

## HIST 232

### Medieval Europe, 400-1400

Grinnell College, Fall 2019

MW @ 2:30-3:50 p.m., HSSC N2112

### Syllabus subject to change

Professor Catherine Chou ([choucath@grinnell.edu](mailto:choucath@grinnell.edu))

Office Hours: TTH @ 1:30-3:30 p.m., or by appointment, Mears Cottage 211

### Course Description and Objectives

As one of the oldest fields of professional history, Medieval Europe presents both great challenges and great joys to the modern-day historian. Among the challenges: in some areas, a very limited corpus of texts and sources, as well as a historiography so dense it can be difficult to find your footing in the scholarship. Among the joys: the opportunity to contribute to the evolution of a spirited, long-lived scholarly conversation and to innovate by moving outside the bounds of traditional history to apply insights from anthropology, archaeology, art history, and sociology.

This course is organized around seven long-standing debates in medieval history, each unit opening with a seminal primary source (or two) before moving on to examine multiple arguments on a given topic, all related to the question of why Western Europe ended up becoming (largely) religiously united (under the Roman Catholic Church) but politically divided (into individual kingdoms with divergent 'ethnic' and group identities) during the period from 400 to 1400. Students will develop a variety of methodological skills for approaching pre-modern primary sources (including chronicles, holy books, devotional works, vernacular poetry, and codes of law) and for weighing the comparative merits of different narratives offered by both foundational and revisionist secondary sources. To study medieval Europe in the twenty-first century is to understand why this period has so often been looked to as the origin point of a coherent, powerful European identity and the stakes this partly-imagined, wholly-reconstructed image has for our own contemporary religious, political, and social debates.

### Required Books and Readings

Textbooks (available at Pioneer Bookstore; also on reserve at Burling)

1. Chris Wickham, *Medieval Europe* (Yale University Press, 2016 or 2017)
2. Judith Bennett, *Medieval Europe: A Short History* (McGraw Hill, tenth or eleventh edition)

Course packet readings available online via P-web; **print the week's readings and bring to class**

### A note on the readings

We will not discuss the Wickham or Bennett textbooks much in class; they are intended as background to our lectures and discussions. You may also draw on them for your papers, exams, and projects. **All of the other primary and secondary sources are uploaded to P-web in the form of a course reader; bringing the correct readings to class is part of your participation grade.**

## **Assignments and Grading Breakdown**

Participation (**including occasional class assignments**): 15%

2 x 1000-word reading responses: 20% (including drafting)

Outline one due 09/18; paper one due 09/26

Outline two due 11/01; paper two due 11/09

Midterm 1: 20% **Due 10/12**

Midterm 2: 25% **Due 11/16**

Final Project: 20% **Due 12/18**

**(plus two 'scaffolding' due dates, 11/19 and 12/06)**

Scale for individual assignments:

A: 97%      B: 85%      C: 75%

A-: 91%      B-: 81%      D: 62%

B+: 88%      C+: 78%      F: 50%

Scale for final grades:

A: 95%+      B: 84-86%      C: 70%-76%

A-: 90-94%      B-: 80-83%      D: 60-69%

B+: 87-90%      C+: 77-80%      F: Below 60%

## **Attendance and Participation: 15%**

Your success in this course will depend on your willingness to engage thoughtfully with the material and each other, in your conversation and your note-taking. We will learn a great deal from one another if we come to class prepared, with open minds, ready to contribute and to take intellectual risks. Together, we will practice developing incisive questions, identifying significant passages, tracing common themes, providing evidentiary support for scholarly arguments, and responding productively to disagreements and critiques.

For every class please come prepared with:

1. Hard copies of the readings
2. Daily Analysis (collected and graded at random)
  - **For secondary sources, identify:** 1) The questions being addressed; 2) the author's main arguments; 3) how the author positions themselves in relationship to the extant scholarship; 4) how they substantiate their arguments (including the kinds of evidence they draw on); 5) an analytical question of your own about the text
  - **For primary sources, write a 250- to 300-word paragraph consisting of:** 1) an analytical question about the reading; 2) a thesis/topic sentence; 3) support for your argument drawn from the sources

Additional ground rules for class:

1. Initial meeting with Instructor – Please sign up here (<https://doodle.com/poll/ge5ektsms4z xu6cf>) for a meeting with me (Mears 211) during weeks 1-2. This is so I can get to better know you and your goals for the class!
2. No laptops/phones (with certain exceptions)
3. Check the class Google Doc: I will post pointers for the reading and questions to consider on a Google Doc before each class here: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mxkBW2\\_AnW2j8C92pCOaM-3GjR4Fl\\_IQeJSDciybECQ/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mxkBW2_AnW2j8C92pCOaM-3GjR4Fl_IQeJSDciybECQ/edit)

4. Attendance – You are allowed two excused absences for any reason, without penalty, as long as you notify me ahead of time. **Subsequent absences or late arrivals must be approved by Student Services, Athletics Department, Chaplain, etc., or they will count against your total grade (2% each).** The best thing you can do to succeed in the course is to come to class every day.

