COLA 298: Special Topics
Iceland: Cultural Inquiry
May Session 2013/ 3 credits

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Course Overview
This course is designed for Capstone Scholars who desire to challenge and engage themselves in the international community by traveling to a unique destination. This course will explore one of the largest islands in the world: Iceland. This isolated and homogenous island provides a unique opportunity for student to fully examine and learn about a culture—historically, culturally and spiritually—in its entirety. The course will be taught in Reykjavik, Iceland with four preparatory classes at USC prior to departure. This program will give students the opportunity to visit different sites that explore the cultural, political, educational, artistic, and physical aspects of Iceland. Students will conduct a research project related to their major and/or personal interest. The topic should cover something that can be further researched or observed during our excursions in Iceland.

Learning Outcomes
As a result of engagement in this class, students will be able to succeed in the following learning outcomes:

Academically, students will be able to:
- Demonstrate knowledge of global issues, processes, trends and systems.
- Understand, from an objective viewpoint, the effect that other countries and different cultures may have on communities and global environments.
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically and solve difficult problems with new, creative and challenging situations.
- Participate actively in the personal and group learning processes, while demonstrating the concepts of inquiry-based learning.
- Demonstrate the ability to conduct research independently and share results professionally.

Culturally, students will be able to:
- Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of other cultures.
- Work effectively with the community and other students through a service-learning project. Understand how their personal values, beliefs, and experiences affect their relationships with others and their educational career.
Personally, students will be able to:

- Synthesize how participation in this program will influence their ability to dream big, impact the community, and leave a legacy.
- Approach life with a higher degree of flexibility, adaptability, independence, and self-confidence.
- Demonstrate the ability to cope effectively with ambiguous and unfamiliar situations.
- Challenge themselves by exploring the natural, and fearsome, terrain of the island.

**Required Textbooks**

- *The Sagas of Icelanders* by Robert Kellogg
- *Wasteland with Words: A Social History of Iceland* by Sigurur Bylfi Magnusson
- Other readings as assigned (Blackboard)

**Course Assignments (All work is to be uploaded to Blackboard)**

**Research Paper & Presentation (30%)**

Each student will be required to write a research paper on a topic provided and approved by instructor, and work individually or in a team of three. The research you will conduct to write the paper and presentation will make you our trip expert(s) in this particular area. The paper should be 6 pages in length and the presentation should last 10 minutes and include a 15-slide power-point which will be delivered in class before we depart for Iceland.

**Possible Research Topics:**

- The Sagas of Iceland
- The Influence of Norse Mythology on Iceland
- Vikings! An Overview and Understanding
- The Religious evolution (and isolation) of Iceland
- The Viking Horse
- Bobby Fischer and the Cold War Chess Game
- Higher Education in Iceland
- The Mythical Wee People of Iceland (Trolls, elves and ghosts)
- Icelandic Holidays and Island Traditions
- From Turf Houses to Geothermal Energy, How Icelandanders Conquered the Land
- Erik the Red and the “selling” of Greenland
- Breaking from Denmark and the Independence Movement in Iceland
- A Day in the Life of an Icelandic Family
- The Economy of Iceland
- The Government of Iceland (parliament, the Althing)
- Iceland’s Volcanoes and Glaciers
- Art and Culture in Iceland
- The Reykjavik Arts Festival: Past, Present and Future

**Site Expert(s) & Discussion Leader(s) (10%)**

Each student, or students, will be an expert(s) during one of our site visits in Iceland. Using material from your research paper and presentation you will be prepared with questions to be asked at each site. Following the visit you will lead an evening discussion about the site visited.
Participation (20%)
Your participation in class discussions and group work will be an important component in determining your final course grade. Both the quantity and quality of your contributions will be taken into account. A large part of your participation is determined by overall student behavior, inside and outside the classroom. This includes being on time for scheduled events, adhering to the USC rules for overseas study abroad, etc.

Reflective Journals (20%)
Each student must write 4 reflective journal entries. The first must be written before departure and must be about your expectations about the overseas experience. Topics for the three other journals will be posted in Iceland one day before they are due. Each journal entry must be about 1,000 words and is worth 5% of your grade for a total of 20%.

Research reflection paper (10%)
Upon returning from the trip you will write a 4-page paper reflecting on what you learned about your research topic first hand in Iceland. Your paper will discuss the reality of what you saw and experienced versus what you read about and researched before the trip. The paper should provide evidence of your ability to critically evaluate your topic in a scholarly manner.

Final Exam (10%)
You are now the instructor for this course and trip schedule for May 2013. If you were leading this trip, what would you change? What would you keep? Are study abroad experiences valuable? Why or why not? Was this course and trip what you expected? Has this trip changed you in any way? Explain. Final exams are due within one week after returning from Iceland.

Grading Scale

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>80-86</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>70-76</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>60-66</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>less than 60</td>
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Course Policies and Procedures
In this class, we will strive to create a community of learners where all community members are both teachers and learners. Our community of learners will foster a respectful learning environment. The principles of the Carolinian Creed (listed below) will guide our behavior in this community.

