

Unity and Unrest in Medieval Towns

History 309

Course Information:

History 309-01 (CRN 80745), Fall 2004

Time: TR 9:30-10:45

Place: McIver 225

Instructor Information:

Dr. Richard Barton

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Office hours: TR 3:30-5:00 and by appointment

Course Description:

This course explores medieval urban culture through examination of the lives, values, religious beliefs, conflicts and historical roles of town-dwellers, some of whom include nobles, bishops, friars, merchants, artisans, women, servants, slaves, criminals, students, and the poor. We will also investigate the role of the town itself as a social, political, and cultural force in the broader arena of medieval history.

A major theme of this course will be the ways in which townspeople came to define their particular urban communities. We will find that because of their relatively high population density, medieval urban communities were especially interested in attaining moral, political and social unity. They craved harmony, and attempted to achieve that harmony both by encouraging the formation of certain groups and activities (guilds, confraternities, civic festivals) and by defining their community in specific ways, ways that came to include certain individuals and exclude others (the poor, certain women, slaves, heretics, and so forth). We will thus be interested in some of the following questions: Who belonged to the urban community? Who did not? What ceremonies and rituals served to promote communal identity? In what ways, and for what reasons, did medieval cities come to be increasingly more tightly defined, and thereby more susceptible to excluding "other" groups? Answers to these and other questions will come from analysis of medieval urban notions of class, gender, "nationality", and morality, as well as from consideration of regional variation in the medieval urban experience (particularly between Italy and Northern Europe).

The course is broken down into three distinct units, each representing a different chronological era of medieval urban development. The first unit explores some fundamental problems in defining urban history through an examination of the fate of urban life in the centuries between 300-800 AD. This is generally accepted as a nadir of urban history in pre-modern Europe as populous and significant Roman towns faded into increasing insignificance. The marginal role played by towns in this period will allow us to confront some basic questions about urban existence: what were towns? what defined urban existence? what role does trade play in defining and/or maintaining urban life? can we even speak of urban life in the early Middle Ages? The second unit tackles the crucial formative period of medieval urban life (1050-1250), in which town-life exploded into the medieval consciousness in Italy, France, England, and

Germany. We will focus at this point on the towns of France and England in order to ask how these newly visible townsmen defined themselves and their occupations, how the towns interfaced with feudal society, and how the towns developed institutions which expressed their distinctive urban culture. The third unit focuses more closely on cultural experiences and collective identities of medieval townspeople. Using the rich sources for late medieval Florence as our primary evidence, we will look at a variety of ways in which towns and townspeople thought about themselves, about religion, about government, about violence, about art, and about sex.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students completing this course should be able to:

- Understand and analyze the difference between primary and secondary sources.
- Perform close criticism of primary sources from the medieval period.
- Grasp and criticize the arguments of modern authorities writing about medieval towns.
- Communicate their ideas effectively in oral and written formats.
- Know how to successfully perform research in Jackson Library
- Understand and employ some important methodological approaches to the past, including class, gender, comparison/contrast, and change over time

Course Requirements:

Students will be evaluated on the basis of active and thoughtful participation in discussions, on a variety of written work, and on a short oral presentation.

Reaction Papers:	10%
Discussion:	5%
Town Project	
Three short written reports	15%
Oral Presentation (1)	5%
Final Paper (6-8 pages)	20%
First Exam (September 30):	20%
Second Exam (November 16):	25%

1. Reaction Papers: periodically during the semester I will ask for 1-2 page papers in which students react to an assigned reading. Sometimes this will involve interpretation of a primary source, while other times it will involve reaction to a scholarly source. I anticipate 4-6 of these during the semester.

2. Discussion: I thoroughly expect students to come to class prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that day.

3. Town Project

In the second week of the course, students will choose a town from a list provided by me and will, for the rest of the semester, investigate certain aspects of that town's experiences during the Middle Ages. [It is possible to switch towns after the first paper, even if I hope that students will stick to the same town. Still, since some of the most interesting and informative early medieval urban centers, ones which I certainly encourage students to explore, were abandoned by 1000 (e.g. Dorestad), I will allow

students interested in such centers to switch to another town for the last two essays. In any event, the subject of the 2nd and 3rd reports must be the same]

a. Short Reports (3): students will write three short (2-3 page) reports on their town during the course of the semester. Each report will discuss a different chronological period of their town's development. The first report will be due after the first unit of the course and will thus discuss the experiences or fate of that town during the period 300-1000 AD. The second report will focus on the period 1050-1250 and will be due after the second unit. The third report will be due at the end of the third unit, and will discuss features of the given town between 1250-1450. I will provide more guidance on the nature of these reports as the class progresses. The due dates for these reports are September 14, October 7 and November 4.

