

HISTORY 221: THE MEDIEVAL LEGACY



Course Information: History 221-01 (CRN 87769) and History 221-02 (CRN 89294). Classrooms: Bryan 105 for lectures (MW) and Curry 303 for discussions (Fridays, at 10 or 11).

Professor's Information:

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Teaching Assistant Information:

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Professor's Office Hours: Tuesdays from 11:00-12:00, Wednesdays from 11:00-12:00 and by appointment

Teaching Assistant's Office Hours: your TA will have some OH during the week.

Course Description:

This course explores the rich legacy of Medieval Europe. The Middle Ages lasted from the collapse of the Roman Empire in the west (around 500 AD) until the so-called Renaissance (14th to 16th centuries AD). This is an enormous time span, and I have no intention of trying to cover every event and every aspect of the Middle Ages. Rather, we will focus on the central core of the Middle Ages, from circa 750-1300. In so doing we will further subdivide our period into the Early Middle Ages (750-1050) and the High or Central Middle Ages (1050-1300). But the course will not primarily be about mastering a body of material; rather it will concern itself with learning to think like a historian, particularly by interpreting texts. As such we will be concerned not to present a narrative or synthesis, but rather to consider a series of problems of interpretation. Some of them are related to fundamental questions of epistemology, or how we know what we know: how do we know about the Middle Ages? What types of evidence exist, and of what quality is each category of evidence? What sorts of things does this evidence let us know about the Middle Ages, and what sorts of things does the evidentiary corpus prevent us from learning? Another broad category of questions involve the historian who asks the questions. Historians shape history by asking particular questions. Thus, if a historian asked “What powers did kings have in 11th-century France?”, the sort of history that she would produce would necessarily rely on certain categories of evidence, and would produce certain kinds of answers. If another historian asked, however, a different question, such as “how did the culture of the Early Middle Ages differ from that of the High Middle Ages?”, then he might well look to different sources (evidence) and might produce a ‘history’ that looks very different from that produced by the first historian. Clearly we cannot ask every question that is possible of our sources in a single semester, but we will try to explore a variety of different approaches, each with somewhat different questions, sources, and subsequent histories.

What is history?

History is a process, and one of interpretation to boot; it is not merely the location and recitation of some inert set of objective facts. Historians - whether professors or students - must actively engage with sources by asking questions of them. Without a question, there cannot be an interpretation, and there cannot therefore be history. “Facts” are not objective, since “facts” must be selected by some person, and the process of selection (as well as that of interpretation) is subjective, not objective. There is no ‘natural’ or ‘objective’ reason why one ‘fact’ is more important than others. Whether you find the fact that Charlemagne was crowned Emperor in 800 more significant than the fact that Frankish kings practiced polygyny is only a reflection of what questions you are interested in (one fact concerns politics, the other social and legal practice); neither is ‘objectively’ more important.

It is thus the historian’s job to read many sources, thereby awakening questions that he or she may then use to form interpretations based on those sources. Good history is thus about persuading others of the plausibility of one’s interpretation - doing so requires one to a) formulate good questions; b) locate and master ‘good evidence’; c) interpret that evidence in the light of the question(s) one has asked; and d) communicate those interpretations in writing (or sometimes orally). Since this is an introductory course, many of the questions will have been pre-selected by me. I have also provided you with a body of evidence (your primary source readings) with which to address those questions and, hopefully, provoke some new ones.

Your task is to read the evidence in the light of the questions I have posed and formulate an interpretation of that evidence. To accomplish this well, you will need to read the material and come to lecture. Lecture will provide the context, some facts, most of the questions and some of the interpretations - without it, you will have trouble deciding what to do with the readings. If you don’t do the readings, however, you will undoubtedly fail, since you will not be able to provide the evidence needed to support the interpretations that you must make on exams, quizzes, and so forth. I am mostly interested in seeing you master the methods of the historian - the ability to present a plausible interpretation of evidence in a logical and coherent fashion.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

A. General Education Learning Outcomes (SLOs marked ‘A’ are GHP; those marked ‘B’ are GL)

SLO-A1. Use a historical approach to analyze and contextualize primary and secondary sources representing divergent perspectives. (connected to LG3)

SLO-A2. Use evidence to interpret the past coherently, orally and/or in writing (connected to LG1)

SLO-B1. Find, interpret and evaluate information on diverse cultures (connected to LG1)

SLO-B2. Describe interconnections among regions of the world. (Must include substantial focus on at least one culture, nation or sub-nationality beyond Great Britain and North America). (connected to LG 3)

SLO-B3. Use diverse cultural frames of reference and alternative perspectives to analyze issues (connected to LG 5)

