Violence in the Middle Ages
History 542 - Fall 2018

Course Information:
History 542-01 (CRN 86169), Fall 2018
Time: TR 2:00-3:15
Place: MHRA 1209

Instructor Information:
Dr. Richard Barton
Office: 2115 MHRA. Office phone: 334-3998. Mailbox: 2118A MHRA. Email: rebarton@uncg.edu

Office hours: Mondays 10:00-11:00, Tuesdays 1:00-2:00, Wednesdays 11:00-12:00 and by appointment

Course Description:
“I’m going to get medieval on them....” We all know this famous phrase from Quentin Tarantino’s *Pulp Fiction*, in which the character of Marcellus promises a nasty end to his former tormentors. We are left to supply, from our own minds, the undoubtedly horrific violence that will ensue. But if this and other modern comments suggest that violence was both common and nasty in the Middle Ages, does the evidence produced by medieval people back up Tarantino’s suggestion?

This course examines the meaning and consequences of violence during the Middle Ages. It is not a course in military history, nor will it focus simply upon a string of violent episodes. Rather, it attempts to get into the medieval mentality of violence. We will move topically through a selection
of primary sources (Gregory of Tours, Galbert of Bruges, Saga of Njall, *Raoul of Cambrai*, etc) and scholarly analyses of war and peace, feuding, dispute resolution, chivalry, and lordship. As we do so we shall attempt to grapple with some fundamental questions: how did medieval people define ‘violence’, if they did so at all? How did violence differ from ‘force’? Did medieval people consider violent acts to be necessarily bad? If so, under what circumstances? Were certain social orders and/or institutions more or less associated with violence? That is, was violence a component of lordship? To what degree was violence a subjective category imposed by authors, and to what degree was it universal? This course will investigate these and many other questions pertaining to medieval representations of force, violence, and social norms.

**Required Books**
1. *Njáls Saga*, tr. Robert Cook (Penguin, 2001). ISBN: 97801404447699. I strongly prefer the older Penguin translation, by Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Palsson [Penguin, 1960. ISBN: 978-0140441031]. If you can score a used copy of Magnusson/Palsson, I would recommend doing so. I will also post pdfs of the older version on Canvas. If you promise to print them out, then you needn't buy a hard copy of either edition. If you don't print them out, though, I will be mad! 😊

**Teaching Methods**
This course is taught as a seminar. That means that I expect everyone to arrive having read and thought about the readings. I will not lecture, but rather will lead a discussion based on the assigned readings. If I feel that students are not doing their part to prepare for discussion, I will begin to impose pop (or even daily) quizzes. Note that this course places much weight on discussion. Graduate students enrolled in the class have an extra article to read each week; most weeks, I will dismiss undergraduates with 15 minutes left on Thursday so that I can discuss that article with the graduate students.

**Note: two sorts of students are taking this course:**
   - A. Regular undergraduates (indicated as **UG** on the schedule)
   - B. M.A. students (designated as **GR**)

The course goals and requirements differ according to which type of student you are.

**I. Course Goals and Requirements for Undergraduates (UG)**

**A. Learning Goals**
A student who successfully completes this course should be able to:

1. interpret primary sources from the period under study and analyze them orally and in writing
2. evaluate modern scholarship of a variety of genres and methodological orientations, by recognizing arguments and placing them in context of other arguments
3. employ print and electronic resources to locate suitable primary and secondary sources for a research project
4. Formulate a thesis based on primary sources that is contextualized in the secondary scholarship.
5. Write clear, argument-driven essays employing standard citation style.

B. Requirements (UG)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper on William Miller’s Humiliation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Primary source summary</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Secondary source analysis</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Final Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Take-Home Essay</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Explanation of Requirements

1. Discussion (10%) (Learning Goals 1 and 2)
I am serious about discussion. If you don’t speak you will get a C or worse for discussion. I will also, against my usual inclinations, call on students.

2. Paper on William Miller (15%) (Learning Goals 1, 4, 5)
This will be a short (3-4 page) essay analyzing Miller’s arguments about violence and related emotions.

3. Midterm Exam (15%) (Learning Goals 1, 2, 5)
The exam will be take-home, and will consist of a set of short, pointed questions directed at the readings for the first part of the semester.

