

Unity and Unrest in Medieval Towns

History 309

Course Information:

History 309-01 (CRN 13610), Spring 2011

Time: TR 9:30-10:45

Place: MHRA 2209

Instructor Information:

Dr. Richard Barton

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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. 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. We will look at a variety of ways in which towns and townspeople thought about themselves, about gender roles, about religion, about trade and crafts, about violence, about art, and about sex.

Required Books: (available in the UNCG bookstore)

1. *Medieval Towns: a Reader*, ed. Maryanne Kowaleski (University of Toronto Press, 2006). ISBN: 9781442600911
2. Richard Hodges, *Dark Age Economics: the Origins of Towns and Trade AD 600-1000*, 2nd edition (Duckworth, 2008). 978-0715616666
3. R.H. Hilton, *English and French Towns in Feudal Society: a Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). ISBN:0521484561
4. Norman Pounds, *The Medieval City* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2005). ISBN: 0-313-32498-0

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

TECHNOLOGY

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 48 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 Blackboard, for instance); make sure you check your UNCG email regularly.
2. Laptops in the Classroom: I have no problem with you bringing your laptop to class and using it for instructional purposes. If I suspect that you are surfing or chatting or something, I will ask you to refrain from bringing your laptop for the rest of the semester.
3. Phones: turn your phone off before lecture. It is extremely rude to make or

receive calls while in class, let alone to text your friends. I will amusedly tolerate a few ringtones going off in class, but I will not tolerate talking or texting in class. Should I find that you are using your phone instead of paying attention, I will ask you to leave it on the table at the front of class each day for the rest of the semester (I won't touch it; you can pick it up at the end of class).

Student Learning Outcomes

Students completing this course should be able to:

1. Demonstrate broad knowledge of urban social, political and economic structures during the period 500-1500.
2. Analyze and criticize primary sources.
3. Identify and criticize the arguments of modern authorities writing about medieval towns.
4. Communicate ideas effectively in oral and written formats.
5. Utilize information technology and resources in Jackson Library to locate and assemble appropriate resources for research into medieval towns
6. Understand and employ some important methodological approaches to the past, including
class, gender, comparison/contrast, and change over time

Course Requirements:

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Discussion: | 10% |
| Town Project | |
| Two short written reports | 20% |
| Final Paper (6-8 pages) | 20% |
| Primary Source Quizzes | 30% |
| Hodges Paper | 10% |
| Hilton Paper | 10% |

1. Discussion (10%) Learning Outcomes: 2, 3, 4, 6

This course emphasizes the reading and discussion of written texts. To get the most out of the course, you should attend regularly and 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 significant comments 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; you ought to be able to write down 4-10 sentences describing the author's points for each chapter. You also might then include a couple of examples from the chapter which illustrate the author's larger (book-length)

points. With other secondary sources, it is essential that you know the argument of the article. In terms of grading discussion, I have found that if you rarely or never open your mouth in class, your discussion grade will probably be in the low C range. If you make regular comments, but they are descriptive and not analytical, your discussion grade will be in the B range. To get in the A range, you should be making regular comments each day and should try hard to offer interpretive points (not pure opinion, but rather things like “Hodges seemed to be trying to prove that ...”). The notes you take on the readings is a good jumping-off point for discussion.

2. Town Project (40%, broken down into three assignments; see below)

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 report and the final paper must be the same]

a. Short Reports (2 reports at 10% each) Learning Outcomes 1, 3, 4, 5,6
Students will write two 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 1050-1300 and will be due after the second unit. Each report will be based on at least one secondary source (article) which students will locate using provided materials and resources in Jackson Library. I will provide more guidance on the nature of these reports as the class progresses. The due dates for these reports are March 3 and April 12.

b. Final Paper (20%) Learning Outcomes 1, 3, 4, 5, 6
At the end of the class each student will submit a 6-8 page paper on the town that he/she has been studying. 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 (i.e., comparing the periods for which they studied their town). Others may wish to analyze a particular event. Still others may wish to treat a more universal or general theme of urban history (similar to those which provide the headings for many of our class meetings) and explore how it played out in their town. The paper must be analytical and not merely descriptive. Topics must be approved by me. Final papers are due on the last day of class (December 2).

3. Primary Source Quizzes (3 quizzes worth 10% each) Learning Outcomes 1, 2

In lieu of exams, students will take three 30-minute long, in-class quizzes based on the primary sources assigned since the last quiz. These

quizzes will take the form of fill-in-the-blank and/or short answer questions. Quizzes will occur on February 22, March 31 and April 21.

4. Essay on Hodges (20%) Learning Outcomes 3, 4

After the first unit of the course, students will write a short (2-4 page) evaluation of Hodges' *Dark Age Economics*. I will provide several prompts from which to choose. Due on February 10.

5. Essay on Hilton (10%) Learning Outcomes 3, 4

Once we've finished reading Hilton's *English and French Towns in Feudal Society* students will write a short (2-4 page) essay evaluating that work. I will provide several prompts from which to choose. Due on March 24.

Summary of Due-Dates

February 10: Hodges essay
February 22: 1st Primary source quiz
March 3: 1st Town report
March 24: Hilton Essay
March 31: 2nd Primary source quiz
April 12: 2nd Town Report
April 21: Third Primary Source quiz
May 3: Town Project

Grading Scale

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|----|----|----|----|
| A | 93 | C | 73 |
| A- | 90 | C- | 70 |
| B+ | 87 | D+ | 67 |
| B | 83 | D | 63 |
| B- | 80 | D- | 60 |
| C+ | 77 | F | 59 |

Sample grading rubrics will be supplied before written work is due.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory. You are allowed to miss 3 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 final course 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. Please note that despite this rule, one must still complete all assignments to receive a final grade for the class.