B. Course-Specific Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, a student will be able to do the following:

1. Define a suite of political, religious, and social characteristics that characterize the period after 500 CE as 'medieval'. Some of these include kingship, secular and religious clergy, lordship, peasants, crusading, and chivalry. (SLO-A1, SLO-B3)
2. Identify and explain changes to these political, religious and social characteristics over the period 500 to 1500, by paying attention to the number, quality, and content of primary sources available for interpretation. (SLO-A1, SLO-A2, SLO-B1, SLO-B2)
3. Compare and contrast modern assumptions about political, religious and social institutions and structures with those encountered in sources from the Middle Ages; recognize and explain events, movements, and belief structures of the past using terms and contexts appropriate to the period under study. (SLO-A1, SLO-B3)
4. Recognize and evaluate salient features of primary source (SLO-A1, SLO-A2, SLO-B1, SLO-B2). These features include authorial subjectivity as shaped by social and geographic considerations, differences in generic structures and expectations (that is, formal characteristics of genres), and interpretive value as compared to other comparable sources.
5. Recognize an academic argument, evaluate its qualities, and relate it to other narratives (SLO-A1, SLO-A2, SLO-B1, SLO-B3)
6. Sift, select, and synthesize a variety of sources in order to address, in writing, a problem connected to one of the classic questions of historical analysis, namely comparison, change over time, and/or causation. (SLO-A1, SLO-A2, SLO-B2)
7. Recognize and employ specific methodological approaches to the interpretation of the past, including (but not limited to) chronology, periodization, comparison/contrast, continuity/change, class, and gender. (SLO-A1, SLO-A2, SLO-B1, SLO-B3)

TEACHING METHODS

This course combines two main teaching methods. On Mondays and Wednesdays, we meet as a full class for lecture by Prof. Barton. On Fridays, the class divides into two discussion sections, each of which is led by a Teaching Assistant. Note: discussion sections meet in different classrooms from the main lecture and are not interchangeable. You must attend the section in which you are enrolled!

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. **Quizzes** (15%) (SLOs: A1, A2, B1, B2, B3; Course Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

A weekly objective quiz on the assigned reading is required. The format of this quiz is still being developed. I hope it will be online, through the CANVAS course management system. If that proves impossible, the quiz will come in the old-fashioned paper-and-pen format. Typically the quiz will involve about 10 multiple-choice, true-or-false, or other short-format objective questions. The quizzes are unapologetically designed to encourage students to complete the assigned reading. That means that the multiple choice questions on the quiz should be easy for anyone who has done a good job reading the assigned material. If it proves possible to host the quizzes online, they will be available in a rolling format; students must complete them on their own schedule provided it occurs before Friday discussion sections. If the quizzes must be pen-and-paper, then they will take place either in lecture on Wednesday or in discussion on Friday. I'll have more details the first week of class.

Quiz questions are modeled on the questions for the clicker exercises. See discussion above (SLOs A1, A2, B1, B2, and B3).

3. **Take-Home Midterm Exam** (25%) (SLOs: A1, A2, B1, B2, B3; Course Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 4, 6, 7)

The take-home midterm exam will ask students to write short (1-page) responses to several (4 to 5) analytical questions posed of the primary sources. The exam questions will be provided at least ten days in advance.

The entire point of the midterm requires students to analyze and contextualize primary sources (SLO-A1). Likewise, the evidence to be read and interpreted for the exam comes from cultures that are diverse in region and time (SLO-B1); indeed, the comparative essay questions often ask students to compare themes or concepts (lordship, kingship, religious authority) across time or regions (SLO-B2). Essay questions that focus on specific points of methodology (gender, class) are designed to invite students to approach the past from perspectives that differ from the generally vanilla (i.e., allegedly 'objective') modern view (SLO-B3).

4. **Article Review** (15%) (SLOs: A1, A2, B1, B3; Course Learning Outcomes: 5, 6, 7)

You will select an article following the guidelines I provide, and obtain a hard copy of it using bibliographical tools discussed in class. Once you have located, downloaded, and printed the article, you will read it and write a short, 3-4 page evaluation of it. That essay will involve an evaluation of the article's argument and an explanation of the ways in which the article intersects with the material presented in class. Note that there are two due-dates for this assignment: the first requires that you show your TA a hard or pdf copy of your article; the second is the date on which the essay is due.

