

Borders and Frontiers in the Classical and Medieval Mediterranean World

HIS 542, Wednesday, 3:30 – 6:20

Spring 2014

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Description:

The world today is a sharply divided and sharply contested landscape of borders and frontiers, delimiting not only nations and political space but ethnicities and religions, languages and cultures. However, current events have equally shown us that these borders and frontiers can often impose arbitrary division where none has existed before or contribute to the creation of new identities and societies. We will introduce the frontier from its beginnings in academic discourse with the seminal work of Frederick Jackson Turner and his ‘frontier as wilderness’ model as well as other theories of frontiers as borderlines. We will progressively examine the various ways in which frontiers have been characterized subsequently, as zones of periphery, zones of contact and exchange, and frontiers of language, religion, and ethnicity between two or more groups. Recent works will be evaluated that add complexity to the idea of frontiers and frontier societies including topics of assimilation, acculturation, cross-cultural contact, cultural ambiguity, and ethnogenesis. Geographically, we will focus on the tumultuous world of shifting states and empires in classical and medieval Mediterranean and Europe from the Roman Empire to the Ottoman Empire. Since the idea of frontiers is interdisciplinary we will incorporate historical, archaeological, ethnohistorical, environmental, and anthropological research. Contrary to the assumption that the central place typifies culture, it is perhaps the frontier which visibly manifests interconnectedness of societies and the process of social change.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students will be able to analyze historical duration, succession, and innovation in terms of human agency and larger systems and structures, specifically the theoretical development of frontier studies, in the classical and medieval Mediterranean world.
- Students will be able to use historical thinking to contextualize and analyze primary and secondary texts and material culture and other interdisciplinary approaches (such as archaeology) from different points of view.

- Students will use evidence-based reasoning to interpret the past coherently, orally, and in writing. Construct persuasive written arguments with the use of primary source materials (including texts and material culture from archaeological reports) as supporting evidence, learning to locate, read, and critique primary sources and analyze and synthesize the writings of modern scholars (as historiography).
- **Undergraduate** students will investigate and interpret primary and secondary sources to conduct original research by producing a **10-15 page** research paper, learning the stages of researching (including library work, note-taking, and source criticism) and critiquing the written work of peers in constructive ways.
- **Graduate** students will do the same, producing a **20-25 page** research paper that is comparative.

Requirements:

Class will consist of a blend of lectures, presentation of readings, and discussion. There will be one 3 hour class per week. Please read the assigned materials during the week assigned and come to classes prepared with questions and observations. Attendance is required, as lectures will frequently include material not covered in the assigned readings, for which you will also be responsible.

No prerequisite is required to take this course.

Readings:

Readings for each week are given on the attached syllabus. Readings listed under the lecture mean you will have read those *in advance* for that lecture day. Weekly assignments consist of readings from selected works. Please come prepared and able to comment on the readings in class. For group readings, please turn in a short outline of the article and two discussion questions to raise in class. The discussion questions will also be posted on Blackboard by the Wednesday before class, midnight.

Individual Readings. On certain days you will be responsible to present on specific readings and lead discussion. *You will do this twice during the semester.* You can select which ones based on interest related to your research paper or general interest. For your individual reading you will post a one-page outline of the article and Blackboard by Wednesday before class, 5pm and two discussion questions to raise in class as well. The presentation should not be a summary but engender discussion on how the reading related to the topic of the day and other readings that we have covered in class.

Graduate Students will read *all* the readings for each class period, as well as lead discussion on their individual readings.

Study aids, though not a requirement for the course, might be useful in preparing for exams, researching the group assignment, and providing useful basic reference information for Islamic history and civilization. They include:

The Encyclopaedia of Islam (First Edition (EI1), 1913-1942, New (Second) Edition (EI2), 1954 (1960)-2004, Third Edition, continuing). Jackson Library stacks Tower 8 DS37.E523, vols. 1-12.

