



London, British Library Sloane MS 2435 (f.85)

The Medieval Legacy

HIS 221-01 — TTh 9:30–10:45

Spring 2020

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Student Hours: TR 11:00-12:30

(or by appointment)

Course Description

Nearly a thousand years of history between the end of the western Roman Empire and the beginning of the early modern period is the period that has become known as the middle ages. Often (mis)characterized as the “dark ages,” the middle ages were, in reality, a time of great change in politics, law, religion, culture, and social organization. This course provides a multifaceted and multidisciplinary survey of medieval history from approximately the fifth century to the fifteenth century, exploring all of those developments while also practicing the methodological and historiographical tools necessary to be a medieval historian. The middle ages continue to influence modern society and popular culture, too, and this medieval legacy will also be explored.

The course is designed so that each week focuses on both a particular chronological period as well as a thematic, theoretical, or historiographical concept. In general, the first class meeting of the week will be a lecture, while the second will include an introduction to the weekly theme as well as small-group or whole-class discussions or other activities in which we work together to analyze a primary source (or small selection of primary sources) and key secondary literature, and to discuss the concepts or themes of the week.

Course Materials

This course requires a range of reading from both primary and secondary sources. Most of these readings will be in the form of academic articles, chapters from academic monographs or essay collections, and/or excerpts of primary sources in translation, and most of the readings for each week will be available on Canvas as PDF downloads or as digital resources (eBooks) through the library; many are also available in the library as physical copies, or can be purchased if you prefer. You will NOT be required to purchase a specific textbook for this course.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, you will be able to do the following.

A. General Education - Global Perspectives (GL) Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Interpret or evaluate information on diverse cultures, polities, and/or intellectual traditions.
2. 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).
3. Use diverse cultural frames of reference and alternative perspectives to analyze issues.

B. Course SLOs:

1. Be able to identify and understand the major events, developments, institutions, and beliefs in European medieval history, c.500–1500.
2. Understand how both historians and the popular imagination have constructed and reconstructed conflicting interpretations of historical events of the middle ages, and assess these interpretations.
3. Demonstrate and improve your skills as a professional historian: source analysis, primary and secondary research skills, interpretation, critical thinking and argumentation, and both written and oral communication through clear and concise presentation of ideas and arguments.

Assignments and Grading

Your final grade will be made up of several assignments throughout the semester, broken down as follows. A brief description of each assignment is provided here, but I will give you a fuller description for each in class over the course of the semester. I will also provide a handout on the proper formatting of written assignments; this format should be followed for all submitted pieces of written work and you will lose points if you do not follow appropriate formats. All assignments will be submitted via Canvas.

Source Analysis –10%	Reading Journal – 15%
Book Review – 15%	Participation and Daily Assignments – 15%
Final Essay – 25%	Final Exam – 20%

Source Analysis: In this assignment, you will be asked to read a primary source extract and write an analytical commentary on that source. This does not simply mean describing what the source is and what it says (though it includes those ideas), but also involves analyzing its authorship, context, historical value, and issues that it brings up. I will provide a selection of extracts from which you can choose your topic. The analysis should be three to four pages. (SLO: A1; B3)

Book Review: For this assignment, you will pick one academic monograph (preferably a source you will be reading for your Final Essay), read it, and write an academic book review of about two to three pages. We will discuss the process and expectations of such reviews more fully in class. (SLO: A3; B3)

Final Essay: Your major assignment for the semester is a research essay on a topic of your choice, of about seven to eight pages. You will choose a topic by the middle of the semester (at the latest!), and should do the research over the course of the semester — what I'm saying is, DO NOT try to write the entire thing in a couple of days! I will provide a list of possible topics, but I will also be available during Student Hours (see below) to help you create your own if you would like, or to help you refine ideas and questions that you may come up with based on those suggestions. (SLO: A1; A3; B1; B3)

Reading Journal: Your primary assignment throughout the semester, in addition to the written assignments above, is to do your readings every week. If you do not do them, you cannot hope to participate in discussions or other class activities. In order to encourage you to do these readings and to assist you in writing your final essay (and preparing for your final exam), I will ask you to complete a reading journal over the course of the semester. An example will be provided in class, but the format of each entry should include what you read, a brief summary or description of the text, and a few comments or questions about that source. These reading journals will be checked periodically throughout the semester. (SLO: A1; A3; B2; B3)

Final Exam: This course has no midterm or other in-class exams, but will require a final exam at the end of the semester. The exam will be cumulative in that it may cover any of the themes and subjects from throughout the semester, but I will provide you a study guide that includes the possible subjects and essay questions to help you guide your studying. (SLO: A1; A2; A3; B1; B2; B3)

Participation and Daily Assignments: This course is designed that each week will feature one major lecture and one seminar, discussion, or activity (usually prefaced by a shorter lecture or presentation). Attendance is imperative, and participation in discussions and activities is a key part of your development as a historian. This portion of your final grade also includes any other daily assignments (quizzes, etc.) that I may require as the semester goes on. (I don't like to give pop quizzes, but may do so if it becomes clear students are not coming to class prepared!) (SLO: A1; A2; A3; B1; B2; B3)

I will grade your work based on the university's standard grading scale. I do not grade on a curve or usually give extra credit, but I will round up if your final grade ends up with a fractional amount.