**2 x 1000-word Response Papers – 10% each (see above for draft & final due dates)**

For two of our seven units, you will write a 1000-word analytical paper building on your daily analyses for each session, as well as our class discussions. You will design your own analytical question and argument and submit an outline a week in advance of the deadline. Then, based on feedback from me (and potentially a writing tutor), please revise and complete the paper

Outlines should consist of:

- A complete introductory paragraph, including your analytical question and thesis
- A complete first body paragraph, including a topic sentence and the evidence and analysis you will use to support it (footnotes required)
- The remainder of your paragraphs (about three to four more) sketched out in bullet points. Begin with your topic sentences for each and include the quotations/evidence you will use to make your case. I should be able to follow clearly the logic of your argument.

**All the writing you produce for this class should be footnoted in Chicago-style format. For more information on footnoting, see: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/03/>**

**Two take-home midterm essays (20% and 25%), Due 10/12 and 11/16**

There are two timed take-home midterms essays. They will cover, respectively, the questions and debates from the first third and the second third of the class. The exams are open book, so take notes in class and as you read! You may not, however, consult with one another once the essay prompts are handed out or use online resources.

**Final Project – Design a ‘short course’ on medieval history (20%)**

**Scaffolding #1 (Due 11/19 ); Scaffolding #2 (Due 12/06); Final (Due 12/18)**

In a survey course covering a thousand years in fourteen weeks, many worthwhile and understudied topics have been left out. For your final project, you will have the chance to design your own four-week ‘short course’ on an aspect of medieval European history that we did not discuss in detail together. The mini-syllabus will consist of a precis of the course, your driving questions and conclusions, plus an annotated bibliography exploring key historiographical debates and useful methodologies for approaching specific pre-modern texts.

**Late Assignment Policy**

Every student two 24-hour grace periods to use on the midterms or final. You must notify me if you plan to take the extension (but do not need to give a reason). Once you have used your grace period, late assignments will be docked by 1/3 of a grade each day.

## Honor Code

Please familiarize yourself with the Grinnell Student Handbook honesty policies and abide by them.

## Accommodations

If you have any documented needs that require accommodation, please do not hesitate to let me know. More details can be found at: <https://www.grinnell.edu/about/offices-services/accessibility-disability/disability-services>

## Readings and Topics

Monday, September 2<sup>nd</sup> – Introduction (Week Two)

- ❖ **How did Christianity develop from a Middle Eastern cult into the dominant religion of the post-classical Mediterranean world?**

Wednesday, September 4<sup>th</sup> (Week Two)

- Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Maria Boulding (New City Press, 2007)

Monday, September 9<sup>th</sup> (Week Three)

- Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton University Press, 1996)

Wednesday, September 11<sup>th</sup> (Week Three)

- Richard Lim, 'Christianization, Secularization, and the Transformation of Public Life', in *A Companion to Late Antiquity*, ed. Philip Rousseau (Blackwell, 2009)
- Naomi Koltun-Fromm, 'Defining Sacred Boundaries: Jewish-Christian Relations', in *A Companion to Late Antiquity*

- ❖ **(Why) did the Roman Empire fall? What is the significance of claiming that it was reorganized or slowly dissolved instead?**

Monday, September 16<sup>th</sup> (Week Four)

- *Codex Theodosianus*, trans. Clyde Pharr (Princeton University Press, 1952)
- Salvian, *On the Government of God*, trans. Eva Matthews Sanford (Columbia University Press, 1930)

Wednesday, September 18<sup>th</sup> (Week Four)

- Walter Goffart, 'Rome's Final Conquest: The Barbarians', in *History Compass*, vol. 6, no. 3 (2008)

**Draft of 1<sup>st</sup> 1000-word reading response due Wednesday, September 18<sup>th</sup> by 11:59 p.m.**

Monday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> (Week Five)

- Bryan Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization* (Oxford University Press, 2014)

❖ **How was 'Western Europe' transformed in a post-imperial world? How were old and new peoples (re)constituted in the Early Middle Ages?**

Wednesday, September 25<sup>th</sup> (Week Five)

- Jordanes, *Origin and Deeds of the Goths*, trans. Charles Christopher Mierow (Princeton University Press, 1915)
- Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks* (Penguin, 1974)

**1<sup>st</sup> 1000-word reading response due Thursday, September 26<sup>th</sup> by 11:59 p.m.**

Monday, September 30<sup>th</sup> (Week Six)