The Cambridge History of Islam. Jackson Library stacks Tower 8 DS35.6.C3, vols. 1-2

Bosworth, C. E., *The Islamic Dynasties*. Jackson Library stacks Tower 8 D199.3.I8 No. 5

Assignments:

Short Paper 1: You will write a 3-5 page paper providing a concise history of the Mediterranean from the Roman period (ca. 50 B.C.E.) to the height of the Ottoman period (ca. end of the 16th century). You must use at least one *non-internet* source and cite properly. This short paper is designed to 1) introduce you to a brief history of the time periods which we will discuss in depth during the semester and 2) allow me to get a glimpse of how you research and write. You have one week to do this. This assignment is the same for both **undergraduates and graduates**.

Short Paper 2: There will be one short paper summarizing points of view surrounding the debate over the Roman *limes*. The short paper is designed to have you 1) understand specific themes and stimulate your own ideas and reactions and 2) exercise your skills in writing. It is not designed to be a research paper but rather reactions to assigned readings and content from class. It should be up to 3 pages in length. The paper is in lieu of essay questions on exams and you will have one week to write it. **Graduate students** will write a **6 page paper** and be expected to bring in other sources related to the historiography of Roman *limes*.

Research Paper: In addition, there will be one long paper (10-15 pages double spaced, 12 point font, 1" margins on all sides). The paper will call upon you to choose a frontier or frontier society keyed into a geographical and chronological moment (i.e. the Roman/Persian frontier or Christian and Islamic Spain) and research how it has been perceived, synthesizing the historical, archaeological, and anthropological data. This paper will require some research in addition to the required readings and will be due at the end of the course. As frontiers are interdisciplinary, you are encouraged to speak to other faculty members who are knowledgeable about the area. Your research paper will be broken down into a process of assignments. These are:

Assignment 1: Research paper paragraph

Assignment 2: Research proposal and preliminary bibliography

Assignment 3: Historiography Paper/Lit Review

Assignment 4: Rough Draft

Assignment 5: Peer Critique

Assignment 6: Final Paper

Graduate Students: Research paper will be 20-25 pages in length and compare two or more frontiers or frontier societies over time and/or space. The paper can examine historiography surrounding how these frontiers have been interpreted. The paper should move beyond the single case study and extrapolate wider themes, similarities, and divergences in frontier studies. .

Undergraduate Grading will be as follows:

Presentation on Readings/Class Participation: 20%

Short paper 1: 10%

Short paper 2: 10%

Assignments 1-5: 20%

Research Paper: 40%

Graduate Grading will be as follows

Presentation on Readings/Class Participation: 20%

Short paper 1: 10%

Short paper 2: 10%

Assignments 1-5: 10%

Research Paper: 50%

Class participation is strongly encouraged and will be *essential* to your overall performance.

Attendance is mandatory, as the class only meets once per week and lectures will frequently include material not covered in the assigned readings, for which you will also be responsible. On several days, you will be presenting a reading or group of readings as part of the seminar discussion. *If you miss more than one class period for any reason, your final grade will be reduced by 2 points for each additional absence.*

Class Rules:

Please do not come late to class as it disrupts the class for both your fellow classmates and for me. Cellular phones *must* be silenced or turned off in the classroom. If you disrupt class by talking on the phone or text messaging, you will be asked to leave. Laptops may *not* be used in the classroom. Please note that plagiarism (this includes copying internet text for papers), cheating, and other violations of academic integrity are serious offences and will not be tolerated in the class or anywhere else in the University.

The best way to contact me is by email. Please note that I will only check and respond to emails Monday through Friday during the work day; i.e. don't expect me to respond to an email at 2 am on a Saturday.

Academic Integrity Policy:

Enrollment in this course and submission of each written assignment constitute students' acceptance of UNCG's Academic Integrity Policy. Make sure you read and understand the policy, which is available at: <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>

If you have any questions about any aspect of this policy, including what constitutes plagiarism, please consult the professor.

