SUGGESTED READING GUIDE

ICELAND: LANDSCAPES OF FIRE AND ICE

Here is a selection of recommended books prepared for your tour. For your convenience, you may call (800) 342-2164 to order these books from Longitude, a specialty mail-order book service. To order online, and to get the latest, most comprehensive selection of books for your trip, go directly to reading.longitudebooks.com/N923542.

*Annotated by Carleton faculty leaders Mary Savina and David Lefkowitz.*

RECOMMENDED PACKAGE

These four items are available as a set for $79 including shipping, 15% off the retail price (Item EXICL39). Any additional books ordered will be shipped free of charge.


National Geographic Society. Iceland Adventure Map. National Geographic Maps, 2011. A detailed, double-sided traveler's map at a scale of 1:465,000. (MAP, $11.95, Item ICL05)

HISTORY, CULTURE & EXPLORATION

Byock, Jesse. Viking Age Iceland. Penguin Putnam, 2001. In this scholarly study, Byock challenges the conventional view of Norse society in Iceland. He describes the life, economy and culture of medieval Iceland – including its autonomy from kings and warlords back home. (PAPER, 432 Pp., $18, Item ICL15) *Note from Prof. Savina: “…strongly recommended by Bill North in the History Department and covers the archaeology, specific to Iceland.”*

Cohat, Yves. The Vikings, Lords of the Seas. Thames & Hudson UK, 2010. An indispensable reference that fits in your pocket, this slim volume is packed with maps, archival photographs and illustrations. (PAPER, 175 Pp., $15.95, Item VIK01)

Diamond, Jared. Collapse, How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed. Viking, 2011. Diamond tackles nothing less than the history and fate of civilization in this compelling book in which he offers case studies, present and past, of societies that work and societies that do not, devoting 100 carefully
reasoned pages, for example, to the fate of the Norse settlements in Greenland and the North Atlantic (climatic change, Inuit) and another big section on Easter Island (deforestation, hubris). This revised edition includes a new afterword. (PAPER, 575 Pp., $19, Item GEN324) *Note from Prof. Savina: “…includes a section on Iceland and Viking settlement in the North Atlantic (chapters 6, 7, 8). I teach this book, too, because it’s important even if it isn’t right. If you have it on your bookshelf, take a look at those chapters.”*


Kurlansky, Mark. *Cod, A Biography of a Fish That Changed the World*. Penguin Putnam, 2009. A sparkling extended essay on the cod, looking at the importance of the fish to cuisine and history, as well as to Scandinavian, American and Canadian commerce. (PAPER, 294 Pp., $15, Item OCE10) *Note from Prof. Savina: “…includes recipes!”*


**TRAVEL, BIOGRAPHY & MEMOIR**


Holm, Bill. *Eccentric Islands, Travels Real and Imaginary*. Milkweed Editions, 2000. Holm mixes his meditative journeys to five actual islands (Iceland, Madagascar, Molokai, Isla Mujeres and Mallard Island) with utterly made-up places in this poetic, philosophical inquiry into the myth and meaning of islands. (PAPER, 346 Pp., $22, Item TVL112) *Note from Prof. Savina: “Two long chapters on Iceland…”*

*Note from Prof. Savina: “…Bill Holm [was a] Minnesota writer/educator of Icelandic descent, who taught at Southwestern State University in Marshall, MN. His other books include *Coming Home Crazy* (about spending a year teaching English literature in China), *Box Elder Bug Variations* (about, well, box elder bugs) and several others. For many years, he had a second home in Hofsós, where he ran a writing workshop, a place we visit on this trip. He died in February 2009.”*


Moss, Sarah. *Names for the Sea, Strangers in Iceland*. Counterpoint, 2013. A stranger in a strange land, British novelist Moss captures the spirit of Iceland in this tale of a year abroad with her husband and two children as the family experiences a nation in financial and political crisis. (PAPER, 358 Pp., $17.95, Item ICL61)

Oslund, Karen. *Iceland Imagined*. University of Washington Press, 2013. This cultural and environmental history explores the geography, literature, language, culture, politics and symbolism of Iceland, Greenland, northern Norway and the Faroe Islands. (PAPER, 260 Pp., $24.95, Item ICL57) *Note from Prof. Savina: “Based on her Ph.D. work, this environmental history traces how Icelanders and foreigners have viewed Iceland and the rest of the North Atlantic from about the 16th century until the present. Her case studies include the Laki eruptions of 1783 and their aftermath, the introduction of reindeer in the 18th century, and the current battles over whaling.”*


LITERATURE

Byock, Jesse. *The Saga of the Volsungs*. University of California Press, 2012. A piece full of traditional lore, including runic knowledge, jealousies of princes, betrayals, unrequited love, the vengeance of a barbarian queen, the greed of Attila the Hun and the mythic deeds of a dragon-slayer. (PAPER, 145 Pp., $20.95, Item SCN05)