b. Oral Presentation: once during the semester students will make a brief (5 minute) oral presentation to the class concerning their town. These reports will be staggered such that 1/3 of the class will present during the first unit, 1/3 during the second unit, and 1/3 during the last unit. Students will sign up for a slot in the first week of the course. Presentations should convey a bit of general information about the town but should also try to make at least one analytical point. Students are welcome, but not required, to use visual evidence (maps, images, etc.) in their presentation.

c. Final Paper: at the end of the class students will write a 6-8 page paper on their town. The form and subject matter of this paper can vary greatly. Some (perhaps many) students may elect to write an essay that emphasizes continuity and/or change over time (ie., comparing the three periods for which they studied their town). Others may wish to analyze a particular event. Still others may wish to treat a more universal theme of urban history and explore how it played out in their town. Topics must be approved by me. Final papers are due on the last day of class (December 2).

4. Exams: there will be two take-home exams in the course. These exams will cover only the material since the previous exam (note there is no comprehensive final exam). Exams will be a combination of essay and short answer, and will be due September 30 and November 16.

Required Books: (available in the UNCG bookstore)

1. Richard Hodges, *Towns and Trade: In the Age of Charlemagne* (Duckworth, 2001). ISBN: 0715629654 (\$17.95)
2. R.H. Hilton, *English and French Towns in Feudal Society: a Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). ISBN: 0521484561 (\$25.00, paper only)
3. Keith D. Lilley, *Urban Life in the Middle Ages, 1000-1450* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). ISBN: 0333712498 (\$23.95 paper)
4. Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988; reprint) ISBN: 0801836433 (\$20.95)
5. Gene Brucker, ed. and trans., *The Society of Renaissance Florence: A Documentary Study* (1971; reprint, Univ of Toronto Press, 1998). ISBN: 0802080790 (\$19.95)

Other readings will be available on-line and/or in the Reserve Room of Jackson Library.

SEQUENCE OF CLASSES

Introduction: Medieval Society and Medieval Towns

August 17: Feudal Society and Medieval Christianity

August 19: What is a town?

Readings: Lilley, *Urban Life*, xii-xvi, 1-41

I: Early Medieval Towns and Trade

August 24: *Civitates* and Civilization in the Roman Empire

Reserve Room: Hugh Kennedy, "From *polis* to *Madina*: Urban Change in Late Antique and Early Islamic Syria," *Past and Present* 106 (1985): 3-27

Reserve Room: Cristina La Rocca, "Perceptions of an Early Medieval Urban Landscape," in *The Medieval World*, ed. Peter Linehan and Janet Nelson (London, 2001), 416-431.

August 26: Bishops, Saints and Towns

Readings:

Reserve Room: Carlrichard Brühl, "Problems of Continuity of Roman *civitates* in Gaul, as illustrated by the interrelation of cathedral and *palatium*," in R. Hodges and P. Hobley, eds., *The Rebirth of Towns in the West* (London: B.A.R., 1988), 43-46.

Reserve Room: H. Galinié, "Reflections on Early Medieval Tours," in Hodges and Hobley, eds., 57-62.

Handout: excerpt from Gregory of Tours

August 31: Trade, Gifts and Emporia

Readings:

Hodges, *Towns and Trade in the Age of Charlemagne*, 7-33

Reserve Room: D. Hill et al., "Quentovic Defined," *Antiquity* 64 (1990): 51-58

Reserve Room: Wim van Es, "Dorestad Centred," in J. Bestemann et al., eds., *Medieval Archaeology in the Netherlands* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1990), 151-82

September 2: the Pirenne Thesis

Readings: Hodges, *Towns and Trade*, 34-67

September 7: Ninth-Century Urban Life

Readings: Hodges, *Towns and Trade*, 69-125

September 9: Urban Renewal, or the Great Take-Off of the Eleventh Century

II. The Formation of the Medieval Town

September 14: **First Town Report Due**

September 14: the First Communes: Le Mans, Milan and others

Readings: Hilton, *English and French Towns in Feudal Society*, 1-24

Martines, *Power and Persuasion*, 1-21

The Le Mans Commune: <http://www.uncg.edu/~rebarton/gestaarnaldi.htm>

September 16: Case Study 1: Vézelay

Readings: Reserve Room: The Vézelay Chronicle, pp. 151-226

September 21: Town Charters

Readings:

The Beauvais Dossier [<http://www.uncg.edu/~rebarton/beauvaisdossier.htm>]

N.B. For today, read only document A (the charter of Beauvais)

Other Handouts

September 23: Town Government:

Readings: Martines, *Power and Persuasion*, 22-44

On-line: Philip II Confirms the Customs of Tours

September 28: Towns in Feudal Society

Readings: Hilton, 25-86

Handouts/On-line readings

Philip II Quashes the Commune of Etampes

Philip II on the Unjust Pretensions of the Commune of Soissons

September 30: **First Exam due in class**

September 30: A Class Struggle?