- Helmut Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity, and the Framing of Western Ethnicity, 550-850* (Cambridge University Press, 2015)

Wednesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> (Week Six)

- Patrick J. Geary, *Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton University Press, 2003)

Monday, October 7<sup>th</sup> (Week Seven)

- Julia Smith, *Europe After Rome: A New Cultural History, 500-1000* (Oxford University Press, 2005)

Wednesday, October 9<sup>th</sup> (Week Seven) – Visit to Burling Special Collections

❖ **How did the rise of the 'sibling cultures' of Byzantium and early Islam contribute to the formation of a distinctively 'Western' Europe?**

Monday, October 14<sup>th</sup> (Week Eight)

- Procopius, *Secret History*, ed. Peter Sarris (Penguin, 2007)

Wednesday, October 16<sup>th</sup> (Week Eight)

- Raymond van Dam, *Rome and Constantinople* (Baylor University Press, 2012)

**Fall Break! :)**

Monday, October 28<sup>th</sup> (Week Nine)

- The Quran, ed. A.J. Droge (Equinox Publishing, 2013)

Wednesday, October 30<sup>th</sup> (Week Nine)

- Judith Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (Princeton University Press, 2001)

**Draft of 2<sup>nd</sup> 1000-word reading response due Friday, November 1<sup>st</sup> by 11:59 p.m.**

- ❖ **How was 'Europe' created through a process of internal colonization, conquest, and expansion from the tenth through the thirteenth centuries?**

Monday, November 4<sup>th</sup> (Week Ten)

- Robert the Monk's *History of the First Crusade*, trans. Carol Sweetenham (Ashgate, 2006)
- *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the crusading period from al-Kamil i 'l-Ta'rikh* (Ashgate, 2010)

Wednesday, November 6<sup>th</sup> (Week Ten)

- Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization, and Cultural Change, 950-1350* (Princeton University Press, 1993)

**2<sup>nd</sup> 1000-word reading response due Saturday, November 9<sup>th</sup> by 11:59 p.m.**

Monday, November 11<sup>th</sup> (Week Eleven)

- Daniel Konig, *Arab-Islamic Views of the Latin West: Tracing the Emergence of Medieval Europe* (Oxford University Press, 2015)

Wednesday, November 13<sup>th</sup> – Library session to prepare for final project (Week Ten)

**Midterm #2 due Saturday, November 16<sup>th</sup> by 11:59 p.m.**

- ❖ **How did men and women live and love in the 'Two Cities' of High and Late Medieval Europe – the sacred one and the profane one, as well as the borderlands between the two?**

Monday, November 18<sup>th</sup> (Week Twelve)

- Charles West, 'Visions in a Ninth-Century Village: an Early Medieval Microhistory', in *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 81, no. 1 (Spring 2016), p. 1-16
- Peter Dutton, 'The Desert War of a Carolingian Monk', in *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, vol. 47, no. 1 (2017), p. 75-119

**'Scaffold' #1 for final project due by Tuesday, November 19<sup>th</sup> by 11:59 p.m.**

Wednesday, November 20<sup>th</sup> (Week Twelve)

- *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, eds. M. McLaughlin and B. Wheeler (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)

Monday, November 25<sup>th</sup> (Week Thirteen)

- Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (University of California Press, 1987)

Wednesday, November 27<sup>th</sup> (Week Thirteen)

- Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, eds. V.A. Kolva and Glending Olson (W.W. Norton, 2018)

❖ What constitutes 'cutting edge' research in medieval history? What are the politics and valences of referencing the medieval past in our fraught and divided present?

Monday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> (Week Fourteen)

- Catherine Holmes and Naomi Standen, 'Towards a Global Middle Ages' and Naomi Standen and Monica White, 'Structured Mobilities in the Global Middle Ages', in *The Global Middle Ages* (Oxford University Press, 2018)

Wednesday, December 4<sup>th</sup> (Week Fourteen)

- Geraldine Heng, 'The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages I: Race Studies, Modernity, and the Middle Ages' and 'The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages II: Locations of Medieval Race', in *Literature Compass*, vol. 8, no. 5 (2011), p. 315-50

**'Scaffold' #2 for final project due by Thursday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 p.m.**

Monday, December 9<sup>th</sup> (Week Fifteen)

- Matthew X. Vernon, 'Introduction: Reading Out of Time: Genealogy, African-American Literature, and the Middle Ages', *The Black Middle Ages: Race and the Construction of the Middle Ages* (Palgrave, 2018)

Wednesday, December 11<sup>th</sup> – Final Project Round Robins (Week Fourteen)

**Exam Week**

**Short Course Syllabus due Wednesday, December 18<sup>th</sup> by 11:59 p.m.**