

MEDIEVAL HISTORY

Hist 371.01W, CID 4532
Credit 3.0
MWF 12:00-1:00, AB4 #303
Sam Houston State University
Fall 2007

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Description of the Course

In the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries, Medieval Europe was largely disdained by the so-called advanced societies of the West. The educated elites of the time, who championed the apparent progresses made by modern science, industry and technology, regarded it as a world that had been plunged by the “barbarians” into “darkness” and petty warfare following the grand achievements and more rational societies of classical Greece and Rome. These elites used the word “Medieval” with negative connotations— antiquated, unsophisticated, unenlightened, backwards. Opinions, however, have changed in the past several decades, and the medieval world is now being seen in a revised, new light. In university circles the number of scholars dedicated to medieval studies continues to grow. The Middle Ages has enjoyed similar success with the general populace. Films such as *Braveheart*, *The Lord of the Rings* series, and the *Harry Potter* series are among the more noteworthy examples of books and movies that have captured popular imaginations with their stories of faith and symbolism, chivalry and virtue, myth and magic.

This semester we will examine the main historical trends of Medieval Europe. While particular emphasis will be placed on the relationship between religion and society, other important aspects will be studied as well. Part I sets the stage by looking at how Christianity transformed the Mediterranean world in the late stages of the Roman Empire. Part II explores the process by which the Christian Church first missionized the “barbarian” world (principally the Germanic and Celtic peoples) and then turned to them in order to form alliances, a pivotal moment in Western and in Church history. Part III describes the formation of the medieval social structure composed of three orders, and how social ideology was fashioned in the wake of it. Part IV examines the High Middle Ages, a period distinguished by the revival of urban centers and a monetary economy. Religious reactions to the changing medieval world produced a variety of inventive, impassioned responses or movements by the monastics and the laity alike. The social “Others” – the Muslims & the Jews – and how Christendom related to them is also examined in this part. Part V covers an age of unrest during the Late Middle Ages, when the ecclesiastical rank and file fought over Church governance and when the “gains” of the High Middle Ages were virtually obliterated by economic setbacks and the Black Death. While lectures will form the background for many class sessions, we will also make regular use of Power Point images, music, film clips, and open dialogue to help form the foreground and enhance our understanding of the subject matter.

Objectives for the Course

- Gaining factual knowledge of the subject matter
- Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, & theories pertaining to the history of Medieval Europe
- Developing skill in expressing oneself in writing (via Short Papers, Term Paper & Exams)
- Learning to analyze and evaluate ideas, arguments & points of view
- Learning how to find and use resources for answering questions or solving problems

Required Books

Richard Fletcher, *The Barbarian Conversion: From Paganism to Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997/1999). ISBN 0520218590.

Edward Peters, ed., *The First Crusade: "The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres" and Other Source Materials*, 2nd edition. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998. ISBN 0812216563.

Richard Wunderli, *Peasant Fires: The Drummer of Niklashausen* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992). ISBN 0253207517.

Attendance Policy

I expect every student to be present and on time for every class. If you happen to arrive more than 5 minutes late on a particular day, I would ask that you not enter the classroom since it disrupts the session and annoys those students who are punctual. The only exceptions regarding tardiness will be on days of inclement weather. I will feel obligated to disseminate material and instructions one time only. In case of any absence, whether excused or unexcused, you are still responsible for the material covered and obtaining it is incumbent upon you. It would be a good idea to establish relationships with fellow students in order to assure that you remain well informed and are adequately prepared for exams.

Per University policy, an attendance sheet will be passed around at each class session. You may miss three hours of class without penalty. Three points will be deducted from your overall semester grade for each absence beyond these three hours of missed class. In the event you experience some emergency for missing class after your three hours, you must provide documentation (to my satisfaction) for those days. In the event you must drop this class, please remember, do so through the Registrar's office. Otherwise, your course grade will be "F."

Classroom Policy, Holy Days Policy, Academic Honesty, Students with Disabilities

The University's policies regarding these matters can be found at the following link:

<http://www.shsu.edu/mailler/coursesyllabus.pdf>

Additional Notes

Do make note that the university has placed a limit on the number of "Q" a student can have on a transcript of his/her student records. Also, as a condition of enrollment in this course, a student agrees to give permission to have all written materials checked for plagiarism by computer internet verification. Continued enrollment in this course beyond the 12th class day constitutes your agreement to this condition. I would prefer that you not bring a tape recorder to class unless you can provide some documentation for a disability. Please be considerate of your classmates. In consideration of time constraints and unforeseen circumstances that might adversely affect the majority of the class, I will reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus.

Reading Assignments & Short Papers

The required readings provide us with engaging primary sources and secondary literature. Below you will find a list of scheduled reading assignments. Be sure you have read the assigned pages before coming to class that day.

Five of the ten readings have a Short Paper assignment attached to them. A Short Paper simply means that a question pertaining to that reading will be posted on Blackboard, and you are to write out your own response to that question.

