

SVARTÁRKOT, CULTURE – NATURE (SCN)

SUMMER COURSE 16-26 AUGUST 2019 - PROGRAMME

The rural regions of Mývatn and Bárðardalur in Suður Þingeyjarsýsla, northern Iceland, are unique environments - sometimes perceived as remote - but they are also entangled in the wider social and environmental histories of Iceland and the North Atlantic. Bárðardalur is a farming community in a deep valley and the neighbouring Mývatn area is an elevated, inland lakeside community with a rare biodiversity and a history of rebellious social movements. The Mývatn community has been at the centre of collaborative research by the interdisciplinary scholars teaching and leading this course. Our research has combined climate history, archaeology, ecology, literary history, and economic history. In addition to contributing scholarship, three of the instructors call these regions home. Our aim is that the diverse lectures and activities included in this course will spotlight the complex historical entanglement of society and environment, from the deep past into contemporary times. Our further goal is to inspire students and professionals alike to draw inspiration for their interdisciplinary scholarship whether their work is focused on Iceland or elsewhere.

The Course Design: 1) Day 2: General overview of the main subject and orientation with excursion. 2) Days 3-6: Specific dimensions of the main subject: e.g., environmental history; ecology; archaeology; climate history; manuscript culture. 3) Days 4 and 9: Guest lectures to expand the course perspective, globally and historically. 4) Days 7-9: Hands-on and field-work in both archives and landscapes, *Framengjar* wetlands, outlaws and trolls. 5) Participants' presentations and discussions.

DAY 1 - Friday 16 August

- 14:00 Participants picked up in Akureyri. Drive to Bárðardalur Valley, guided by the 18th century woman poet **Björg Einarsdóttir (Látra-Björg)** 1716–1784 and other poets and storytellers.
- 17:00 Arrival at Kiðagil guesthouse – participants staying there settle in.
- 18:00 Kiðagil guesthouse: Dinner and **Introductory Presentation of the Svartárkot Project.**

DAY 2 - Saturday 17 August

- 8:00-9:00 Breakfast at Kiðagil
- 9:00-12:00 **A joint lecture by all five main instructors:** The storyline - a base narrative extracted from a variety of manuscript sources, of tangled family lines from 1703-2018, interspersed with relevant information and analysis: Climate, environmental history, ecology, archaeology, based on research into various sources and documents. 15 min. coffee break c. 10:45.
- 12:00-13:00 Lunch at Kiðagil

- 13:00-18:00 Orienting tour around Lake Mývatn, visiting sites of of ecological, geological, historic and cultural interest, guided by Ragnhildur (Raga) Sigurðardóttir, Megan Hicks and Viðar Hreinsson. Visit to the Mývatn Research Station, **lecture** on the biology of Lake Mývatn. Archaeology tour of Hofstaðir guided by Megan Hicks.
- 18:00-19:00 Dinner at Kiðagil
- 20:00 The Icelandic Documentary film *Hvellur*.

DAY 3 - Sunday 18 August

- 8:00-9:00 Breakfast at Kiðagil
- 9:00-10:30 Astrid Ogilvie: **Climate History of Iceland and the Lake Mývatn Area.**
- 10:30-10:45 Coffee break
- 10:45-12:15 Árni Daníel Júlíusson: **Arctic Farming: Contradiction in Terms?**
- 12:15-13:00 Lunch at Kiðagil
- 13:00-15:30 Árni Daníel Júlíusson: **The Closing of a Commodity Frontier. The Case of Sheep Export from Iceland in the 19th and 20th Centuries.**
- 18:00-19:00 Dinner at Kiðagil –

DAY 4 - Monday 19 August

- 8:00-9:00 Breakfast at Kiðagil
- 9:30-12:00 Árni Daníel Júlíusson: **Woodland Management**
- 12:00-13:00 Lunch at Kiðagil
- 13:00-14:00 Viðar Hreinsson: **Heath Settlements and the Local Historian Helgi Jónsson. Glimpses of Environmental and Literary History.**
- 14:00-18:00 Hiking on Fljótshéiði, to the ruins of the farm Brenniás, guided by Viðar Hreinsson, Guðrún Tryggvadóttir and/or Sigurlína Tryggvadóttir. Those who don't want to hike there through wetlands (and ford a little river that might be up to knee-deep) can get a ride in a car.
- 18:00-19:00 Dinner at Kiðagil
- 20:00- Icelandic Movie *Rams*.