UNCG's Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as "representing the words of another, as one's own in any academic exercise" (<http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>). Plagiarism includes both 1) failure to cite sources for ideas and words you use; and 2) submitting all of parts of someone else's work as your own. Be sure to cite fully all material you use, whether you are paraphrasing or using a direct quote.

Please note that plagiarism (this includes copying internet text for papers), cheating, and other violations of academic integrity are serious offences and will not be tolerated in the class or anywhere else in the University.

Lecture and Reading Schedule:

Week 1 (January 15) Introduction

Organizational Meeting

Historical Overview of Boundaries and Frontiers

Group Readings:

- Introduction by Curta, F., ed. *Borders, Barriers, and ethnogenesis: Frontiers in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*. 2005, 1-9.
- "Introduction" in: Mathisen, Ralph W. and Hagith S. Sivan, eds. (1996). *Shifting frontiers in late antiquity: papers from the First Interdisciplinary Conference on Late Antiquity, The University of Kansas, March 1995*. Aldershot, Great Britain, 1-5.
- Power, D. "Introduction, A. Frontiers: Terms, Concepts, and the Historians of Medieval and Early Modern Europe," in: Powers, Daniel and Naomi Standen, eds. *Frontiers in Question: Eurasian Borderlands, 700-1700*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999, 1-12.
- Abulafia, D., "Introduction: Seven Types of Ambiguity" in: Abulafia, David and Nora Berend, eds. *Medieval Frontiers: concepts and practices*. (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2002), 1-34.

Week 2 (January 22) Frederick Jackson Turner

Turner's frontier as wilderness

Anti-Turnerian views, the "Middle Ground" theory

[short paper 1 concise history of the Mediterranean due]

Presentations on readings

Group Readings:

- Turner, F.J. “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” 37-62.
- Wolfskill and Palmer, “Introduction” In: Wolfskill, George and Stanely Palmer, *Essays on Frontiers in World History*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), ix-xvi.
- Wyman and Kroeber, “Introduction” In: Wyman, Walker D. and Clifton B. Kroeber, eds. *The Frontier in Perspective*. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957), xiii-xviii.
- Bohannon, “Introduction,” In: Bohannon, Paul and Fred Plog, eds. *Beyond the Frontier: social process and cultural change*. New York: The Natural History Press, 1967, xi-xvii.
- Bishko, Charles Julian “The Frontier in Medieval History” in a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, Washington, D.C. 29 December 1955, 1-7.
<http://libro.uca.edu/aarhms/essays/bishko.html>

Individual Readings:

- Mackendrick, Paul L. “Roman Colonization and the Frontier Hypothesis,” In *The Frontier in Perspective*, 3-21.
- Reynolds R.J. “The Mediterranean Frontiers, 1000-1400” In *The Frontier in Perspective*, 21-35.
- Bekker, K “Historical Patterns of Culture Contact in Southern Asia” In *Beyond the Frontier*, 71-86.

Week 3 (January 29) Spatial Frontiers

Frontiers viewed as borderlines, and zones

Perceptions of space in the Medieval world

Presentations on readings

Group Reading:

- Brauer, Ralph W. “Boundaries and Frontiers in Medieval Muslim Geography,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 85.6 (1995), 1-69.

Individual Readings:

- Whittaker, C.R. “Chapter 1: Space, Power, and Society” *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: A Social and Economic Study* (Baltimore, 1994), 10-30.
- Rooke, Tetz. “Writing the Boundary: *Khitat al-Shām* by Muhammad Kurd ‘Ali,” *The Concept of Territory in Islamic Law and Thought*, (2000), pp. 165-186.
- Squatriti, Paolo, “Moving Earth and Making Difference: Dikes and Frontiers in Early Medieval Bulgaria,” in: *Borders, Barriers, and Ethnogenesis*, Curta, ed., 2005, 59-90.