This assignment asks students to confront the interpretation of secondary sources as one of the necessary skills of the historian. Students must locate an appropriate academic article (gaining familiarity with online bibliographic and search tools), identify the governing argument made by the author, and evaluate the success of that argument as best as they are able. Clearly students will not be held to professorial standards, as they may have had little background in the subject of the article that they have chosen; still, we talk about ways to contextualize a scholarly argument using the lectures, textbook, and primary sources read for the course. Given these goals, students will clearly be required to 'analyze and contextualize secondary sources' (SLO-A1) and to 'use evidence to interpret the past coherently' (SLO-A2). Since part of the assignment focuses on the location of an appropriate article, students gain experience in 'finding' as well as 'interpreting and evaluating' information on diverse cultures (SLO-B1). By being asked to evaluate another's argument according to principles of historical analysis, students are necessarily going to have to 'use diverse cultural frames of reference' to analyze the subject of the article (SLO-B3)

5. **Final Exam** (25%) (SLOs: A1, A2, B1, B2, B3; Course Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 4, 6, 7).

The final exam comes in two parts, an in-class part and a take-home part. The in-class part will present answer a set of multiple-choice questions based on the material for the second half of the course. For the take-home part, students must turn in written answers to previously provided questions on the date of the in-class portion of the exam. The number and format of the questions is TBD, but will probably be similar to the midterm. The final fulfills the same SLOs as the midterm (see above).

6. **Discussion Section Grade (20%)** (SLOs: A1, A2, B1, B2, Be; Course Learning Outcomes, 1-7)

Your TAs have discretion with how this grade is defined and evaluated.. Your TAs will at a minimum reward attendance and frequent, perceptive verbal participation in the discussion of sources. Your TA may also construct his own subsidiary assessment instruments, potentially including weekly in-class writing, quizzes, short oral presentations, etc. Your TA will provide you of a breakdown of how your discussion grade will be determined.

EVALUATIONAND GRADING

The weight of the final course grade represented by each of the various assignments is indicated as follows:

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Quizzes | 15% |
| Midterm: | 25% |
| Article Review | 15% |
| Final Exam: | 25% |
| Discussion Section | 20% |

Grading Scale:

| | | |
|--------------|------------|-----------------|
| 100-97% = A+ | 89-87 = B+ | 59 or lower = F |
| 96-93 = A | 86-83 = B | |
| 92-90 = A- | 82-80 = B- | |
| 79-77 = C+ | 69-67 = D+ | |
| 76-73 = C | 66-63 = D | |
| 70-72 = C- | 60-62 = D- | |

REQUIRED BOOKS

All books are available for sale in the UNCG bookstore.

1. Wim Blockmans and Peter Hoppenbrouwers, *Introduction to Medieval Europe, 300-1550*, 2nd edition (Routledge, 2014). [ISBN: 9780415675871]
2. Patrick Geary, ed., *Readings in Medieval History*, 4th edition (University of Toronto Press, 2010) [ISBN:9781442601208]
3. Keynes, Simon and Michael Lapidge, *Alfred the Great. Asser's Life of King Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources* (Penguin, 1983). ISBN 978-0140444094.
4. Suger, *The Deeds of Louis the Fat* (Hopkins, Catholic U of America, 1992). ISBN 978-0813207582.

READING ADVICE

Because most of the original sources (and much of the content) will be totally unfamiliar to you, I recommend taking notes on them as you read. It is also useful to write a brief summary (2-3 sentences) of each document/source so that you can remember the basic gist of it for class discussion. It's much easier to note down important points as you read than it is to go back and find those points again once you've finished reading. Finally, I recommend reading each document more than once. Sometimes it will take two readings for something to make sense to you. Because the amount of reading for our course is fairly small, you'll have plenty of time for re-reading.

Schedule of Classes and Readings**Week 1**

August 17: Course Introduction

August 19: History, Historians, and Historiography

Reading: Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers, 1-11

Canvas: A medieval document: Juhel of Mayenne Finds a Priory

August 21: Discussion: Being Historians

Week 2

August 24: Europe in 800: Geo-political Contours

Reading: Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers, 15-27 (these pages are optional), and 27-43 (required)

August 26: Charlemagne and the Franks

Reading: Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers, 103-117

Reading: Einhard, *Life of Charlemagne*, in Geary, 266-279

August 28: Discussion: Einhard's Life of Charlemagne

Week 3

August 31: Early Medieval Christianity: Beliefs, Bishops and Priests

Reading: Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers, 50-85

September 2: Monks, Nuns and Miracles

Reading: the Benedictine Rule (in Geary, 159-188). Pay special attention to chaps. 4-7, 22, 23, 33, 38-40, 48, 59, 63-64, 68-73. Make sure you know what Benedict means by 'God's Work' [Lat. *Opus dei*].

