: a G.I.'s memoirs* (Saint Louis, Mo., 1996).

Oral presentations and themes for discussion:

- Why did Britain occupy Iceland in the Second World War?
- What impact did the British and the American presence have on Icelandic society during the Second World War?
- How did the Second World War affect the Icelandic economy?

Week 10

March 9 Reluctant Ally: Iceland during and after the Cold War

Required reading:

Gunnar Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 313-324

Þór Whitehead, *The Ally who Came in from the Cold* (Reykjavík, 1998), OR

Valur Ingimundarson, *The Struggle for Western Integration. Iceland, the United States, and NATO during the First Cold War* (Oslo, 1999).

Supplementary reading:

Philip William Calvert, *Uncertainty and dissent: Iceland in the post-Cold War world* (Ann Arbor, Mi., 1999).

Valur Ingimundarson, "Buttressing the West in the North: The Atlantic Alliance, Economic Warfare, and the Soviet Challenge in Iceland, 1956-1959," *International History Review*, 21:1, 1999, 80-103.

Donald Nuechterlein, *Iceland: Reluctant Ally* (Ithaca, NY, 1961).

Benedikt Gröndal, *Iceland: From Neutrality to NATO Membership* (Oslo, 1991).

Albert Jónsson, *Iceland, NATO, and the Keflavik Base* (Reykjavik, 1989).

Michael T. Corgan, *Iceland and Its Alliances: Security for a Small State* (Lewiston, NY, 2003).

Elfar Loftsson, *Island i NATO – partierna och försvarsfrågan* (Göteborg, 1981).

Oral presentations and themes for discussion:

- Describe the opposition to NATO membership and the US presence in Iceland during the Cold War
- What role did Iceland play in US strategic thinking?
- Did Icelandic policymakers (ab)use Iceland's strategic importance during the Cold War?

Week 10

March 11 Troubled Waters: The Cod Wars and the Struggle for Sovereignty in the Waters off Iceland, 1948-76

Required reading:

Gunnar Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 342-347

Jón Þ. Þór, *British Trawlers and Iceland, 1919-1976*, 141-235, OR

Hannes Jónsson, *Friends in Conflict. The Anglo-Icelandic Conflict and the Law of the Sea* (London, 1982), 69-187

Supplementary reading:

Guðni Th. Jóhannesson, *Troubled Waters. Cod War, Fishing Disputes, and Britain's Fight for the Freedom of the High Seas, 1948-64* (Dissertation, London, 2003).

Valur Ingimundarson, "Fighting the Cod Wars in the Cold War: Iceland's Challenge to the Western Alliance in the 1970s," *RUSI Journal*, 148:3, 2003, 88-94.

Andrew Gilchrist, *Cod Wars and How to Lose Them* (Edinburgh, 1978).

Benedikt Gröndal, *Iceland: From Neutrality to NATO Membership* (Oslo, 1991).

Michael T. Corgan, *Iceland and Its Alliances: Security for a Small State* (Lewiston, NY, 2003)

Oral presentations and themes for discussion:

- Why did Iceland have its way in the Cod Wars?
- Was "right" always on Iceland's side in the Cod Wars?

Week 11

March 16 "Independent People"? Iceland and European Integration

Required reading:

Guðmundur Jónsson, *"Nothing to expect but trouble:" Iceland's response to European economic integration, 1945-1960* (2001), OR

Einar Benediktsson, *Iceland and European Development* (Reykjavík, 2003).

Supplementary reading:

Baldur Þórhallsson, *On the Edge: Iceland and European integration* (London, 2004).

Baldur Þórhallsson, "Consequences of a small administration: the case of Iceland," in Clive Archer and Neill Nugent (eds.), *Small States and the European Union* (Huntington, NY, 2002).

Þorvaldur Gylfason, "Nordic integration and European integration," in Jürgen von Hagen and Mika Widgren (eds.), *Regionalism in Europe. Geometries and strategies after 2000* (Boston, 2001).

Kenneth Hanf and Ben Sootendorp (eds.), *Adapting to European integration: small states and the European Union* (London, 1998).

Kristján Jóhannesson, *De islandske eksporterhverv og EF's indre marked* (Reykjavík, 1989).

Oral presentations and themes for discussion:

- Why has Iceland not joined the European Union or its predecessors?
- Have the states of the EU or its predecessors ever had a real interest in Icelandic membership?

Week 11

March 18 "Iceland for Icelanders"? Nationalism and Attitudes towards Foreigners in the 20th Century

Required reading:

Guðmundur Hálfðanarson, "Iceland: A Peaceful Secession," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 25 (2000), 87-100.

Supplementary reading:

Þorgerður Hrönn Þorvaldsdóttir, "The amazing beauty of Icelandic women, nationalism, purity and the "American gaze"" (Dissertation: New York, 1998).

Inga Dóra Björnsdóttir, *Nationalism, gender and the contemporary Icelandic women's movement* (Dissertation: Santa Barbara, 1992).

Guðmundur Hálfðanarson, "Icelandic nationalism. A non-violent paradigm?" in Guðmundur Hálfðanarson and Ann Katherine Isaacs (eds.), *Nations and nationalities in historical perspective* (Pisa, 2001).