4. Research Project (total of 40% of grade, broken down into 3 assignments)
The basic assignment is to choose a primary source, locate and analyze some episodes of violence in that source, read a few accounts by modern historians to provide context, and write a short research paper analyzing how that text/author interprets and/or defines violence.

a. Primary Source Summary (10% of overall grade) (Learning Goals 1, 3 and 5)
You will select a primary source from a list provided by me and read at least 50 pages of it (this source cannot be one assigned for our course). You must turn in a 2-3 page summary of episodes of violence that you found in that source. The summary will be graded according to general writing, the quantity and quality of episodes you have found, and my perception of how much of the source you read (i.e., at least 50 pp).

b. Secondary Source Analysis (10% of overall grade) (Learning Goals 2, 3 and 5)
Once you’ve decided on your primary source, you must assemble a bibliography of works that will help you contextualize that source. For this assignment you must turn in an annotated bibliography and a two page analysis of how and why one (article-length) source will be useful to your paper.
Secondary sources, that is, scholarly accounts (books, journal articles, essays in books), can be about the author, about some aspect of the content of the primary source, about the region (and general time period) from which the source is derived, or about a theoretical approach to violence that helps you understand the text. They may also include methodological items – that is, works not on your author or text, but on aspects of violence that you plan to employ in your analysis (for example, Miller’s book).

c. Research Paper (20% of overall grade) (Learning Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5)
You will eventually write a 9-12 page paper related to your source and the way it employs,
represents, and/or defines ‘violence’ OR one or more related topics (vengeance, emotions, punishment, chivalry, etc). This mini-research paper should be focused on the primary source, and should pay special intention to the interpretive issues we will have studied in class (author, genre, the issue of ‘representation’, etc.). It should also take into account relevant secondary scholarship (such as those you’ve assembled for your bibliography) and should make some effort to address some of the methodological or philosophical questions we have posed about violence. I will provide a handout with suggestions for general approaches to take on this final essay.

5. Final Take-Home Essay (20%) (Learning Goals 1, 2, 4 and 5)
The exam will cover the main readings we have studied this semester. I’ll ask a couple of short, pointed questions (1-2 pp each) and then a longer, more philosophical question about violence as a category of analysis (4-5 pages). It will be due in exam week.

II. Course Goals and Requirements for M.A. Students

A. Learning Goals (GR)
A student who successfully completes this course should be able to:

1. interpret primary sources from the period under study and analyze them orally and in writing
2. evaluate modern scholarship of a variety of genres and methodological orientations, by recognizing arguments and placing them in context of other arguments
3. employ print and electronic resources to locate suitable primary and secondary sources for a research project
4. Formulate a thesis based on primary sources that is contextualized in the secondary scholarship
5. Write clear, argument-driven essays employing standard citation style
6. Demonstrate deeper insight into the relationships linking different works of secondary scholarship, as well as those relationships between secondary and primary sources

B. Requirements (GR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay on Miller</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Primary source summary</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Secondary source analysis</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Final Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Take-Home Essay</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Explanation of Course requirements for M.A. students

1. Discussion (15%) (Learning Goals 1 and 2)
I am serious about discussion. If you don’t speak you will get a C or worse for discussion. I will also, against my usual inclinations, call on students.

2. Paper on Miller’s *Humiliation* (10%) (Learning Goals 1, 4, 5, 6)
This will be a short (4-6 page) essay analyzing Miller’s arguments about violence and their utility to the study of history.
3. **Midterm Exam** (15%) (Learning Goals 1, 2, 5)
The exam will be take-home, and will consist of a set of short, pointed questions directed at the readings for the first part of the semester. One question will pertain to the extra graduate-student readings.