Cook, Robert (Introduction). *Njal's Saga*. Penguin, 2002. The tales of heroic (and handsome) Gunnar Hamundarson and his scheming friend Njal. Originally written in Icelandic sometime in the 13th century, it's an earthy tale with a strong sense of place, featuring murder, mayhem, a famous feud and noble deeds. (PAPER, 384 Pp., $17, Item ICL16) *Note from Prof. Savina: “…our first stay of several days [August 18th thru 23rd] is in the area this saga is set in.”*


Laxness, Halldor, and Magnus Magnusson (Translator). *Under the Glacier*. Vintage Books, 2005. Laxness brings the full range of his wit, humor, humanity and imagination to this strange, rather slight and amusing book, in which a Church of Iceland envoy travels inland to investigate the strange goings-on in a remote parish. (PAPER, 256 Pp., $15, Item ICL24)


Smiley, Jane (Preface), and Robert Kellogg (Introduction). *The Sagas of Icelanders*. Viking, 2001. Prose “histories” of events from the 10th to 11th centuries, compiled and written down in the 13th-14th centuries, these rousing tales are told with surprising directness and simplicity. Includes nine sagas and six tales, including an account of Leif Eriksson's voyage to North America, all newly translated. (PAPER, 848 Pp., $26, Item ICL13)

Sturluson, Snorri, and Byock, Jesse (Translator). *The Prose Edda*. Penguin Classics, 2006. A new translation of one of the most influential and entertaining medieval Icelandic sagas, the source for much of what we know of Norse mythology. (PAPER, 304 Pp., $17.65, Item ICL26)

Verne, Jules. *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. Dover Publications, 2005. An unabridged republication of the famous work, originally published in 1876. The adventure starts in Iceland, as the explorers descend into the crater of Snæfelljökull. After multiple adventures, they reach the surface through Stromboli, one of Italy’s Aeolian Islands’ volcanoes. (PAPER, 155 Pp., $3, Item ICL64) *Note from Prof. Savina: “The 1959 movie (starring Pat Boone) is a hoot, but it’s filmed in Carlsbad Caverns – which has no resemblance to either Iceland or Stromboli. The book is much better…”*

*Also Recommended by Prof. Savina:

Versions of the Sagas, Eddas, and the Landnámabók (the book of settlement) are available on the web, or as inexpensive electronic books; [http://www.northvegr.org/index.html](http://www.northvegr.org/index.html) has links to online versions.

The Eddas [are] collections of Old Norse mythology and poems, written and compiled in the 12th and 13th centuries:


**NATURAL HISTORY & FIELD GUIDES**


McPhee, John. *The Control of Nature*. Noonday Press, 1989. In the classic McPhee tradition, these sparkling essays explore our generally feeble attempts to combat all-powerful nature, including valiant efforts by Icelanders to control the flow of a volcano across the harbor at Heimaey in the
Westman Islands. (PAPER, 272 Pp., $16, Item NAT01) *Note from Prof. Savina: ‘‘Part 2 – Cooling the Lava’ is about Iceland and the (ultimately successful) attempts to prevent lava flowing on Heimaey in 1973 from completely blocking the island. We visit Heimaey, the largest of the Westman Islands [on August 20th].’’*

Pielou, E.C. A Naturalist's Guide to the Arctic. University of Chicago Press, 1994. Our bestselling book on the Arctic, this guide covers the geography and climate, plants, birds and wildlife of the circumpolar north. (PAPER, 327 Pp., $22, Item ARC03) *Note from Prof. Savina: ‘‘Pielou’s books are readable and good value; potential buyers should know that it doesn’t specifically refer to locations in Iceland.’’*

Thordarson, Thor, and Armann Hoskuldsson. Iceland. International Specialized Book Services, 2002. This geologic companion to Iceland covers rifting of the crust, volcanic eruptions and glacial and other geologic activity in detail. (PAPER, 208 Pp., $35, Item ICL56) *Note from Prof. Savina: ‘‘I will be carrying a copy and so, most likely, will our Icelandic guide. I can help anyone who buys a copy with the technical terms.’’*

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ART AND ICELAND: FURTHER READING RECOMMENDATIONS
by Prof. David Lefkowitz

There are a few contemporary artists whose work has focused on the landscape of Iceland that I would recommend taking a look at: the Icelandic/Danish installation artist Olafur Eliasson, about whom there is a lot of literature (including the exhibition catalog listed below) and the American conceptual artist Roni Horn, whose work on Iceland is a little harder to find but well worth the investigation.

Then there is the Iceland-born pop artist Erro, whose omnivorous appetite for pop culture imagery is well represented in the Reykjavik Art Museum. A survey of his work can be found here:


I will be available for general consultation for any participants who are interested in drawing and/or keeping a field notebook/journal during our trip. If you’d like to learn more about that, I recommend any in a series of books by Carleton alum Clare Walker Leslie, but especially: