

History 2A
Mr. Bensch
Fall 2013

Office Hours (Tr 204):
M: 4:00-5:00; F: 10:30-11:30
and by appointment

SYLLABUS

MEDIEVAL EUROPE

The goal of the course is to introduce students to the Middle Ages through sources written by contemporaries. In many instances, you will be reading the principal evidence upon which all modern historians have based their accounts. These materials provide us with more than just facts, for they permit us to eavesdrop on individuals from the distant past speaking to each other. In order to listen in on their conversations, you must become aware of how an author writes about his materials as well as what he writes. The tone of a document is just as important a piece of historical evidence as its contents; perceptions of events are just as "real" as the events themselves. As we shall see, dreams and dragons can tell us as much about the past as speeches and battles.

In addition to the texts available at the bookstore (marked with an asterisk in the syllabus), you will be expected to work carefully with the primary source materials: the works of medieval authors will form the foundation of the course. Three brief, lucid synthetic essays (by P. R. L. Brown, Julia Smith, and R. W. Southern) will provide the background for lectures and readings in the primary sources. For those students wishing a more detailed narrative of the period, one can recommend J. Le Goff, Medieval Civilization.

Mondays and Wednesdays will be devoted to lectures; Fridays will take the form of discussions. You should read the weekly materials carefully before discussion and be prepared to participate actively. Your grade will be determined by a midterm (10%), a final examination (25%), 2 short papers (1,500-2,000 wrds. - approximately 6-8 pp.: 40%), 3 announced quizzes on "hard facts" (15%), and your preparation for and participation in class discussions (10%).

I. Week of Sept. 2

a) Introduction. The Decline of Rome: Awful Revolution or the Birth of Europe?

b) The Nature of Empire: Carrying the Big Stick.

Readings: Sources, nos. 1-10.

**P. R. L. Brown, The World of Late Antiquity, 11-48.

II. Week of Sept. 9

a) Myths Old and New: Roman Patriotism versus Early Christianity.

b) Bandits and Immigrants: Romans and Barbarians to 418.

Readings: Sources, nos. 11-25.

Brown, 49-69, 82-95, 115-25.

III. Week of Sept. 16

- a) Coexistence and its Alternative: Germanic Settlement in Gaul to 480 and the Empire of Attila, 433-53.
- b) The Indian Summer of Antiquity: Mediterranean and non-Mediterranean Europe to 570.

Readings: Sources, nos. 26-42.

Brown, 126-59.

** J. M. H. Smith, Europe after Rome: A New Cultural History, pp. 1-9, 51-82.

IV. Week of Sept. 23

- a) Christianity in New Robes: Religion and the Barbarians to 597.
- b) The Northern World: The Heroic Ideal.

Quiz on Friday, Sept. 27

Readings: Sources, nos. 43-47.

** Gregory of Tours, History of the Franks, Prologue, Bk. I, 1, 30-48; Bk. II.

** Beowulf.

Brown, 96-115.

Smith, pp. 13-51

V. Week of Sept. 30

- a) Barbarians at Work: Violence, Loyalty, and Coexistence.
- b) The North Comes of Age: The Spread of Christianity, 597 to 754.

Readings: Sources, nos. 48-69.

Gregory of Tours, Bks. III-V; VI, 10, 26-27, 32, 35; VII, 4-8, 31, 47; VIII, 29, 31; IX, 18-19, 34; X, 18, 27-28.

VI. Week of Oct. 7

Paper 1 Due on Monday, Oct. 7

- a) A Northern Augustus: Charlemagne, 768 to 814.
- b) Discussion and Review on Wednesday, Oct. 9

Readings: Sources, nos. 70-75.

Smith, 217-52.

Midterm on Friday, Oct. 11.

VII. Week of Oct. 21

- a) Europe Reshaped: The Carolingian Renaissance and the Dissolution of the Empire.
- b) The West under Siege: The Vikings and the Consolidation of Europe.

Readings: Sources, nos. 76-96.

Smith, pp. 151-82, 293-97.

VIII. Week of Oct. 28

- a) A New Dawn: European Society after the Millennium.
- b) The Feudal Revolution: Anarchy or Stabilization?

Quiz 2 on Friday, Nov. 1

Readings: Sources, nos. 97-116.

** R. W. Southern, The Making of the Middle Ages, 11-49, 98-117.

IX. Week of Nov. 4

- a) Sorting Out the Sacred and Profane: New Roles for Clergy and Laity in Christian Society.
- b) Proliferating Cells for Living: Village, Town, and Corporation.

Readings: Sources, nos. 117-134.
Southern, 118-69.

X. Week of Nov. 11

- a) The Twelfth-Century Renaissance: New Attitudes Toward Self and Community.
- b) States in Formation: Kings, Lawyers, and Accountants, 1066-1250 A.D.

Readings: Sources, nos. 135-40, 147-154.
Southern, 74-98, 170-257.

XI. Week of Nov. 18

- a) Europe on the March: Eastern Expansion and Reconquista to 1250.
- b) The Apogee: The International Order of the Thirteenth Century.

Readings: Source Book, nos. 141-146, 155-162
**Poema del mío Cid.
Southern, 49-73.

XII. Week of Nov. 25

- a) The Protestors: Heretics, Reformers, and Ascetics.

Readings: Sources, nos. 163-67.

XIII. Week of Dec. 2

- a) The Fourteenth-Century Crisis: Plague, Insecurity, and Mysticism.
- b) Europe in the Late Middle Ages: A Society in Decline?

Readings: Sources, nos. 168-74;
** Margery Kempe, The Book of Margery Kempe, pp. 33-196, 219-31, 257-97.
Quiz 3 on Wednesday, Dec 4.

XIV. Week of Dec. 9

Paper 2 Due on Monday, Dec. 9
a) Wrap-up.