4. **Research Project** (total of 40% of grade, broken down into 3 assignments)
The basic assignment is to choose a primary source, locate and analyze some episodes of violence in that source, read a few accounts by modern historians to provide context, and write a short research paper analyzing how that text/author interprets and/or defines violence.
   a. **Primary Source Summary** (10% of overall grade) (Learning Goals 1, 3 and 5)
      You will select a primary source from a list provided by me and read at least 50 pages of it (this source cannot be one assigned for our course). You must turn in a 2-3 page summary of episodes of violence that you found in that source. The summary will be graded according to general writing, the quantity and quality of episodes you have found, and my perception of how much of the source you read (i.e., at least 50 pp).
   b. **Bibliography** (10% of overall grade) (Learning Goals 2, 3 and 5)
      Once you’ve decided on your primary source, you must assemble a bibliography of works that will help you contextualize that source. For this assignment you must turn in an annotated bibliography and a two page analysis of how and why two (article-length) sources will be useful to your paper. Secondary sources, that is, scholarly accounts (books, journal articles, essays in books), can be about the author, about some aspect of the content of the primary source, about the region (and general time period) from which the source is derived, or about a theoretical approach to violence that helps you understand the text. They may also include methodological items – that is, works not on your author or text, but on aspects of violence that you plan to employ in your analysis (for example, Miller’s book).
   c. **Research Paper** (20% of overall grade) (Learning Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6)
      You will eventually write a 12-20 page paper related to your source and the way it employs, represents, and/or defines ‘violence’ OR one or more related topics (vengeance, emotions, punishment, chivalry, etc). This research paper should be focused on the primary source, and should pay special attention to the interpretive issues we will have studied in class (author, genre, the issue of ‘representation’, etc.). It should also take into account relevant secondary scholarship (such as those you’ve assembled for your bibliography) and should make some effort to address some of the methodological or philosophical questions we have posed about violence. I will provide a handout with suggestions for general approaches to take on this final essay. Graduate students are permitted, moreover, to employ several linked primary sources in their research projects (i.e., several chronicles from 11th- and 12th-century Normandy, or several sagas, etc.)

5. **Final Take-Home Exam** (20%) (Learning Goals 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6)
The exam will cover the main readings we have studied this semester. I’ll ask a couple of short, pointed questions (1-2 pp each) and then a longer, more philosophical question about violence as a category of analysis (4-5 pages). At least one of the shorter questions will be aimed at the special graduate-student readings. The exam will be due in exam week.

6. **Additional reading**: (Learning Goal 6)
On the schedule of readings you will occasionally find additional readings marked “GR”. These are required readings for M.A. students.
Important Rules and Regulations for all Students!

Attendance Policy
Attendance is mandatory. You are allowed to miss 2 classes without explanation; for every subsequent absence, I will deduct 1 point from your final cumulative course grade.

Academic Honor Code
Each student is required to sign the Academic Integrity Policy on all major work submitted for the course. Refer to this address on the UNCG website for more details:
http://studentconduct.uncg.edu/policy/academicintegrity/complete/.

Additional Requirements and Advice
1. In case later consultation should prove necessary, students are asked to keep copies of all graded assignments until at least the end of the semester.
2. All course requirements must be completed to receive a grade for the class.
3. Late work will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade (ie., A to A-) per day it is late unless previous arrangements have been made with the instructor.
4. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense that occurs when someone - whether knowingly or not - uses the words or ideas of someone else without giving that person credit for those words or ideas with a formal citation. I therefore expect that all written (and oral) work will be your own. Should I find evidence to the contrary, I will consider any and/or all of the punitive sanctions made available to me by the university. When in doubt, cite your source. If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me in private - I'm happy to discuss it. In my experience, the most common forms of plagiarism are 1) cutting material from the web and pasting it into your paper without attribution, and 2) failing to cite adequately. You should familiarize yourself with the University policy on Academic Integrity:
http://studentconduct.uncg.edu/policy/academicintegrity/complete/.
5. Note-Taking: This course emphasizes the reading, analysis, and discussion of written texts. To get the most out of the course, you must come to class prepared to discuss the readings that were assigned for that class meeting. You are strongly encouraged to take written notes on the readings. With primary sources, this might involve noting significant passages or events (with the appropriate page number so you can find them again if necessary). With secondary sources, you should try to jot down the main interpretive points of the reading; none of our secondary sources (e.g. Miller, White, Bisson, etc.) is a neutral purveyor of fact - you ought to be able to write down 4-10 sentences describing any of their points for each chapter. You also might then include a couple of examples from that reading which illustrate the reading's larger points. With all secondary sources, it is essential that you know the argument of the article/chapter. You should also try to be alert to differences of opinion between authors; sometimes this will be obvious, other times more subtle.
6. PDFs: it is your responsibility to print out the pdfs for the class. Consider that I could have assigned books instead of pdfs, which would have increased the cost of books enormously. It is impossible to take notes on your phone or even on a laptop pdf. Please print them out.
**Schedule of Class Meetings and Readings:**