The purpose of the Short Paper is three-fold. First, it is an effective means for learning the subject matter. In the process of completing each assignment you will be reading the history of a given subject, processing and analyzing that material according to the question provided, reformulating the material in your own words in response to the question, and making insightful comparisons. (Plus, the nature of these assignments allows you to work at a pace and at a time convenient to you.) Second, the Short Papers provide you with good opportunities to improve your writing skills. I will make corrections and offer suggestions so that you can – step by step – improve your ability to articulate and write your own thoughts. Let me recommend, therefore, that you look through the corrections/suggestions made on the sheet handed back to you and consider them carefully when writing subsequent assignments. Third, they will provide a springboard for class discussions that goes beyond the who-what-when-where and considers the how and the why.

Each Short Paper is to be typed, printed out, and handed in on the day it is due. You are to use 12-font (and use Times New Roman), 1.5-spacing between lines, and 1-inch margins on each side. In the top, left-hand corner be sure to put your name, class, and indicate which Short Paper assignment it is. The text should be approximately 450-650 words in length. Each Short Paper is worth 6% of your overall grade for the course.

Reading Assignments (those that include a Short Paper assignment are in **bold** with an asterisk[*])

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| 1. Fri, Aug. 24 – | Fletcher, <i>The Barbarian Conversion</i> , ch. 1 |
| 2. Mon, Aug. 27 – | Fletcher, ch. 2 |
| *3. Wed, Aug. 29 – | Fletcher, ch. 3 |
| 4. Fri, Aug. 31 – | Fletcher, ch. 4 |
| *5. Wed, Sept. 5 – | Fletcher, ch. 4-6 |
| *6. Mon, Sept. 10 – | Fletcher, ch. 7-8 |
| *7. Mon, Sept. 17 – | Fletcher, ch. 11 |
| 8. Mon, Oct. 22 – | Fletcher, ch. 9; & Peters, <i>The First Crusade</i> , pp. 102-38 |
| 9. Mon, Nov. 5 – | Fletcher, ch. 14 |
| *10. Mon, Dec. 3 – | Wunderli, <i>Peasant Fires</i> (pp. xi-xii, 1-150) |

Exams

There will three exams for the course—two during the semester and one Final Exam. Each exam will be in the form of one essay (80 points) and one identification (20 points). For the essay part, a choice of two questions will be offered and you will select one on which to write an essay (approx. 40 minutes). For the identification part, a choice of three (be it a person, place, or thing) will be offered and you will select one on which to write a long paragraph that explains the who-what-when-where-why important pertaining to it (approx. 10 minutes). The exams will pertain only to the material covered in class.

Term Paper

Each student is to write a term paper utilizing Edward Peters, ed., *The First Crusade*. The objective of the paper is to cultivate your research, analytical, critical-thinking, and writing skills. The paper is to be based on the primary source material found in *The First Crusade* as well as 5-10 works of secondary literature (books, essays in edited books, journal articles...). The secondary works should be incorporated into your text and analysis where appropriate. Bonus points will be given to papers that include works in a foreign language. It is recommended that you search other library catalogs and sources on the Internet to find the best possible materials for your paper and, if you do find them, order them via interlibrary loan. *Note: because interlibrary loans may not arrive quickly, you should place the order in plenty of time.

The paper's due date is Monday, Oct. 29. Its length is to be 8-10 pages, and the text should be formatted using 12-font (preferably Times New Roman), double-spacing, 1-inch margins on each side, footnotes, and a bibliography. The paper must follow the guidelines of *The Chicago Manual of Style* and not those of MLA or some other citation system. It is also highly recommended that each student take a rough draft (once if not a few times) to the Writing Center in order to have it checked for mistakes and for improvements in grammar, style, punctuation, organization, sentence structure, and so forth. I will also be happy to go over a rough draft with you during my office hours (it would be a good idea to give me a copy of the rough draft a day or two beforehand so that I have time to go through it carefully).

Late Policy

Any Short Paper or Term Paper handed in late will be marked down 10 points for each of the first three days that it is late (I would advise you to turn in to me any late paper via email attachment so that you incur the least amount of penalty). Beyond that point no credit can be earned for the paper. Make-ups for missed exams must be done within 5 school days of the scheduled exam day, and unless you can verify that you missed the exam for a good reason, 15 points will be subtracted from the exam score.

Grading

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| Short Papers (5) | 30% (6% each) |
| Term Paper | 31% |
| Exams (3) | 39% (13% each) |

*Note: Grades will be posted and updated on Blackboard over the course of the semester. Once you've taken the Final Exam and your semester grade is finalized on Blackboard, it cannot be negotiated. It will not be possible to do extra credit work or a make-up assignment in order to try and raise your grade. You will be able to track your grade on Blackboard throughout the semester, which means you will know as the semester goes along whether you have to work harder to get the letter grade you want.

OUTLINE

(the Outline is subject to changes. Note: * - indicates that a Short Paper is due that day).