A	93 – 100	B-	80 – 82	D+	67 – 69
A-	90 – 92	C+	77 – 79	D	63 – 66
B+	87 – 89	C	73 – 76	D-	60 – 62
B	83 – 86	C-	70 – 72	F	59 >

Course Policies and Information

Academic Integrity: All students are expected to abide by the University's Academic Integrity Policy (<http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>). Violations of this policy, including cheating or plagiarism, may result in punishments up to and including an automatic failure on the assignment in question or for the entire course, and may, for egregious cases, be referred for a faculty-student joint conference or academic integrity meeting, as noted online.

Academic Support & Disability Accommodations: The University of North Carolina at Greensboro seeks to promote meaningful access to educational opportunities for all students. Should you have any needs or questions related to disability issues, please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS – <https://ods.uncg.edu/>), located in the Elliot University Center, #215. As an instructor, I am committed to making this course accessible to all students in it and will work with OARS to accommodate students' requests. You do not need to disclose details about your disability to the instructor in order to receive accommodations, but it is your responsibility to arrange documentation from OARS for whatever accommodation you have been approved for. Academic support is also available to you via the Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.uncg.edu/>) and the Speaking Center (<http://speakingcenter.uncg.edu/>), and I encourage all students to take advantage of the tools and support they can provide for any type of writing or presentation assignments.

Adverse Weather Policy: In the event of adverse weather (snow/ice, hurricane, etc.), you can check whether the university is officially open via the UNCG Adverse Weather Line at (336) 334-4400, or by checking the SpartanAlert website (<http://spartanalert.uncg.edu/>). If the university is open, we will have class. If the university is closed, I will adjust the syllabus and assignments as necessary, and will alert you to changes via email or during the next class meeting.

Attendance Policy: Attendance to all class meetings is your primary responsibility, and if you are missing class, you are missing out on learning opportunities that you have paid for and are essential for future assignments and exams. The university's general attendance policy recommends three excused absences, and if you miss more than those three, my policy is to subtract 1% per day from your Participation grade. However, I recognize that disability, long-term or chronic illness, family emergencies, or other events may cause you to miss class meetings; if this is the case, I am happy to work with you via OARS (see above) or to meet and chat if you have issues that are causing you to miss more than three days, and work to find a solution.

Contact and Communication Information: I prefer to communicate via my official UNCG email address (XXXX) and with your official UNCG email address. I usually try to respond within 24 hours; if I have not responded in two business days (i.e., not over the weekend or holidays), please feel free to email me again. When you email me, please write professionally; we can discuss professional communication if you have questions about it. I am also available to meet in person if you need to do so; see **Student Hours** below.

Food and Drink: I prefer to have no policy on snacks and drinks in class, unless we are in a classroom that bans them for reasons of safety (spills on electrical devices, etc.). If you need to have a snack or drink your coffee, feel free to do so, as long as you are not distracting your peers. If things become a problem, however, this policy may change.

Late Work: Written assignments will generally be due at the beginning of the class period on the listed due date. I realize that technology or other factors can cause problems, and on a case-by-case basis may allow a short (6- to 12-hour) grace period. If a significant illness or other event seems likely to cause you to have late work, please email me and we can make arrangements if necessary. In all other cases, late work will incur a 5-point penalty per day, and will not be accepted more than one week beyond the due date.

Respect, Diversity, and Inclusivity: Disagreement is an essential part of intellectual discussion and arguing out issues is critical to university education. Therefore, you should expect to disagree with the ideas or opinions of others, especially in our seminar discussions of the readings. That is not to say, however, that racism, sexism, transphobia, or any other forms of bigotry are acceptable forms of academic discussion, and they will not be tolerated in the classroom; please see the UNCG Policy on Discrimination and Harassment: "UNCG is committed to equal opportunity in education and employment for all persons and will not tolerate any discrimination against or harassment of persons on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, political affiliation, genetic information, veteran status, disabling condition, or age."

That being said, we will occasionally cover issues related to race/racism, sexism, or other forms of discrimination, or other sensitive topics, in discussions of historical accounts or as part of earlier historical interpretations. I will provide content notices for such topics in advance when possible (usually in the introductory notes on readings for the week), in order to allow you to better prepare for and engage with difficult materials. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me and we can discuss these matters privately and figure out the best way forward.

Student Hours (a.k.a. "Office Hours"): Each week I will be available for a few hours to meet with you, discuss the course, answer questions, or chat about whatever else you would like to chat about. These hours are set aside specifically for you to come talk to me, so don't hesitate to do so! You can show up unannounced, or if you want, feel free to email me and make an appointment. (I can also meet with you outside these times if you are unavailable — please email me to arrange a time in that case.)

