

HIST 232

Medieval Europe, 400-1400

Grinnell College, Fall 2019

MW @ 8:30-9:50 a.m., HSSC N2110

Syllabus subject to change

Professor Catherine Chou (choucath@grinnell.edu)

Office Hours: MW 1:30-3:30, or by appointment, HSSC N3162

Course Description and Objectives

This course is organized around several long-standing debates in medieval history, 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 varying 'ethnic' and group identities) in 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, and vernacular poetry) and for weighing the comparative merits of different narratives offered by both foundational and revisionist scholarship. 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 European identity and the stakes this partly-imagined, wholly-reconstructed image of Europe 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. Judith Bennett, *Medieval Europe: A Short History* (McGraw Hill, tenth through twelfth edition okay)

Course packet readings available online via P-web and Perusall; **bring readings to class in hard copy**

Assignments and Grading Breakdown

Participation (including occasional class assignments): 20%

2 x 1000-word reading responses: 30% (including drafting)

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

Outline two due 10/01; paper two due 10/13

Exam: 25%, Due Sunday, 11/13

Final Project: 25%, Due 12/14; plus two 'scaffolding' due dates, 11/17 and 12/02)

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: 20%

The major predictor of your success in this class is your attendance. In 15 weeks of classes, we have 23 class sessions for discussing our readings; and 4 additional days set aside for an introduction, library sessions, individual meetings and a final get-together. We are in this journey together. “Class” is you the students coming together to analyze the readings: developing incisive questions, identifying significant passages, tracing common themes, providing evidentiary support for your arguments, and responding productively to critiques. There is no replacement for class, no substitute for showing up together in community. **This is the magic formula.***

*That said, you are entitled to two excused absences as long as you email me before class. As we are still dealing with the pandemic, I understand that students may need to quarantine at different periods as well.

Additional Pointers for Class:

1. **Bring the readings.** No exceptions, no substitutions.
2. **Prepare in advance:**
 - a. I will post instructions and reminders for class on a Google Doc before every session. Sign up for a meeting with me in Weeks 1-2 so I can get to know you and your goals for the class!
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wI4rkzHnQalzy_ZMQlvO9cJ7ywVeU0tawN3FWR4CKfY/edit?usp=sharing.
 - b. You will also be responsible for responding to my annotations of the text on Perusall (feel free to add your own questions and thoughts as well): <https://app.perusall.com/courses/medieval-europe-400-1400>. Reading is an iterative process, a call-and-response between you and the text.

*If you have any 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>

2 x 1000-word Response Papers – 15% each (see above for draft & final due dates)

Choose from two of our seven units to write a 1200-word analytical paper. Design your own question by putting our readings into conversation with one another. You may also consult additional primary sources or peer-reviewed scholarship. Submit an outline using the guidelines below. 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/>

Take-home Exam: Due November 13 (25%)

There is one 72-hour take-home exam that will cover the questions and debates from weeks two through eleven. The exam is open-book, so take notes in class and as you read! Once the essay prompts are handed out, you may not consult with one another or use resources from outside the class.

Final Project – Design a ‘short course’ on medieval history (25%)

Scaffolding #1 (Due 11/17); Scaffolding #2 (Due 12/02); Final (Due 12/14)

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. After that, 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.

Readings and Topics

Monday, August 29th – Introduction (Week Two)

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

Wednesday, August 31st (Week Two)

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

Monday, September 5th (Week Three)

- Naomi Koltun-Fromm, ‘Defining Sacred Boundaries: Jewish-Christian Relations’, in *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Wiley Blackwell, 2008)

Wednesday, September 7th (Week Three)

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

Outline for first paper due by Friday, September 9th at 11:59 p.m.

❖ **(Why) did the Roman Empire fall? What is the significance of claiming that it did not “fall”, but was reorganized or slowly dissolved instead?**

Monday, September 12th (Week Four)

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

Wednesday, September 14th (Week Four)

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

First paper due by Sunday, September 18th at 11:59 p.m.

Monday, September 19th (Week Five)

- Salvian, *On the Government of God*, trans. Eva Matthews Sanford (Columbia University Press, 1930)

❖ **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 21st (Week Five)

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

Monday, September 26th (Week Six)

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

Wednesday, September 28th (Week Six)

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

Outline for second paper due by Saturday October 1st at 11:59 p.m.

Monday, October 3rd (Week Seven)

- Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks* (Columbia University Press, 1916 translation)

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

Wednesday, October 5th (Week Seven)

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

Monday, October 10th (Week Eight)

- Anthony Kaldellis, "From Rome to New Rome, from Empire to Nation-State: Reopening the Question of Byzantium's Roman Identity", in *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity* (Oxford University Press, 2012)

Wednesday, October 12th (Week Eight)

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

Second paper due by Thursday, October 13th at 11:59 p.m.

Fall Break! :)

Monday, October 24th (Week Nine)

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

Wednesday, October 26th (Week Nine)

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

Monday, October 31st (Week Ten)

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

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

Wednesday, November 2nd (Week Ten)

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

Monday, November 7th (Week Eleven)

- Michael Mitterauer, *Why Europe: The Medieval Origins of its Special Path* (University of Chicago Press, 2010)

Wednesday, November 9th (Week Eleven)

- 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)

Exam due by Sunday, November 13th at 11:59 p.m.

❖ **What constitutes ‘cutting edge’ research in medieval history? How do medieval historians study more “contemporary” concepts like gender and race? What are the politics and valences of referencing the medieval past in our fraught and divided present?**

Monday, November 14th (Week Twelve) – **No new reading, Library Session for Final Project**

Wednesday, November 16th (Week Twelve)

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

First Scaffolding for Final Project due Thursday, November 17th by 11:59 p.m.

Monday, November 21st (Week Thirteen)

- Katherine L. French, *The Good Women of the Parish: Gender and Religion After the Black Death* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008)

Thanksgiving Break :)

Monday, November 28th (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

Wednesday, November 30th (Week Fourteen)

- 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)

Second Scaffolding for Final Project due Thursday, December 1st by 11:59 p.m.

Monday, December 5th (Week Fifteen) – **No class, time for individual meetings**

Wednesday, December 7th – **Final Project Round Robins (Week Fourteen)**

Exam Week

Short Course Syllabus due Wednesday, December 14th by 11:59 p.m.