Readings: Hilton, 87-154

October 5: Case Study 2: Chartres and Beauvais

Readings:

The Chartres Riot [on-line]

The Beauvais Dossier [<http://www.uncg.edu/~rebarton/beauvaisdossier.htm>]

October 7: **Second Town Report Due**

October 7: Case Studies 3: Milan, Rome and Cologne

Readings: Handouts

October 12: **No Class** (Fall Break)

October 14: Kings, Lords and Urban Jurisdictions

Readings: Lilley, *Urban Life*, 75-137

On-Line: Philip II on tailles at Laon

October 19: The Urban Space

Readings: Lilley, *Urban Life*, 138-211

October 21: Townspeople

Readings: Lilley, *Urban Life*, 212-253

III. Urban Identity: Solidarities and Exclusions

October 26: Urban Identities: Guilds

Readings: Brucker, ed., 90-94

On-line Texts

October 28: Urban Identities: Families

Readings: Brucker, ed., 28-73

November 2: Urban Identities: Religion and Spirituality

November 4: **Third Town Report Due**

November 4: Fairs, Trade and Finance

Readings: Brucker, ed., 1-22

Handout: Philip II Grants a Fair at Poitiers

November 9: the Changing Shape of Italian Communes, 1200-1350

Readings: Martines, 45-71, 94-110, 130-161

November 11: Class Struggle: Urban Unrest

Readings: Brucker, ed., 213-228, 233-236, 236-9 (Ciompi)

November 16: **Second Exam due in class**

November 16: Urban Values

Readings Martines, 72-93, 111-129

Brucker, ed., 23-27

November 18: Violence and Correction

Readings: Handout: Nicole Gonthier, *Cris de haine et rites d'unité: la violence dans les villes, XIIIe-XVIe siècle*, Violence et société (Turnhout: Brepols, 1992), 183-195. Translated from the French by Richard Barton.

Brucker, ed., 95-120, 130-138, 139-155, 168-172, 176-178

November 23: Art and Towns: Cathedrals and Murals

Readings: Martines, 241-276

November 25: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)

November 30: Sexuality and Civic Virtue

Readings: Brucker, ed., 179-212

December 2: **Final Town Project Due**

December 2: Summary: Urban Identities, Collective and Individual

Academic Honor Code

Each student is required to sign the honor statement on all major work submitted for the course.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory. More than 5 unexcused absences will not be tolerated, will result in the instructor dropping the student from the class. Attendance at class-meetings specifically designated as discussions is particularly important.

Late Work Penalty:

Assignments must be submitted by or on the date indicated in the syllabus, unless a student has come to a prior arrangement with the instructor. Late assignments will have their grade reduced by one letter grade for each day they are late. Please see the instructor if you have conflicts with any of the scheduled due-dates.

THE 'LEGAL' STUFF

1. In case later consultation should prove necessary, students are asked to keep copies of all graded assignments until the end of the semester (at least).

2. All course requirements must be completed to receive a grade for the class. This means that you will fail the course if you don't, for instance, turn in the exam essay.

3. Regarding late work ... Assignments are due on the date and at the time listed on the syllabus; if a crisis (such as illness) arises, it is **your responsibility** to contact me. If you do not contact me, the work (when eventually received) will be substantially penalized. Contact may be made by phone, email, or a note left in my mailbox in the History Department (219 McIver). And while I provide my home phone number at the top of the syllabus, I will be annoyed if you call me at home after 9 PM.

3. **PLAGIARISM:** Plagiarism is a type of cheating, and occurs when a person passes off (whether intentionally or unintentionally) someone else's words or ideas as their own. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense, which, in its most overt forms, can result in formal disciplinary action by the university (at the most extreme, this might include expulsion). This is a notoriously thorny area for students. Many students unintentionally commit plagiarism by 'borrowing' ideas, interpretations, and/or actual words from other authors. Make sure that your words are your own, and that your interpretations are also your own. If you find yourself using someone else's words or ideas, make sure you have given him/her credit by using a footnote, endnote, or parenthetical citation. Note: my comments in class do not need to be cited.

