

**Medieval Europe (History 221)**  
**Spring 2005**

Instructor: Anne Barton  
Class: T, R 9:30-10:45  
Room: McIver 222

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& by appointment

Welcome to medieval history! In our romantic imaginations, the history of the Middle Ages is concerned primarily with knights in shining armor, damsels in distress, and quests after such items as the “Holy Grail.” While the nobility, women, and Christianity will all play a part in our course, the sources we examine and the questions we ask of them will bear little resemblance to scenes from King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. Instead, we will be looking at a wide variety of sources to see 1) how the exercise of government changed over this period as kings and nobles struggled to exert their authority; 2) how the beliefs, practices, & institutional functions of Christianity changed over this period; 3) how women participated in various facets of medieval culture; and 4) how individuals were defined by the various groups to which they belonged. The Middle Ages - roughly the period from 500 (the end of the Roman Empire in the West) to 1400, or 1500, or 1600 (depending on when the Renaissance occurred in a particular location) – could be described as a period in which people were engaged in defining who was “in” and who was “out” of various groups. In order to create such a definition, each person’s role in medieval society had to be defined, and further, so did each aspect of his or her role. Thus, we will look at changes in the history of law & government, the history of Christianity, and the history of women through the prism of a society that was attempting to codify precisely what it meant to be a part of that society. It would also be useful for you to keep in mind that while for many historians the Middle Ages marks the beginning of modern history, for others the Middle Ages is a period characterized primarily by its differences from the modern (or post-modern) world in which we live. We will be engaged in a search for modern institutions which have their origins in the medieval period, but we will not be blind to the differences that exist between that age and our own.

To formulate our own conclusions about these questions, we will be using primary sources (those written during the Middle Ages). In order to make good oral and written evaluations of these sources, you must always consider the biases, both positive and negative, of the author and the nature of the source. All historical sources are not created equal; you’ll need to make informed judgments about each of them. Since this is a history course, the topics of our discussions will be roughly chronological, but we will be more concerned with analytical methods than with strict chronology. In other words, you will spend more time in this class reading and analyzing primary source materials than you will spend memorizing names and dates.

## **Discussion Preparation and Writing Assignments**

For the purposes of evaluation (grading), we will focus on two interrelated skills. The first, active discussion of the materials, requires reading the material before the day of the lecture with which it is connected so that you can contribute both comments and informed questions to the discussion.

Because this is a writing intensive (WI) course, we will also be exploring a wide variety of ways to write about history. Each of the writing assignments will aid you in becoming a better interpreter of the primary sources left to us by medieval people.

**5 Short Writing Assignments:** These periodic one-page writing assignments will focus on the process of constructing a brief essay (introduction, evidence, conclusion) and help to prepare you to write the three longer essays.

**In-class writing:** At the beginning of each discussion, students will take 5 minutes to answer a specific question which will serve as a starting point for the discussion. These timed writings will be collected periodically but not graded. Completion of these writings is part of the grade for discussion.

**3 essays of 4-5 pages:** These essays allow students to focus separately on three of the forms of writing practiced by historians – argument, comparison, and examination of an historical question. All three of the essays will be revised and accompanied by a brief (1/2 to 1 page) explanation of how the author has addressed the comments of the reader (instructor). No grade will appear on the first draft of any of these essays. After the first draft of the first essay has been returned to the students, each student will be required to meet with the instructor to outline the changes he/she will make in the revised version of the essay.

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

At the end of the course you will be able to:

- construct an analytical essay using related primary source material as evidence to support an argument in answer to a specific historical question.
- demonstrate familiarity with argumentative, comparative, and historiographical styles of writing about historical issues.
- understand which elements in medieval society can be seen as origins for modern beliefs or institutions and which cannot.

## **For Your Information**

Attendance: After you have missed three class periods for any reason, your final average for the course will be reduced by one percentage point (ie from 84 to 83) for each additional absence.

Honor code: Any violation of the honor code (such as plagiarism or cheating) will be dealt with according to UNCG's academic integrity policy. I am particularly concerned about plagiarism from the web. I do not want you to use websites for any of the writing assignments unless a particular website is specifically included as part of the assignment. The primary sources and the lectures will provide you with sufficient information to complete the assignments. For specific explanations about UNCG's academic integrity policy, see the Student Affairs website at <http://saf.dept.uncg.edu/conduct/policies/academic.integrity.html>.

Assignment completion: Failure to complete any part of the course – in-class writings/discussions, periodic short writing assignments, or any of the three essays– will result in an “F” for the course.

### **Grade Breakdown**

Discussion & Timed Writings	20%
Short Writing Assignments	15%
First Essay (argument)	15%
Second Essay (comparison)	25%
Third Essay (historiography)	25%

### **Required Texts**

*Alfred the Great. Asser's Life of Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources.* Translated with an introduction and notes by Simon Keynes and Michael Lapidge (Penguin, 1983) ISBN 0-14-04409-2.

*The Letters of Abelard and Heloise,* ed. Betty Radice (Penguin, revised edition 2003) ISBN 0-140-44899-3.

Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec and Enide.* trans. Dorothy Gilbert (University of California Press, 1992) ISBN 0-520-07346-0.

Jean Froissart, *Chronicles,* ed. and trans. Geoffrey Brereton (Penguin, 1968) ISBN 0-14-044200-6.

Patrick Geary, *Readings in Medieval History,* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Broadview, 2003). ISBN 1-55111-550-6.

C. Warren Hollister and Judith Bennett, *Medieval Europe: A Short History,* 9<sup>th</sup> edition (McGraw-Hill, 2002). ISBN 0-07-112109-9.