DAY 5 - Tuesday 20 August

- 8:00-9:00 Breakfast at Kiðagil

9:30-12:00 Ragnhildur Sigurðardóttir: **Ecology and Local Documents.** How to integrate Natural Sciences with Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Cultural Artefacts.

15 min. coffee break c. 10:45.

12:00-13:00 Lunch at Kiðagil

13:00-18:00 Scenic excursion, waterfalls, Ódáðahraun, Aldey, guided by Guðrún Tryggvadóttir and/or Sigurlína Tryggvadóttir (including 2-3 hours hiking over rough terrain)

18:00-19:00 Dinner at Kiðagil

DAY 6 - Wednesday 21 August

8:00-9:00 Breakfast at Kiðagil

9:00-10:15 Viðar Hreinsson: **Big Farmers, “the first gay in the village”, Bohemians and Leading Writers: Manuscripts and Literatures of Mývatn, Stories and Poetry.**

10:30-12:00 Ragnhildur Sigurðardóttir: **Drivers of change: Sustainability and Environmental Change in the Lake Mývatn District of Iceland AD 1700 – 2000.**

12:00-13:00 Lunch at Kiðagil

13:00-18:00 Excursion to *Framengjar* wetlands, with: a) an outlook on the natural ecosystem of one of Iceland’s most extensive inland floodplains and the **adaptive management as well as the traditional ecological knowledge** of the farming community from 1700-2000, guided by Ragnhildur Sigurðardóttir; and b) an archaeology and ecology tour of Skútustaðir combined with a lecture on **the excavation and landscape use** by Megan Hicks.

18:00-19:00 Dinner in Þórólfsvoll

DAY 7 - Thursday- 22 August

Hiking and excursions guided by Ragnhildur Sigurðardóttir, Viðar Hreinsson and Guðrún Tryggvadóttir: Svartárvot, Sellönd shieling, *Framengjar* hands on, **short lectures by the team of instructors** along the way and in the farmhouse Þórólfsvoll, on the hydrology, irrigation, ecology, the significance of *Framengjar* for the community (sustenance, trade etc), love-life in the shielings, horny trollwomen etc.

DAY -8 - Friday 23 August

8:00-9:00 Breakfast at Kiðagil

9:00-All day: Excursion to the local archives in Húsavík, Bakki (heavy industry) Archives and Ásbyrgi Hljóðaklettur, Dettifoss.

Breakfast and dinner in Kiðagil, packed lunches will be brought along.

DAY 9 - Saturday 24 August

8:00-9:00 Breakfast at Kiðagil

9:00-10:00 Sigurður Torfi Sigurðsson: **Adaptation of Agriculture to Nature Conservation and Wetland Protection in Iceland.**

10:00-10:30 Coffee break.

10:30-12:00 Megan Hicks: **Zooarchaeology and Historical Economy.**

12:00-13:00 Lunch at Kiðagil

13:00-15:00 Guest lecture. **Announced later**

15:00-16:00 Coffee and discussion

Free time, participants prepare presentations

18:00-19:00 Dinner at Kiðagil

20:00 Enlarged environmental perspective – Ragnhildur Sigurðardóttir: **Bond Villains in the Context of Environmental History: How Britain’s 007 Super Spy Saves the World.**

DAY 10 - Sunday 25 August

8:00-9:00 Breakfast at Kiðagil

9:00-12:30 Viðar Hreinsson: **Outlaws and Legendary Landscapes in Iceland.** After a 15-minute coffee break the lecture is followed by a short hike to Sexhólagil and the rock “Karlinn” where the saga outlaw-hero Grettir left his sword.

12:30-13:30 Lunch at Kiðagil

13:30-17:00 Participant presentations and final discussions

19:00 Last supper at Kiðagil

DAY 11 - Monday 26 August

8:00-9:00 Breakfast at Kiðagil

Departure to Akureyri, a final lecture on the way.