4. **BE CAUTIOUS in using websites.** Many students feel that they can obtain the 'answer' (or even a good interpretation) concerning a historical problem by simply looking it up on the web. While the web has many uses, this is almost invariably a

fatal strategy. Looking for someone else's ideas is no substitute for your own analysis. Some observations from the instructor's point of view: 1) use of a web-site without citing it (even if it is crap) is plagiarism, which, if detected, can result in serious academic penalties (see above); 2) instructors can often detect uncited use of a website when either the writing style of the student's paper changes drastically, or when facts/ideas/dates/people not discussed in class or in any of the assigned readings appear in an assignment. Again, I don't want to discourage you from gaining more perspectives by using the web. What I'm saying is that ultimately you are being evaluated on your analysis of the assigned readings, not on your ability to plug some web site's ideas into your essay (an action which will result in severe punishment ~ see the next point).

5. The Big Whammy! If I detect the uncited use of someone else's words or ideas in an egregious fashion in any of the formal assignments for this course, I will be extremely upset and very disappointed. The student in question will receive a 0 (zero) on that assignment. Depending on circumstances, I reserve the right to take further disciplinary action as necessary. I state this rather severely only to warn you. All writing should be your own. It is unacceptable and unethical to cut and paste or borrow ideas or facts from other sources without giving full credit to the author of those words/ideas.

Other books:

Joseph and Frances Gies, *Life in a Medieval City* (Harper Perennial, 1969) ISBN: 0060908807 (\$13.95)

Daniel Waley, *The Italian City Republics*, 3rd Edition (textbook binding, \$45.00)

Eileen Power, *Medieval People* (Harper Perennial, 1963, 1992) ISBN: 0486414353 (\$9.95)

Hugh of Poitiers, *The Vézelay Chronicle*, ed. and trans. John Scott and John O. Ward (MRTS, 1992) Out of Print

Gene Brucker, ed. and trans., *The Society of Renaissance Florence: A Documentary Study* (1971; reprint, Univ of Toronto Press, 1998). ISBN: 0802080790 (\$19.95)

The Life of Cola di Rienzo, ed. John Wright (Pontifical Institute, 1975) ISBN: 088844267X (\$9.50)

Petrarch, *The Revolution of Cola di Rienzo*, ed. Mario Emilio Cosenza (1913; reprint Italica Press, 1996). ISBN: 0934977003 (\$17.50)

Trevor Dean, ed., *The Towns of Italy in the Later Middle Ages* (Manchester UP, 2000) ISBN: 0719052041 (out of print)

Waley, *The Italian City Republics*, 3rd Edition (textbook binding, \$45.00)

Philip Jones, *The Italian City-State: From Commune to Signoria* (Clarendon Press, 1997) ISBN: 0198225857 (\$160.00)

City and Countryside in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy: Essays Presented to Philip Jones, ed. T. Dean and C. Wickham (Hambledon, 2003)

Richard Hodges, *Towns and Trade: In the Age of Charlemagne* (Duckworth, 2001). ISBN: 0715629654 (\$17.95)

Individual, Corporate & Judicial Status in European Cities (Late Middle Ages & Early Modern Period (Studies in Urban Social, Economic and Political History of the Medieval & mOdern Low Countries, 5), ed. Marc Boone and Maarten Prak (Coronet Press, 1996)

Heather Swanson, *Medieval British Towns, Social History in Perspective* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1999) ISBN: 0312223269 (\$79.95)

John Schofield, et al., *Medieval Towns: The Archaeology of British Towns in their European Setting* (Continuum, 2003). ISBN: 0826461301 (\$45.00)

David Nicholas, *Urban Europe, 1100-1700* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003): ISBN: 0333949838 (\$21.95)

Adriaan Verhulst, *The Rise of Cities in North-west Europe* (Cambridge UP, 1999), ISBN: 0521469090 (\$21.00)

Edwin S. Hunt and James Murray, *A History of Business in Medieval Europe, 1200-1550* (Cambridge UP, 1999). ISBN: 0521499232 (\$20.00)

Robert S. Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages, 950-1350* (Cambridge UP, 1976) ISBN: 0521290465 (\$25.00 or \$20.50)

Sharon A. Farmer, *Surviving Poverty in Medieval Paris: Gender, Ideology and the Daily Lives of the Poor* (Cornell UP, 2002). ISBN: 0801438365 \$35.00

William FitzStephen, *Norman London* (Italia Press, 1990). ISBN: 0934977194 (\$12.00)

Caroline Barron and Anne Sutton, eds., *Medieval London Widows, 1300-1500* (Hambledon, 2003). ISBN: 185285085X (\$60.00) [edited wills]