## Lecture Schedule

Tuesday, January 11: Introductions

Thursday, January 13: Roman Origins

Readings: Geary – *Theodosian Code* (1-28); Hollister & Bennett – 5-16 & 31-37

Tuesday, January 18: Christian Origins I: the Gospels & the Early Creeds

Readings: Handout – Nicene Creed and Vincent of Lérins-Definition of Orthodoxy;  
Handout – New Testament excerpts on women; Hollister & Bennett – 17-30

Thursday, January 20: Christian Origins II: Late Antique Female Sanctity

Readings: *The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas* (61-68)

Tuesday, January 25: Benedict and his *Rule*

Readings: Geary – *The Rule of Saint Benedict* (168-198); Hollister & Bennett – 74-78

Thursday, January 27: Germanic Origins: Clovis

Readings: Geary – *The Tomb of Childeric: Father of Clovis* (120-128); *Salic Law* (129-136); Gregory of Tours *History of the Franks* (139-161); Hollister & Bennett: 35-48

Tuesday, February 1: Frankish Women: Fredegund, Brunhild, & Balthild

Readings: Geary - *Life of Saint Balthild* (162-167); Handout – Gregory of Tours on Frankish Queens

Thursday, February 3: Charlemagne and his Empire

Readings: Geary – *Life of Charles the Great* (282-296); Selected Capitularies (297-320); Hollister & Bennett: 102-124

Tuesday, February 8: Alfred the Great

Readings: Alfred the Great - Asser's *Life of Alfred* (66-110); *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 888-900* (111-120); Extracts from the laws of King Alfred (163-170); Hollister & Bennett – 134-138

Thursday, February 10: Byzantium & Islam

Readings: Handout – excerpts from the *Qu'ran*; Hollister & Bennett: 49-64; 86-101  
***First Draft of First Essay Due***

Tuesday, February 15: Aristocratic Power: Lords and Vassals

Readings: Geary – Fulbert of Chartres *Letter to William of Aquitaine* (386); Hugh of Lusignan *Agreement between Lord and Vassal* (387-392); Galbert of Bruges *The Murder of Charles the Good* (393-406); Hollister & Bennett – 182-187

Thursday, February 17: Banal Lordship: Peasants and their Lords

Readings: Hollister & Bennett – 160-171

- Tuesday, February 22: Monastic Reforms: Cluny & Cîteaux  
Readings: Geary – Cluniac Charters (321-327); Bernard of Clairvaux *Sermons on Song of Songs* (350-359); Hollister & Bennett - 197-203
- Thursday, February 24: Investiture Controversy I  
Readings: Geary – Pope Gregory VII and King Henry IV *The Investiture Controversy* (609-634); Handout – *The Dictatus papae*; Hollister & Bennett - 203-210  
***Second Draft of First Essay Due***
- Tuesday, March 1: Investiture Controversy II  
Readings: Geary – *The Concordat of Worms* (635)
- Thursday, March 3: First Crusade  
Readings: Geary – The First Crusade, Four Accounts (407-442); Hollister & Bennett – 227-236
- Tuesday, March 8: No class. Spring Break.
- Thursday, March 10: No class. Spring Break.
- Tuesday, March 15: At the Church Door: 12<sup>th</sup>-century Marriage Reforms  
Readings: Handout – Marriage Documents
- Thursday, March 17: Heloise & Abelard  
Readings: *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise – Historia calamitatum* (3-43); Letters 2-5 (46-89)
- Tuesday, March 22: “A White Mantle of Churches”: Gothic Architecture  
Readings: *Erec and Enide* (41-152); Hollister & Bennett – 302-308
- Thursday, March 24: The Romances of the Twelfth Century : Erec and Enide  
Readings: *Erec and Enide* (152-252)
- Tuesday, March 29: Religious Response to the Growth of Towns: the Mendicants  
Readings: Geary – *The Rule of Saint Francis of Assisi* (470-473); Clare of Assisi *Testament* (474-477); Canonization Process of St. Dominic (478-492); Hollister & Bennett - 210-215  
***First Draft of Second Essay Due***
- Thursday, March 31: Royal Centralization: the Example of England  
Readings: Geary – Domesday Book (758-765); Richard Fitz Nigel *Dialogue of the Exchequer* (766-775); *The Huntingdonshire Eyre of 1286* (794-797); Hollister & Bennett - 268-279

Tuesday, April 5: Magna Carta  
Readings: Magna Carta (776-793)

Thursday, April 7: The Late Medieval Papacy: Babylonian Captivity, Schism, & Conciliarism  
Readings: Geary – Marsilius of Padua *Discourses* (545-566); Hollister & Bennett – 264-266; 336-339  
***Second Draft of Second Essay Due***

Tuesday, April 12: The Hundred Years' War & Social Unrest  
Readings: Froissart *Chronicles* 146-166; 211-230; Hollister & Bennett - 323-328

Thursday, April 14: The Deposition of Richard II & the Emergence of Parliament  
Readings: Froissart *Chronicles* 421-471; Hollister & Bennett: 349-353

Tuesday, April 19: La Pucelle: Joan of Arc  
Readings: Geary – The Trial of Joan of Arc (742-757); Hollister & Bennett – 353-356

Thursday, April 21: the Black Death: Boccaccio's *Decameron*  
Readings: Handout – Excerpts from Boccaccio's *Decameron*; Hollister & Bennett - 328-335  
***First Draft of Third Essay Due***

Tuesday, April 26: Late Medieval Women: Chaucer's *Wife of Bath* and Margery Kempe  
Readings: Geary – *The Book of Margery Kempe* (567-599); Handout – Geoffrey Chaucer *Prologue to the Wife of Bath's Tale*

Thursday, April 28: Periodization: What were the Middle Ages?

Thursday, May 5 at 12 noon in my office (25 Foust)  
***Final Draft of Third Essay Due***