



SVARTÁRKOT, CULTURE – NATURE (SCN)

SUMMER COURSE 14-24 AUGUST 2020 - 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 team of scholars teaching and leading this course. 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.

Through lectures, discussions and excursions, the course will engage a range of questions concerning the human dimensions of environmental change and the effects of such change on environments and societies grounded in interdisciplinary orientation to case-based study. In particular, the course foregrounds questions of long-term societal resilience and cultural responses in the face of climate change, competition and societal conflict over natural resources, effects of early globalization and anthropogenic transformation of landscapes and ecosystems at multiple times scales.

DAY 1 - Friday 14 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 15 August

- 8:00-9:00 Breakfast at Kiðagil
- 9:00-12:00 **A joint lecture by all main instructors:** The storyline - a base narrative extracted from a variety of manuscript sources, of tangled family lines from 1703-present, 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 ecological, geological, historic and cultural interest, guided by Ragnhildur (Raga) Sigurðardóttir, Megan Hicks, Skúli Skúlason 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*, which tells the story of more than a hundred farmers from Lake Mývatn and adjacent communities protesting a hydro-project in the outflowing river Laxá by blowing up a dam by the Lake, resulting in the Lake and the River being listed as a nature conservation area and subsequently listed on the Ramsar list of wetlands of international importance.

DAY 3 - Sunday 16 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 17 August

- 8:00-9:00 Breakfast at Kiðagil
- 9:30-10:30 Viðar Hreinsson: **Heath Settlements and the Local Historian Helgi Jónsson. Glimpses of Environmental and Literary History.**
- 10:30-12:00 TBA
- 12:00-13:00 Lunch at Kiðagil
- 13:00-18:00 Excursion to Svartárfkot farmstead and the Aldeyjarfoss waterfall, guided by Guðrún Tryggvadóttir and/or Sigurlína Tryggvadóttir (including 2-3 hours hiking over rough terrain).
- 18:00-19:00 Dinner at Kiðagil
- 20:00- Icelandic Movie *Hrútar* (en: *Rams*), an award-winning film about two brothers who haven't spoken in 40 years, coming together in order to save what's dearest to them – their sheep. *Hrútar* is filmed in the Bárðardalur valley.

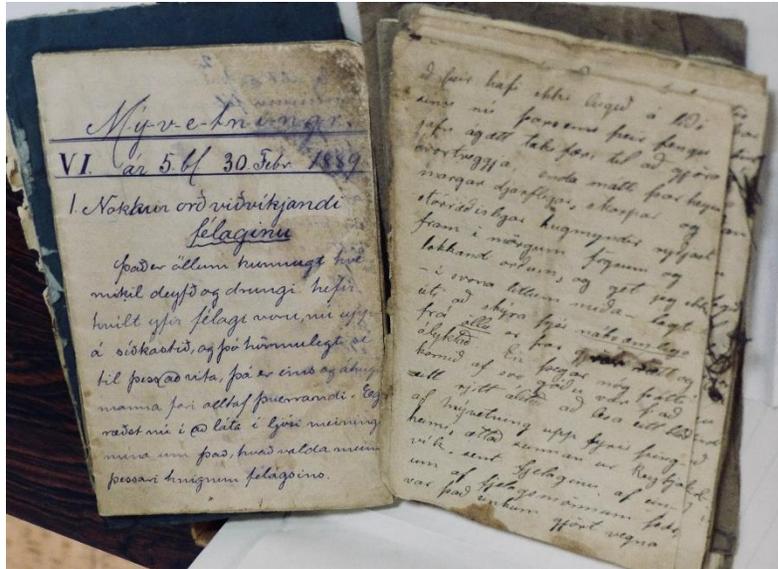


DAY 5 - Tuesday 18 August

- 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.
- 12:00-13:00 Lunch at Kiðagil
- 13:00-18:00 TBA excursion and or lecture
- 18:00-19:00 Dinner at Kiðagil

DAY 6 - Wednesday 19 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 – present.**
- 12:00-13:00 Lunch at Kiðagil
- 13:00-18:00 Excursion to the local archives in Húsavík
- 18:00-19:00 Dinner at Kiðagil.



DAY 7 - - Thursday- 20 August

9:00-All day: Highland excursion from Svartárkot to Mývatn guided by the team with emphasis on archaeology, folklore, climatological, geological and ecological change at the frontier of human habitation in Iceland, in both present time and historically. Short lectures along the way will, furthermore, focus on rangeland management, deserted farms from the medieval period, shielings from the early modern era and on myths about how the present landscape was impacted by horny troll women.

18:00-19:00 Dinner at Þórólfshvoll (Mývatn).

DAY -8 - Friday 21 August

8:00-9:00 Breakfast at Kiðagil



9:00-All day: Excursion to Lake Mývatn guided by Skúli Skúlason and Ragnhildur Sigurðardóttir, taking a closer look at the natural resource management of Mývatn, focusing on the biodiversity and productivity of the lake itself and the extensive Framengjar wetlands in the past and present.

18:00-19:00 Dinner at Þórólfshvoll.

DAY 9 - Saturday 22 August

8:00-9:00 Breakfast at Kiðagil

9:00-10:00 Sigurður Torfi Sigurðsson: Traditional Ecological Knowledge; Opportunities and Applications for Modern Agriculture and Rural Social Development.

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. **TBA**

15:00-15:30 Coffee and discussion

18:00-19:00 Dinner at Kiðagil

20:00 Enlarged environmental perspective – Ragnhildur Sigurðardóttir

DAY 10 - Sunday 23 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 24 August

- 8:00-9:00 Breakfast at Kiðagil

Departure to Akureyri, a final lecture on the way.