Derek Hall, *Burgess, Merchant and Priest: the Medieval Scottish Town* (Birlinn, Ltd., 2002) ISBN: 184158147X (\$10.00)

Richard K. Marshall, *Local Merchants of Prato: Entrepreneurs in the Late Medieval Economy* (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1999). ISBN: 0801860571 (\$48.00)

Jennifer Kermode, *Medieval Merchants: York, Beverley and Hull in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge UP, 2002). ISBN: 0521522749 (\$95.00)

Peter Spufford, *Power and Profit: the Merchant in Medieval Europe* (Thames and Hudson, 2003). ISBN: 0500251185 (\$39.95, on sale for \$27.95)

James Masschaele, *Peasants, Merchants and Markets: Inland Trade in Medieval England, 1150-1350* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1997). ISBN: 0312160356 (\$70.00)

Sylvia Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London* (1948; reprint, Univ. of Michigan Press, 1988). ISBN: 0472060724 (\$24.95)

Richard Hodges and David Whitehouse, *Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe* (Cornell UP, 1983). ISBN: 0801492629 (\$16.95)

Richard Holt and Gervase Rosser, eds., *The Medieval Town: a Reader in English Urban History* (Longman, 1990). Out of print

Barbara Hanawalt and Kathryn Reyerson, eds., *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe* (Univ of Minnesota Press, 1994). ISBN: 0816623600 (\$19.95)

Marcia Kupfer, *The Art of Healing: Painting for the Sick and the Sinner in a Medieval Town* (Penn State univ. press, 2003) ISBN: 0271023031 (\$45.00)

T.R. Slater and Gervase Rosser, eds., *The Church in the Medieval Town* (Ashgate, 1998). ISBN: 1840142138 (\$99.95)

Teofilo Ruiz, *Crisis and Continuity: Land and Town in Late Medieval Castile* (Univ Penn Press, 1994). ISBN: 0812232283 (\$49.95)

Lorraine Atreed, *The King's Towns: Identity and Survival in Late Medieval English Boroughs* (Peter Lang, 2001); ISBN: 0820451630

Walter Simon, *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200-1565* (Univ. Penn Press, 2003). ISBN: 0812218531 (paper: \$22.50)

Charles Pythian-Adams, *Desolation of a City: Coventry and the Urban Crisis of the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge UP, 2002). ISBN: 0521525004 (\$35.00)

Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy* (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, reprint 1988). ISBN: 0801836433 (\$20.95)

Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton UP, 1986). ISBN: 0691102007 (\$23.95)

David Nicholas, *The Growth of the Medieval City: From Late Antiquity to the early Fourteenth Century* (Longman, 1997)

David Nicholas, *The Later Medieval City, 1300-1500* (Longman, 1997)

Steven Epstein, *Wage Labor and Guilds in Medieval Europe* (Chapel Hill, 1991)

Bronislaw Geremek, *The Margins of Society in Late Medieval Paris* (Cambridge, 1987)

Barbara Hanawalt, *Growing Up in Medieval London: the Experience of Childhood in History* (New York, 1993)

John Henderson, *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence* (1994).

Richard Hodges, *Dark Age Economics: The Origins of Towns and Trade, AD 600-1000* (London, 1982, 1989)

Martha Howell, *Women, Production and Patriarchy in Late Medieval Cities* (Chicago, 1986)

Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family and Ritual in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, 1985)

Jacques Le Goff, *Your Money or Your Life: Economy and Religion in the Middle Ages*, trans. Patricia Ranum (NY: Zone Books, 1988)

Lester Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy* (Ithaca, 1978)

Robert S. Lopez, *The commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages, 950-1350* (Cambridge, 1976)

Robert Lopez and Irving Raymond, ed. and trans., *Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World* (New York, 1955, 1990)

Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination* (Johns Hopkins U.P., 1988)

Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Florence* (Princeton, 1981)

Stephen Murray, *Beauvais Cathedral: Architecture of Transcendence* (Princeton, 1989)

David Nicholas, *The Metamorphosis of a Medieval City: Ghent in the Age of the Artevelde, 1302-1390* (Lincoln, 1987)

Jacques Rossiaud, *Medieval Prostitution* (New York: Blackwell, 1988)

Guido Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford, 1985)

Guido Ruggiero, *Violence in Early Renaissance Venice* (New Brunswick, 1980)

Richard Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York, 1980)

Daniel Waley, *The Italian City-Republics*, 3rd ed. (Longman, 1988)

Ronald Weissman, *Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence* (New York 1982)