I.**BACKGROUND:****THE MEDITERRANEAN WORLD IN THE LATE CLASSICAL PERIOD**

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| Aug. 20 | Introduction to the Course |
| Aug. 22 | Christianity & the Roman Empire, 1 st -3 rd cent. |
| Aug. 24 | Christianity & the Roman Empire, 4 th cent. |
| Aug. 27 | Visible→Invisible: St. Augustine & The Medieval World View |

II.**THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES, 400-1000:****CONVERSION OF THE BARBARIAN WORLD & THE MAKING OF LATIN CHRISTENDOM**Conversion of the Barbarians: The Merovingian Age, 5th-8th cent.

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| *Aug. 29 | Christian Missions to Ireland: The Conversion of the Irish |
| Aug. 31 | The Germanic Peoples & the Conversion of Clovis |
| Sept. 3 | NO CLASS – Holiday for Students & Faculty |
| *Sept. 5 | Christian Missions from Ireland: The Spread of Irish Monasticism |
| Sept. 7 | St. Benedict & Western Monasticism: Synthesis of the Desert Fathers & Latin Fathers |

Conversion of the Barbarians: The Carolingian Age, 8th-9th cent.

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| *Sept. 10 | The Christianization of Death: Funerary Rituals & Practice in the Early Medieval period |
| Sept. 12 | East Rome: Constantinople, Eastern Christianity, and the Byzantine Empire |
| Sept. 14 | Papacy's 90-degree turn: Franco-Papal Alliance (750s) & Charlemagne's Empire (768-814) |
| *Sept. 17 | The Vikings: Viking Society, Invasions & Integration into the Christian World |
| Sept. 19 | Saints and Shrines: Relics, Pilgrimages & Religious Culture in the Early Medieval period |
| Sept. 21 | 1ST EXAM |

III.**FROM THE EARLY TO HIGH MIDDLE AGES:****THE FORMATION OF MEDIEVAL SOCIETY**The Order of Those Who Pray – *oratores* (The Monks)

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| Sept. 24 | Monastic Renewal in a Time of Church Disarray, 850-1050: Cluny & The Cluniacs |
| Sept. 26 | Monasteries and the Prayer-based life of the Monks |

The Order of Those Who Fight – *bellatores* (The Lords)

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| Sept. 28 | The Rise of Feudalism: Lords & Vassals |
| Oct. 1 | Castles & the Privileged Life of the Lords |

The Order of Those Who Work – *laboratores* (The Peasantry)

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| Oct. 3 | The Rise of Manorialism: Serfs & the Medieval Manor |
| Oct. 5 | Villages & the Agrarian-based Life of the Serfs |

IV.
THE HIGH (OR CENTRAL) MIDDLE AGES, 1000-1300:
GROWTH & INNOVATION IN AN AGE OF PROFIT & POVERTY

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| Oct. 8 | The Revival of Cities, Trade & Profit Economy: The Urban World of the Town-dwellers |
| Oct. 10 | Avoiding the Profit Economy: Hermits & Cistercians |
| Oct. 12 | Romanesque Art & Architecture, 11 th -12 th cent. |
| Oct. 15 | Confronting the Profit Economy: The Franciscans |
| Oct. 17 | Female Spirituality in the High Middle Ages |
| Oct. 19 | 2ND EXAM |
| Oct. 22 | The Internal Other in Christendom: The Jews & the Profit Economy |
| Oct. 24 | Gothic Art & Architecture, 12 th -14 th cent. |
| Oct. 26 | Office Hours: Help & Consultation on Term Paper |

The Crusades

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| Oct. 29 | The External Other in Christendom: Muslims & the Origins of the Crusading Ideal NOTE: Term Paper Due |
| Oct. 31 | The First Crusade: to Jerusalem, 1096-1099 |
| Nov. 2 | The First Crusade: at Jerusalem, 1099 |
| Nov. 5 | Legacy of the Crusades: The Historiography of the Crusades |

V.
THE LATE MIDDLE AGES, 1300-1500:
CRISES & TRANSITION IN AN AGE OF UNREST

The Black Death: A Curse, or a Blessing in Disguise?

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| Nov. 7 | Plague – The Black Death (1347-1350) |
| Nov. 9 | Responses – Societal Insecurities: The Dance of Death & The Art of Dying |
| Nov. 12 | Dissolution of Manorialism & Serfdom |

Pressures from Below: the Religious and the Popular Rank-and-File

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| Nov. 14 | Cross v. Crown: The Investiture Contest (11 th -13 th cent.) |
| Nov. 16 | An Embattled Papacy: Exile & Schism |
| Nov. 19 | TBD |
| Nov. 26 | An Embattled Papacy: Conciliarism & the Renaissance Popes |
| Nov. 28 | Official Religion & Popular Religion in the Late Middle Ages |
| Nov. 30 | Unrest in the Social Order: Peasants & their Superiors |
| *Dec. 3 | Unrest in the Social Order: Discussion of Wunderli's <i>Peasant Fires</i> |
| Dec. 5 | A Look Back on the Medieval world |

FINAL EXAM