Week 4 (February 5) Case Study 1: Rome and the Eastern *Limes*

Imperial borders and military boundaries

Local organization and zones of contact

Presentations on readings

[Short Paper 2 due on Roman *Limes* debate]

Group Readings:

- Parker, S.T. “Chapter 1: Introduction “, “Chapter 6: Arabian Frontier from Trajan to Diocletian,” “Chapter 7: The Arabian Frontier from Diocletian to Justinian,” In *Romans and Saracens: A History of the Arabian Frontier*. ASOR Dissertation Series 6 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1986), 1-2; 123-134; 135-147.
- Mayerson, P., “Towards a Comparative Study of a Frontier,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 40.4 (1990), 267-279
- Isaac, B. “Chapter 9: Frontier Policy – Grand Strategy?” In *The Limits of Empire: The Roman Army in the East*, 1992\, 372-417.
- Eadie, John, “Transformation of the Eastern Frontier”, in: *Shifting Frontiers*, Mathisen and Sivan, eds. 1996, 72-79.
- Magness, J. “Chapter 5 The Limes in Southeastern Judea,” In *Early Islamic Settlement in Palestine*, 2004, 112-129.
- Elton, Hugh, “Defining Romans, Barbarians, and the Roman Frontier,” in: *Shifting Frontiers*, Mathisen and Sivan, eds., 1996, 126-135.
- Whittaker, C.R. “Chapter 2: Frontiers and the Growth of Empire,” and “Chapter 5: The Frontiers Under Pressure,” *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: A Social and Economic Study* (Baltimore, 1994), 49-59; 132-151

Week 5 (February 12) Frontier Societies: Assimilation, Acculturation and Cultural Ambiguity

Rome’s Relations with Germanic tribes

Early Medieval Frontiers

Presentations on readings

Group Readings:

•Burns, Robert I, “The Significance of the Frontier in the Middle Ages,” *Medieval Frontier Societies*, Burns and Mackay, eds., 1989, 307-330.

•Brather, Sebastian. “Acculturation and Ethnogenesis along the Frontier: Rome and the Ancient Germans in an Archaeological Perspective” in: *Borders, Barriers, and Ethnogenesis*, Curta, ed., 2005, 139-171.

Individual Reading:

•Sirks, A.J Boudewijn, “Shifting Frontiers in the Law: Romans, Provincials, and Barbarians,” in: *Shifting Frontiers*, Mathisen and Sivan, 1996, 146-157.

•Ellis, Linda, “Dacians, Sarmatians, and Goths on the Roman-Carpathian Frontier: Second-Fourth Centuries” in: *Shifting Frontiers*, Mathisen and Sivan, eds., 1996, 105-125.

•Mackay, Angus, “Religion, Culture, and Ideology on the Late Medieval Castilian-Granadan Frontier” in: *Medieval Frontier Societies*, Burns and Mackay, eds., 1989, 217-243.

•Henning, Joachim, “Civilization versus Barbarians? Fortification Techniques and Politics in the Carolingian and Ottonian Borderlands,” in: *Borders, Barriers, and Ethnogenesis*, Curta, ed., 2005, 23-34.

•Teodor, Eugen, S., “The Shadow of a Frontier: The Walachian Plain during the Justinianic Age,” in: *Borders, Barriers, and Ethnogenesis*, Curta, ed., 2005, 205-245

Week 6 (February 19) Political Ideologies

Byzantine/Late Antique Frontiers

Seventh-Tenth Centuries

Presentations on readings

[Assignment 1 Research paper paragraph due]

Group Readings:

•Pohl, Walter, “Frontiers and Ethnic Identities: Some Final Considerations,” in: *Borders, Barriers, and Ethnogenesis*, Curta, ed., 2005, 255-265.

•Miller, David Harry, “Frontier Societies and the Transition Between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages,” in: *Shifting Frontiers*, Mathisen and Sivan, eds., 1996, 158-171.

Individual Readings:

•Okamura, Lawrence, “Roman Withdrawals from Three Transfluvial Frontiers.” In: *Shifting Frontiers*, Mathisen and Sivan, eds., 1996, 11-19.

•Drinkwater, John F. “The Germanic Threat on the Rhine Frontier?: A Romano-Gallic Artefact?” in: *Shifting Frontiers*, Mathisen and Sivan, eds., 1996, 20-30.