Sigríður Matthíasdóttir, "The Renovation of Native Pasts. A Comparison between Aspects of Icelandic and Czech Nationalist Ideology," *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 78:4, (2000), pp. 688-709.

Sigríður Matthíasdóttir, "The Nation as a Golden Age Man. Gender and Nation in Early Twentieth Century Iceland," in *Internationalisation in the History of Northern Europe. Report of the Nordsaga '99 Conference, University of Tromsø, 17-21 Nov. 1999* (Tromsø, 2000), pp. 23-36.

Oral presentations and themes for discussion:

- Can Icelandic nationalism in the 20th century be described as a positive force, as opposed to aggressive nationalism, racism and xenophobia?
- Describe Iceland's official policy towards foreigners and immigration in the 20th century
- What role has womanhood played in the definition and defence of Icelandic nationalism?

Week 12

March 23 Coalitions and the "Four-Party System": Party Politics after the Second World War

Required reading:

Gunnar Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 324-335, 348-360

Supplementary reading:

Thorleifur Fridriksson: *Den gyldne Flue. De skandinaviske socialdemokratiers relationer til den islandske arbejderbevægelse 1916-56. Internationalismen eller indblanding?* (Copenhagen, 1990).

Oral presentations and themes for discussion:

- Describe the political party system in Iceland in the post-war period
- Why did the Social Democrats never become as strong in Iceland as in Scandinavia?

Week 12

March 25 Conservation vs. Utilization: Whaling, Heavy Industry and Hydroelectric Power

Required reading:

Karen Oslund, "Imagining Iceland: Narratives of Nature and History in the North Atlantic," *British Journal for the History of Science*, 35:3 (Sept. 2002).

Supplementary reading:

Susan De Muth, "Power Driven", *GuardianUnlimited*

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/weekend/story/0,3605,1094541,00.html>

Skúli Sigurðsson, "The Dome of the World: Iceland, Doomsday Technologies, and the Cold War," in Ingi Sigurðsson and Jón Skaptason (eds.), *Aspects of Arctic and Sub-Arctic History: Proceedings of the International Congress on the History of the Arctic and Sub-Arctic Region, Reykjavik, 18-21 June 1998* (Reykjavik, 2000), pp. 475-485.

Anne Brydon, "Whale-Siting: Spatiality in Icelandic Nationalism," in Gísli Pálsson and E. Paul Durrenberger, *Images of Contemporary Iceland* (Iowa City, 1996).

Anne Brydon, *The eye of the guest: Icelandic nationalist discourse and the whaling issue* (Dissertation: McGill University, 1991)

Þóra Ellen Þórhallsdóttir, "Evaluating Nature and Wilderness in Iceland," in Alan Watson, Lilian Alessa and Janet Sproull (eds.), *Wilderness in the Circumpolar North: searching for compatibility in traditional, ecotourism, and ecological values; 2001*

May 15-16; Anchorage, AK. *Proceedings* (Ogden, UT, 2002), pp. 96-104.
http://www.fs.fed.us/rm/pubs/rmrs_p026.pdf

Internet sources:

<http://natturuvaktin.blogspot.com>

<http://www.mannvernd.is/>

<http://www.decode.is>

Oral presentations and themes for discussion:

- Describe how nature and nationalism have been intertwined in Iceland since the early 20th century
- Is the history of the harnessing of hydroelectric power in Iceland

Week 13

March 30 Feminism and Women's Rights in the 20th Century

Supplementary reading:

Katherine Connor Martin, "Nationalism, Internationalism and gender in the Icelandic anti-base movement, 1945-1956" (Dissertation, Reykjavik, 2003).

Þorgerður Hrönn Þorvaldsdóttir, "The amazing beauty of Icelandic women, nationalism, purity and the "American gaze"" (Dissertation: New York, 1998).

Inga Dóra Björnsdóttir, *Nationalism, gender and the contemporary Icelandic women's movement* (Santa Barbara, 1992).

Bára Baldursdóttir, *This rot spreads like an epidemic: policing adolescent female sexuality in Iceland during World War II* (College Park, Maryland, 2000).

Inga Dóra Björnsdóttir, "Public View and Private Voices", in Paul Durrenberger and Gísli Pálsson (eds.), *The Anthropology of Iceland* (Iowa City, 1989), 98-118.

Sigríður Dúna Kristmundsdóttir: "Outside, Muted, and Different: Icelandic Women's Movements and Their Notions of Authority and Cultural Separateness." *The Anthropology of Iceland*. Ed. by E. Paul Durrenberger and Gísli Pálsson (1989).

(a search on "women AND Iceland" on the library search machine (www.gegnir.is) gives 41 sources, most of them quite useful).

Oral presentations and themes for discussion:

- Describe the main achievements of the women's liberation movement in Iceland in the 20th century
- What, if anything, has been unique about the women's liberation movement in Iceland in the 20th century?

Week 13

April 1 Summary: Changes in Icelandic Society in the 20th Century

Oral presentations and themes for discussion:

- Compare and contrast the history of Iceland in the 20th century with that of your own country
- Did the transformation of Iceland from one of Europe's poorest nations to one of its wealthiest states have more to do with external circumstances than the energy and drive of the Icelanders themselves?