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.

SEQUENCE OF CLASSES

Introduction: Medieval Society and Medieval Towns

January 11: Feudal Society and Medieval Christianity

January 13: What is a town?

I: Early Medieval Towns and Trade

January 18: *Civitates* and Civilization in the Roman Empire

Readings:

Kowaleski, ed., 1-13

January 20: What Happened to the Cities of Antiquity? Gibbon & Pirenne

Readings:

Hodges, 6-28 ("the Shadow of Pirenne")

Pounds, 187-8 (Document 1: the Ruin)

In class: choice of town for first town report

January 25: Black Earth: Archaeology and the End of Rome

Readings

E-reserve: Hodges: "Pirenne after McCormick", in *Goodbye to the Vikings?*, 176-186.

E-reserve: Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages* (2005), 591-596, 636-681 (western cities)

January 27: Towns in Early Medieval France, Italy and Britain

Readings

Pound, 1-19

Kowaleski, 14-15

Blackboard: H. Galinié, "Reflections on Early Medieval Tours," in Hodges and Hopley, eds., 57-62.

February 1: Trade in the Early Middle Ages

Readings

Hodges, 29-46, 104-129

February 3: Charlemagne and the Carolingian Revival

Readings

Hodges, 151-161

February 8: Emporia, Markets, and Trade in the 9th Century

Readings:

Hodges, 47-65, and 66-86 (only read entries on Hamwih, London,
Ipswich, York, Dorestad, Haithabu and Birka)

Pound, 188-9 (Document 2: Anglo-Saxon Chronicle)

Kowaleski, 16-18.

II. High Medieval Towns: Towns and Lords

February 10: Take-Off and Urban Expansion, 10th-11th centuries

Readings:

Kowaleski, 21-24, 28-33

Pound, 209-211 (document 16)

Due: Hodges Paper

February 15: High Medieval Towns: Plans, Buildings and Environment

Readings

Pound, 21-53, 147-149

Kowaleski, 349-374

February 17: Rise of the Communes

Readings

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

Kowaleski, 35-44

Online: the Le Mans Commune:

<http://www.uncg.edu/~rebarton/gestaarnaldi.htm>

February 22: Town Charters

Readings:

Blackboard: the Beauvais Charter

Blackboard: Philip II grants a commune to Poitiers, 1222

Pound, 191-193 (Document 4)

Due: First Primary Source Quiz

February 24: Towns and Feudalism

Readings:

Hilton, 25-52

Kowaleski, 45-51

Blackboard: Philip II Orders Oaths of Fealty from men of Beauvais
Blackboard: Philip II mediates between men of Peronne and the
Archbishop of Rouen
Blackboard: Philip II quashes a commune

March 1: Social Structure in Towns

Readings

Pound, 137-140
Hilton, 53-86
Kowaleski, 60-61, 81-83, 90-95, 98-109

March 3: Towns and their Rulers

readings

Hilton, 87-104
Blackboard: Development of consular government in Toulouse
Blackboard: The Creation of a new town at Salisbury
Due: First Town Report

March 8-10: Spring Break

March 15: Urban Government

Readings

Pound, 99-118
Kowaleski, 62-67,
Blackboard: Philip II Regulates Tailles and Government in Laon
Blackboard: Royal Influence in Tours
Blackboard: Philip II regulates limits of commune of Soissons

March 17: Urban Government, Italy

Readings:

Kowaleski, 52-59, 70-72, 86-89, 95-98, 113-115

March 22: Social Conflict in Towns

Readings

Hilton, 127-154
Blackboard: the Chartres Riot of 1210 and its Aftermath
Blackboard: the Beauvais Riot and Inquest

III. Life in Towns During the High and Late Middle Ages

March 24: the Medieval Church and Towns: Cathedrals

Readings

Pound, 85-97
Due: Hilton Paper

March 29: Medieval Church and Towns: Spirituality

Readings

Kowaleski, 235-264

Blackboard: On the Flight of Jews from France, 1183

March 31: Fairs and Trade

Readings:

Kowaleski, 121-135

Pound 169-171

Blackboard: Louis VII rules on debts owed to Parisian burghers

Blackboard: the Fair of St Lazare in Paris

Blackboard: Philip II grants a fair to Poitiers

Due: Second Primary Source Quiz, in class

April 5: Guilds

Readings:

Pound, 146-147

Pound, 194-197 (documents 6 and 7)

Kowaleski, 137-152

Blackboard: Philip II and the Bakers of Pontoise

Blackboard: Philip II and the Butchers of Paris

April 7: Family Structure and Life

Readings

Pound, 138-142

Kowaleski, 181-212

April 12: Urban Women, Power and Literacy

Readings

Kowaleski, 213-230, 265-268

Due: Second Town Report

April 14: Justice and Crime

Readings

Pound, 142-145

Pound, 203-205 (document 10)

Kowalski, 166-180, 277-280, 341-6

Blackboard: Nicole Gonthier, *Cris de haine et rites d'unité: la violence dans les villes, XIIe-XVIe siècle*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 1992), 183-195. Trans. from the French by Richard Barton

April 19: Prostitution

Pound, 145-146

Kowaleski, 231-233, 346-7

April 21: Conclusion: Good Government and Bad Government
Readings

Pound, 151-164

Due: Third Primary Source Quiz, in class

May 3 (Tuesday): Town Project due at 12:00 Noon in my office (2115 MHRA)