•Kulikowski, Michael, “Ethnicity, Rulership, and Early Medieval Frontiers,” in: *Borders, Barriers, and Ethnogenesis*, Curta, ed., 2005, 247-254.

•Curta, Florin, “Frontier Ethnogenesis in Late Antiquity: The Danube, the Tervingi, and the Slavs,” in: *Borders, Barriers, and Ethnogenesis*, Curta, ed., 2005, 173-202.

***Meet with me sometime before next class to discuss Research Paper topics**

Week 7 (February 26) Religious Ideologies

The Crusaders, Mamluks, and Mongols

The Ottomans

Presentations on readings

Group Readings:

•Wittek, Paul. *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* 1938

•“Introduction” Mathisen and Sivan 1996.

Individual Readings:

•Olster, David, “From Periphery to Center: The Transformation of Late Roman Self-Definition in the Seventh Century” in: *Shifting Frontiers*, Mathisen and Sivan, eds., 1996, 93-101.

•De Coca Castañer, José Enrique López, “Institutions on the Castilian-Granadan Frontier, 1369-1482,” in: *Medieval Frontier Societies*, Burns and Mackay, eds. 1989, 127-150.

•Amitai-Press, Reuven, “Northern Syria Between the Mongols and Mamluks: Political Boundary, Military Frontier, and Ethnic Affinities,” in: *Frontiers in Question*, Powers and Standen, eds., 1999, 128-152.

•Williams, Ann, “Crusaders as Frontiersmen: The Case of the Order of St. John in the Mediterranean,” in: *Frontiers in Question*, Powers and Standen, eds., 1999, 209-227.

Week 8 (March 5) Case Study 2: Early Islamic Desert Castles

Internal or External Frontiers? - “Desert Castles”

[Assignment 2 Research Proposals and Preliminary Bibliographies due]

Group Readings:

- Grabar, O “Umayyad ‘Palace’ and the ‘Abbasid ‘Revolution’” (1955), 5-18.
- G.R.D. King, "The Umayyad Qusur and Related Settlements in Jordan," *IVth International Conference on Bilad al-Sham*. Amman: University of Jordan, 1989
- Bacharach, J. “Marwanid Umayyad Building Activities: Speculations on Patronage.” *Muqarnas* 13 (1996), 27-44.

Week 9 (March 12)

No Class: Spring Break

Week 10 (March 19) Frontier Settlements

Colonialism

Feudalism/Anti-feudalism – Fortified places and *incastellamento*

Library Seminar

Presentations on readings

[Assignment 3 Historiography Essay/Literature review due]

Group Reading:

- Redford, S., “Chapter 2 Excavations in Medieval Levels at Gritille” and “Chapter 8 Interpreting Medieval Gritille,” In *The Archaeology of the Frontier in the Medieval Near East*, 1998, 31-76; 269-280.

Individual Readings:

- Dietler, M. *Consumption and colonial encounters in the Rhône Basin of France : a study of Early Iron Age political economy*. 2005
- Francovich, R. & R. Hodges. “Chapter 4 From *Curtis* to *Castello*,” In *Villa to Village: the transformation of the Roman countryside in Italy, c.400-1000*. London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 2003, 75-105
- González Jiménez, Manuel, “Frontier and Settlement in the Kingdom of Castile (1085-1350),” in: *Medieval Frontier Societies*, Burns and Mackay, eds., 1989, 49-74.

•Rashev, Rasha, “Remarks on the Archaeological Evidence of Forts,” in: *Borders, Barriers, and Ethnogenesis*, Curta, ed., 2005, 51-58.