Reading: the Miracles of St Foy (in Geary, 322-328)

September 4: Discussion: monks, saints and miracles

Week 4

September 7: **No Class: Labor Day holiday**

September 9: A Renaissance in the Ninth Century?

Reading: Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers, 257-269

General capitulary on the missi, 802, in Geary, 315-320

(Canvas) Paul Dutton, ed., "Letters of Alcuin," from *Carolingian Civilization* (Broadview, 1993), 106-119.

Charlemagne's letter to Baugulf, in Geary, 308-309

September 11: Discussion: concepts of renaissance

Week 5

September 14: Early medieval Society: Class and Gender

Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers, 86-103

September 16: Scholarly Articles and Arguments

Use the search features on Jackson Library's homepage to locate, download/print, and read the following scholarly article: Robin Fleming, "Acquiring, Flaunting and Destroying Silk in Late Anglo-Saxon," *Early Medieval Europe* 15 (2007), 127-158.

In reading it, focus on 1) identifying Fleming's specific argument (i.e., what she is trying to prove); 2) evaluating how and why she has (or has not) proved that argument; and 3) why (or why not) other historians might find her argument to be significant

September 18: Discussion: Robin Fleming's article

Week 6

September 21: the Vikings

Due: Midterm Exam, in class

September 23: Alfred of Wessex

Reading: Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers, 117-125

Reading: *Alfred the Great*, p. 65-120, 163-178

September 25: Discussion: King Alfred

Week 7

September 28: Comparative Fate of Post-Carolingian Kingdoms

Reading: Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers, 154-155 (yes! Two pages only!)

September 30: Economic, Demographic, and Urban Take-off

Reading: Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers, 129-134, 240-256, 297-316

The Beauvais Dossier, on Canvas

October 2: Discussion: growth and expansion

Week 8

October 5: A Localized World: Manors, Peasants and Lords

Reading: Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers, 134-143, 150-152

October 7: Aristocratic Society: Lordship

Reading: Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers, 143-150

Reading: Fulbert of Chartres, Letter to William of Aquitaine (in Geary, p. 376)

Hugh of Lusignan, Agreement between Lord and Vassal (in Geary, 377-381, but only read pp. 377-379 to get a taste for the complicated lordship relationships in this case)

Galbert of Bruges, excerpts from *The Murder of Charles the Good* (in Geary, 382-393)

October 9: Discussion: Lordship

Week 9

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

October 14: Visual Evidence: the Battle of Hastings and the Bayeux 'Tapestry'

Reading: Article on Bayeux Tapestry to be determined, available on Canvas

October 16: Discussion: the Bayeux Tapestry and the scholarly article

Week 10

October 19: the High Medieval Church, 1: the Rise of the Papacy

Reading: Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers, 189-199

Reading: Pope Gregory VII and King Henry IV [of Germany], Letters, in Geary, pp. 562-586. Geary has arranged these letters strangely: I recommend reading only these letters, and in this order:

a. Gregory VII to Henry IV, Admonishing him, pp. 562-565

b. Henry IV, to various including Gregory VII, from the Synod of Worms, January 1076, p. 578 up to the end of 1st column on p. 581

c. Gregory VII, Lenten Synod of 1076 (Feb 1076), pp. 565-566

d. Gregory VII, to all Faithful in Germany (Sept 1076), pp. 571-572

e. Henry IV, Promise (1076), Surrender (1076), and Vow at Canossa (1077), pp. 582-584

f. Gregory VII, Account of Canossa (1077), p. 572

Reading: Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council, in Geary, 430-455, focusing on these canons: numbers 1, 3, 6-8, 10, 11, 13, 14-18, 21, 27, 29, 32, 38, 42-46, 51-52, 62, 67-70

October 21: the High Medieval Church, 2: Reform and Heresy

Reading: Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers, 199-217

Jacques Fournier's account of a heresy interrogation, in Geary, 482-501

October 23: Discussion: the high medieval church

Week 11

October 26: Kingdoms, 900-1300, part I

Reading: Suger, *Deeds of Louis the Fat*, 21-80

Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers, 167-178

Due: delivery of a hard copy of your choice of article for the article review to your TA

October 28: Kingdoms, 900-1300, part II

Reading: Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers, 182-187

Suger, *Deeds of Louis the Fat*, 81-162

Magna Carta, in Geary, p. 739-746 (Geary prints several versions of the document; only read this one). Pay special attention to the following clauses: 2-9, 12, 14, 15, 20, 28, 38, 39, 40, 52, 54, and 61

Vocabulary: amerce (verb) or amercement (noun) = to fine/a fine, imposed by a court as punishment for a wrong