Important note: M.A. students must read an extra article each week; that article is listed in the fourth column. While undergraduates are, of course, welcome to read them, they are not required to do so.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date and Subject</th>
<th>Readings (all)</th>
<th>Readings (grad.)</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the Franks comments about his intentions and methods as a ‘historian’), in Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks*, tr. L. Thorpe (Penguin, 1974), pp. 63, 67 (first paragraph), 103, 161-162, 253-254, 601-604

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>September 4: Gregory of Tours</th>
<th>1. Gregory of Tours, Book II, chaps. 25-43 (p. 138-158) and Book V (p. 251-324)</th>
<th>Essay on Miller due, in class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

|------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|

|------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|

*vi. Another Feud, Book 5, chap. 32
*vii. An honor Killing: Book 6, chap. 36 (first paragraph)
*viii. Feuds of Sichar, Book 7, Chapter 47, and Book 9, Chapter 19
*ix. Guntram’s feuds: Book 8, chap. 28; Book 9, chaps. 16, 20; book 10, chap. 4
x. Fredegund Feuds: Book 10, Chapter 27

Week 6 September 18:
2. Canvas: Charters from Western France


September 20:
2.

Week 7 September 25:

September 27:
2. Canvas: Warren Brown, Violence in Medieval Europe, 99-115


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>October 2:</td>
<td>The Murder of Charles the Good, 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Murder of</td>
<td>1. The Murder, Betrayal and Slaughter of the Glorious Charles, p. xvii-xxxii, 2-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Cary Nederman, “A Duty to Kill: John of Salisbury’s Theory of Tyrannicide,”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October 4:</td>
<td>The Murder of Charles the Good, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Murder of</td>
<td>1. The Murder, Betrayal and Slaughter of the Glorious Charles, p. 29-71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Take-Home midterm due, in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>October 9:</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall Break</td>
<td>Choice of Primary Source for Research Project due (send bibliographic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>reference to me by email, along with selfie of you with the book)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October 11:</td>
<td>The Murder of Charles the Good, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Murder of</td>
<td>1. The Murder, Betrayal and Slaughter of the Glorious Charles, p. 71-121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Canvas: David Crouch, “From Preudommie to Chevalerie,” in Crouch,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Birth of Nobility (Routledge, 2005), 29-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October 16:</td>
<td>The Murder of Charles the Good, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Murder of</td>
<td>1. The Murder, Betrayal and Slaughter of the Glorious Charles, p. 121-169, 183-190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chivalry (Cambridge, 2016), 7-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Canvas: selected troubadour songs from the 12th and 13th centuries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October 18:</td>
<td>Chivalry and Noble Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chivalry and Noble Culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Canvas: David Crouch, “From Preudommie to Chevalerie,” in Crouch,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Birth of Nobility (Routledge, 2005), 29-86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Week  | October 23: | 1. *Njal's Saga*, tr. Robert Cook (2001), chaps. 1-45 (p. 3-78)  
1a. Or *Njal's Saga*, tr. Magnus Magnusson and Herman Palsson (1960), chaps 1-45 (p. 39-119). This version will be available in pdf form on Canvas.  
2. Be sure to consult the maps, genealogies, and glossaries as needed (Cook, 354-367; Magnusson and Palsson, 359-378)  
1a. Or *Njal's Saga*, tr. Magnus Magnusson and Herman Palsson (1960), chaps. 46-90 (p. 119-197) | Primary Source analysis due  
1a. Or *Njal's Saga*, tr. Magnus Magnusson and Herman Palsson (1960), chaps. 91-134 (p. 197-283)  
| 13    | Late Medieval Crime | Secondary Source analysis due |
1. Canvas: Dean, “Punishment”, in Crime in Medieval Europe, 118-143
3. Canvas: The Case of Thomas of Elderfield


Week 14 November 13: Raoul of Cambrai, 1

Week 15 November 20: the Pinker Thesis
1. Canvas: selections from Steven Pinker, the Better Angels of Our Desire
3. Canvas: selected other critiques of Pinker

Week 16 November 27: What is
1. Canvas: William Ian Miller, “In Defense of Revenge,” in
Violence? Definitions and Interpretations

Medieval Crime and Social Control, ed. B. Hanawalt and D. Wallace (Minneapolis, 1999), 70-89.

2. Review: Canvas: Warren Brown, 1-30 (see August 16)

November 29: Reading Day

NO CLASS

Week 17 Monday, 3 December, 12:00

Take-Home Exam due, in my office by noon