Syllabus Modifications: Please note that this syllabus and class schedule may be changed at any point; I reserve the right to modify or alter any part of it as necessary. I will announce any changes via email and in class.

Technology: I have no strict policy on technology in the classroom. Please feel free to take notes by hand, or on a laptop or tablet as you prefer. If you do so, however, please avoid using technology for other purposes (texting/messaging, social media, etc.) unless it is relevant, in order to prevent you

from distracting yourself, your peers, or me. I don't mind if you have your cell phone in class, but please make sure it is on silent/vibrate, and as above, avoid distracting yourself and your classmates. I may, on occasion, plan activities that require the use of a laptop, tablet, or cell phone in class; these will be small-group activities, so if you do not have one, let me know and we can make sure you are in a group that has one available. I usually do not allow video or audio recording of lectures or seminars, unless as part of an approved accommodation via OARS.

Useful Links

The following links may be useful in your

UNCG History Department: <http://his.uncg.edu>

History Department FB Page: <https://www.facebook.com/UNCGDepartmentofHistory/>

Library: <http://library.uncg.edu>

SpartanAlert: <http://spartanalert.uncg.edu>

Chicago Manual of Style Online: <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.com>

Internet Medieval Sourcebook (Fordham U.): <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/sbook.asp>

Course Schedule and Assignment Due Dates

The class will generally follow the schedule below throughout the course of the semester. On Tuesdays, I will deliver a lecture giving you the background on the historical subject we are discussing for the week. On Thursday, I will introduce a particular theme: a historiographical debate, theoretical framework, or other historical theme, which will usually relate to the readings for the week. After this introduction, we will have a seminar (an in-class discussion) and/or a class activity related to that day's topic. This schedule is subject to change due to weather or other events; I will provide an updated schedule if such a change should occur.

Date	Class Topic	Assignments
Week 1 – Introduction		
Jan 14	Welcome: What do “the Middle Ages” Mean (to You)?	
Jan 16	Setting the Stage: Europe, c.500	
Week 2 – Kingdoms and Peoples in the Post-Roman West		
Jan 21	The ‘Germanic’ Migrations	
Jan 23	Race and Ethnicity in the Middle Ages	
Week 3 – Christianity and Conversion in the Early Middle Ages		
Jan 28	The Creation of a Christian Europe?	
Jan 30	Paganism, Christianization, and Conversion	
Week 4 – A Carolingian Empire and Beyond		
Feb 4	An Age of Iron?: The Carolingians after Charlemagne	
Feb 6	The Carolingians: Collapse or Transformation?	* Reading Journal Check *
Week 5 – The Viking Age		
Feb 11	Scandinavia, Europe, and the Vikings	
Feb 13	Gender in the Early Middle Ages	***SOURCE ANALYSIS DUE***
Week 6 – Church and State in the Tenth Century		
Feb 18	Formation & Reformation: An Anglo-Saxon Case Study	
Feb 21	Documentary Evidence: A Window into the Past	
Week 7 – The Norman Conquest(s)		
Feb 25	A Tale of Two Conquests: England and Sicily	
Feb 27	Visual Culture: The Bayeux Tapestry and Bari <i>Cathedra</i>	
*** SPRING BREAK ***		
Week 8 – Islam, Byzantium, and the Mediterranean World		
Mar 10	Beyond Western Europe: The Medieval South and East	
Mar 12	Towards a “Global” Medieval History?	*** ESSAY TOPIC IDEA DUE ***
Week 9 – The Crusades and the Idea of Crusading		
Mar 17	The Crusades, East and West	
Mar 19	Identity, Frontiers, and the Crusader States	* Reading Journal Check *
Week 10 – Intellectual Developments of the “High” Middle Ages		
Mar 24	The Twelfth Century: Renaissance or Crisis?	
Mar 26	The Middle Ages: #ZeroPercentScience?	
Week 11 – Social and Religious Change in the “High” Middle Ages		
Mar 31	Feudalism: Rethinking Medieval History’s “F-Word”	
Apr 2	Debating Historiography: Renaissance and Reform	***BOOK REVIEW DUE***

Week 12 – The Calamitous Fourteenth Century		
Apr 7	War, Plague, and Famine: A New “Dark Age”?	
Apr 9	Medieval Village Life: The Case of Wharram Percy	
Week 13 – The End of the Middle Ages?		
Apr 14	Was There a “Renaissance”?	
Apr 16	Rethinking the “Middle Ages”	* Reading Journal Check *
Week 14 – Peer Review Week		
Apr 21	Peer Review	
Apr 23	Peer Review	
Week 15 – The Medieval Legacy		
Apr 28	The Middle Ages and Medievalism in 2020	***FINAL ESSAY DUE***
EXAMS		
May ??	*** FINAL EXAM ***	