Week 11 (March 26) Case Study 3: The Islamic Byzantine Frontier of Spain

Late Roman to Early Islamic period – irrigation systems

Medieval period – *incastellamento*

In class presentation on Research Paper writing, formatting, and style

Presentations on readings

Individual Readings:

- Bazzana, A. & J. de Meulemeester. “Irrigation systems of Islamic origin in the Valle de Ricote (Murcia, Spain).” *Ruralia II* (Spa 1997) (Pamáry Archeologicke – Supplementum 11): 152-60, Praha, 1998.
- de Meulemeester, J. & A. Matthys. “The conservation of grain and the fortified granaries from the Maghreb to central Europe.” *Ruralia II* (Spa 1997) (Pamáry Archeologicke Supplementum 11): 161-71. Praha, 1998.
- Glick, T.F. “Tribal Landscapes of Islamic Spain: History and Archaeology.” *Inventing Medieval Landscapes: Sense of Place in Western Europe*. J. Howe and M. Wolfe, eds. (Gainesville, FL: 2002)
- Glick, T.F. “Chapter 5 The Transition to Feudalism,” In *From Muslim Fortress to Christian Castle: Social and Cultural Change in Medieval Spain*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 92-124

Week 12 (April 2) Case Study 4: The Islamic Byzantine Frontier of Anatolia, *al-thughūr*

Historical Problems and Religious Ideologies

Archaeology of the Frontier

[Assignment 4 Rough Drafts Due] Send an electronic copy of your draft to both me and the classmates who are critiquing your work by **noon**.

Group Readings:

- Haldon, John F. and Hugh Kennedy, “The Arab-Byzantine frontier in the eighth and ninth centuries: military organization and society in the borderlands,” *Zbornik Radova Vizantoloski Institut (Recueil des Travaux de l’Institut d’Etudes Byzantines)* (Belgrade) 19 (1980), 79-116.

Individual Readings:

- Bosworth, C.E. “The City of Tarsus and the Arab-Byzantine frontiers in Early and Middle ‘Abbasid times.” *Oriens* 33 (1992) 268-86.
- Lilie, Ralph-Johannes. “The Byzantine-Arab Borderland from the Seventh to the Ninth Century.” *Borders, Barriers, and Ethnogenesis: Frontiers in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*. Ed. Florin Curta. pp. 13-21.
- Bonner, M. “The Naming of the Frontier: `Awasim, Thughur, and the Arab Geographers.” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 57.1 (1994): 17-24.

Week 13 (April 9) Environmental Frontiers and Frontier Societies

Mountains and Pastoralists

Marshes and Marsh Dwellers

Film: *Grass: A Nation’s Battle for Life*

Group Readings:

- Shaw, B.D. “Bandit highlands and lowland peace: The mountains of Isauria-Cilicia.” *JESHO* 33 (1990), 199-270.
- Braudel, F. “Preface to the First Edition,” In *The Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* . Trans. by S. Reynolds (London, 1972), 17-21.

Individual Readings:

- Braudel, F. “Part One The Role of the Environment” including “Chapter 1 The Peninsulas: Mountains, Plateaux, and Plains.”, 22-102 .
- A. Popovic, “Chapter 1 Origins of the Revolt,” *The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century*, 9-9-31.

Week 14 (April 16) Deconstructing Frontiers

Internal Frontiers and Frontier Societies

Frontiers as Centers

In-class, small-group critiques of rough drafts.

[Assignment 5 Peer-critiques are due]

Individual Readings:

- Ellenblum, Ronnie, “Were there Borders and Borderlines in the Middle Ages? The Example of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem,” In *Medieval Frontiers*, Abulafia and Berend, eds., 2002, 105-119.
- Riley-Smith, Jonathan “Government and the Indigenous in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem,” in *Medieval Frontiers*, Aboulafia and Berend, eds., 2002, 121-131.
- Heywood, Colin, “The Frontier in Ottoman History: Old Ideas and New Myths,” *Frontiers in Question*, Powers and Standen, eds., 1999, 228-250.
- Gabbay, Alyssa. “Chapter 2 The Framework of Frontier Studies, When Two Cultures Meet,” In *Islamic Tolerance: Amir Khusraw and Pluralism* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 13-19.

Week 15 (April 23)

Last Day of Class

Presentation of Final Projects

[Assignment 6 Final Papers due]