Relief: customary payment made by an heir to his lord so as to permit him to inherit his father's fief

ward: a minor who requires a legal guardian

wardship: rights that a guardian has over his ward's (future) lands and, sometimes, over the ward (for example in choosing a spouse for the ward)

chattels: moveable property, as opposed to land

an aid: a supposedly one-time 'tax' requested of vassals by their lord; how often and for what reasons 'aids' could be demanded was a prime concern

tenant-in-chief: a noble whose direct lord was the king, as opposed to a 'rear vassal', or someone who had several lords between him and the king

assize: a) a law court, held periodically in each county; b) the record produced by a royal legal council

clerk: British-English for any member of the clergy; a cleric, or someone who is not a layman

Fee: an archaic spelling for 'fief', that is, land held from a lord by a Vassal

Disseise: to evict someone from property. A famous legal right conferred by King Henry II (1180s) was called the writ of novel disseisin, and was intended to provide a non-violent means for those who had been evicted from their estate to enlist the king's help in recovering their land

Seisin, or 'to be seised of': rightful possession of an estate

October 30: discussion: Suger and Magna Carta

Week 12

November 2: the Crusades

Reading: "The First Crusade, Four Accounts," in Geary, 394-429
Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers, 221-235

November 4: High Medieval Culture: Abelard and Heloise

Reading: Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers, 269-288

"Letter 1", from the Letters of Abelard and Heloise, on Canvas

November 6: Discussion: the crusade narratives

Week 13

November 9: the Late Middle Ages: Plague and Insurrection

Reading: Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers: 327-343, 347-354

Reading: Selections on the arrival of the plague, and on contemporary explanations for it, from *The Black Death*, ed. Rosemary Horrox, on Canvas

Due: Article Review

November 11: The Hundred Years War

Reading: Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers, 357-363, and 380-383

Froissart, the Crécy Campaign, excerpted from *Chronicles*, on Canvas

November 13: Discussion: calamities of the 14th century

Week 14

November 16: Late Medieval Women

Reading: Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers 343-346

The Trial of Joan of Arc, in Geary, 701-715

November 18: Church Developments: the Papacy and Popular Piety

Reading: Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers, 398-420

Decrees of the Council of Constance (1414-18), on Canvas

November 20: Discussion: Women and the Church

Week 15

November 23: State Formation in the Fourteenth Century

Reading: Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers, 380-396

The Deposition of King Richard II, on Canvas

November 25: Thanksgiving Break

November 27: Thanksgiving Break

Week 16

November 30: Summing Up the Middle Ages

December 1: Reading Day

DUE: December 2 (Wednesday), 12:00-3:00: In-class final exam (multiple choice) and due-date for take-home portion of final exam. The in-class portion of the exam will only last approximately 45 minutes, but will start promptly at noon.

Academic Integrity Policy

Students are expected to include the following statement on all formal writing submitted for the course: "I have adhered to the UNCG Academic Policy in preparing and submitting this assignment." If you are unfamiliar with the policy, please read it carefully at <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is expected at all class meetings. You should check in with your TA before each lecture commences, and your TA will take attendance at Friday discussion sections. Failure to attend class with regularity will negatively impact your grade for the course. Missing more than 2 lectures without prior permission will result in a one-point deduction from the final grade average for each subsequent absence.

Additional Requirements and Advice

1. In case later consultation should prove necessary, students should 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.
3. 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 penalized, usually at the rate of 1/3 of a letter grade per day. .
4. Consultation of websites not assigned on the syllabus: 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 up 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 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 the ideas of some web site into your essay.

CANVAS SITE

All materials for the course (except for the required books) will be posted on the Canvas site for the course. This is particularly important for announcements and E-Reserves. It is a good idea to check the Canvas site regularly. You can get to Canvas from the UNCG homepage (click 'Blackboard', then the option for Canvas).

TECHNOLOGY AND HISTORY 221

1. Email: I prefer to communicate by email (rebarton@uncg.edu). Please be advised, however, that I generally do not check email at night. I will try to respond to all email within 24 hours. If you haven't had a response by then, try again. On the flip side, I can communicate with you only by your UNCG email account (that is the email linked to Canvas, for instance); make sure you check your UNCG email regularly.

2. Laptops in the Classroom: we will start the semester allowing laptops to be used in lecture for note-taking purposes only. If I detect that students are using laptops for other purposes, the privilege of using laptops will be removed for all students.

3. Phones: Please turn your phones off before class. If your phone rings during class, you will be counted as absent for that class period. If I detect that you are using your phone to text (or surf) you will also be counted as absent for that day. Subsequent offenses will be treated with increasing severity.