- I will practice personal and academic integrity.
- I will respect the dignity of all persons.
- I will respect the rights and property of others.
- I will discourage bigotry, while striving to learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions.
I will demonstrate concern for others, their feelings and their need for conditions which support their work and development.

Specific course policies and procedures are set forth below:

- **Attendance**—In accordance with University policy, grade deductions will be taken for students who have excessive absences. Due to the nature of this course, the 5 scheduled pre-departure meetings are extremely important to students’ success in the course. Any absence (excused or unexcused) over one (1) will lower your final course grade one whole step. Students should contact the professor prior to missing class to discuss any extenuating circumstances.

- **Class Participation**—Your participation in class discussions and group work will be an important component in determining your final course grade. Both the quantity and quality of your contributions will be taken into account.

- **Blackboard**—The course syllabus, schedule, and instructions for assignments will be posted to our class group. You are responsible for checking the course site on a regular basis for information on upcoming assignments and class meetings.

- **Late Work**—Learning to budget time effectively and to adhere to deadlines is an essential skill for the college student and the working professional. Assignments are due at the beginning of each class period on the dates specified or at other times as specified in the course schedule. Any assignments turned in after this time will be considered late. The instructor is generally reasonable about extending deadlines if you have extenuating circumstances and if you approach me before the due date. However, unexcused late assignments will be penalized one letter grade per day, including weekends.

- **Academic Dishonesty**—Students are required to abide by the USC Honor Code found at [http://www.housing.sc.edu/academicintegrity/default.html](http://www.housing.sc.edu/academicintegrity/default.html). Penalties for students who violate the honor code can be severe, including automatic failure of the course and possible expulsion from the University. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in the course.

- **Changes to the Syllabus, Schedule, and Assignments**—The instructor reserves the right to change or modify the syllabus as needed to support the structure of the course.

- **In Iceland** - Students are expected to be on time for all classes and excursions, prepared, and ready to participate in discussion. Required site visits per the itinerary are considered class meetings. Failure to take part will negatively impact your final grade.

**Course Schedule**

Note: *Classes will be held at a date to be determined by the availability of students and instructors. Class sessions will be 1-2 hours.*

**Class One** (1.5 contact hours)

Introduction to the Course and the Study abroad Program

- Let’s get to know each other – Icebreakers
- Course Overview and Objectives
- Syllabus Discussion
- Trip Discussion
• Pick Research Topic and other group members (if applicable)
  Assignments: Read introduction to *The Sagas of Icelanders* and bring all trip documentation

**Class Two** (1 contact hour)
Students will make appointment with Dr. Weingarth to discuss their research topic in detail. Focus will be on sources and purpose of research. Appointments will be held in Dr. Weingarth’s office at a mutually agreed time
  Assignments: Bring research questions, list of resources, and ideas about presentation

**Class Three** (1.5 contact hours)
• Historical overview of Iceland
• Research Presentations
  Assignments: Read assigned sections of *Wasteland with Words: A Social History of Iceland*

**Class Four** (1.5 contact hours)
• Mythology, Religion, and Iceland
• Research Presentations
  Assignments: Other readings, as assigned

**Class Five** (1.5 contact hours)
• Research Presentations
• Trip preparation and logistics (with representative from CIS Abroad, logistics provider)
  o Health & Safety
  o What to pack
  o Travel details
  o How course will progress in Iceland
  Assignments: First reflective journal entry due. Come with a list of questions and trip expectations

**Tentative In-Country Iceland Itinerary**

Assignments: Assignment due dates during trip will be posted in a central area and announced. In the free evenings, students will lead discussions about their particular Iceland topic and their observations that day.

**Thursday, May 9th, 2013**
• Depart from Charlotte for Reykjavik, Iceland

**Friday, May 10th, 2013**
• Morning – Arrive in Iceland and transfer to centrally located hostel: CIS Welcome and Orientation
• Afternoon – Reykjavik City Walking Tour – Visit the Pearl, the Hallgrímskirkja Church, the Parliament, and the Harbour
Evening – Group Welcome Dinner

Saturday, May 11th, 2013
- Day – Guided history and cultural tour throughout the center of Reykjavik with a visit to the National Museum
- Evening – Let’s Talk Iceland Play – A journey throughout the history of Iceland

Sunday, May 12th, 2013
- Golden Circle Day Trip

Monday, May 13th, 2013
- Morning – Volunteer at the Iceland Red Cross
- Afternoon/Evening – Partake in the Iceland International Arts Festival Events

Tuesday, May 14th, 2013
- Southern Coast Day Trip

Wednesday, May 15th, 2013
- Morning – Local high school visit
- Afternoon – Iceland University visit

Thursday, May 16th, 2013
- Morning – Read to local elementary school students
- Afternoon/Evening – Blue Lagoon Trip

Friday, May 17th, 2013
- Morning - Horseback riding tour
- Free afternoon in Reykjavik

Saturday, May 18th, 2013
- Iceland International Arts Festival Events

Sunday, May 19th, 2013
- Snaefellness peninsula day trip

Monday, May 20th, 2013
- Depart Reykjavik for Charlotte