

University of Wisconsin – Madison
Department of History

History 115: Medieval Europe 410-1500

HUMANITIES 1111

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays

9:55AM - 10:45AM

in-person



Prof. Elizabeth Lapina

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Office: 4131 Mosse Humanities or Zoom

Office hours: 11:00-12:00, Wednesday and Friday and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

We will begin this class with a discussion of the rise of Christianity and the role of Christianity in forging the new medieval civilization. We will continue with the relations between Romans and barbarians and with the fall (or “fall”?) of Rome. We will then move on to three major heirs of the Roman Empire: the Carolingian Empire, the Byzantine Empire and the Islamic Empire. After dealing with the Vikings – and, hopefully, dispelling a myth or two about them – we will move on to the age of castles and cathedrals. Some of the features of this period were expansion of Latin Europe into the Middle East during the crusades, the appearance of the new chivalric culture, the rise of heresy and the founding of first universities. We will finish with the Black Death and the Hundred Years War!

This 4-credit course meets as a group for 4 hours per week (according to UW-Madison's credit hour policy, each lecture counts as 1.5 hours and each discussion counts as an hour). The course also carries the expectation that you will spend an average of at least 2 hours outside of class for every hour in the classroom. In other words, in addition to class time, plan to allot an average of at least 8 hours per week for reading, writing, preparing for discussions, and/or studying for quizzes and exams for this course.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- To acquire a broad understanding of the main developments of the medieval period, from the end of the Roman Empire to the beginning of the Renaissance
- To learn to engage critically with a wide variety of primary sources

READING ASSIGNMENTS:

Please bring all of the primary sources assigned for that week to your discussion sections. When it comes to sources available on-line, you can bring them to sections in either paper or electronic format. The following primary sources are available at the University of Wisconsin bookstore and on reserve at the College Library (Helen C. White Hall, 600 North Park Street). If you wish, you can use different editions (including those available on the Web) as long as you are aware of and accept the inconveniences this might cause you. **All assigned readings are due on Wednesday of the week when they are assigned.**

- St. Augustine, *Confessions* (Penguin Classics)
- Jordanes, *History of the Goths*
- Abelard & Heloise, *The Letters and Other Writings* (Hackett Publications)
- *Egil's Saga* (Penguin Classics)
- Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot. The Knight of the Cart*, translated by Burton Raffel (Yale University Press)
- John Aberth, *The Black Death. The Great Mortality of 1348-1350*

GRADING:

Midterm:	20%
Final Exam:	20 %
Short essay:	20%
Pop-up quizzes:	20% (only top 10 quizzes count for your grade)
Participation in sections:	20%

ESSAY (for the topic see below)

- should be 5-7 pages (double-spaced) long
- should have an introduction and a conclusion
- should be proof-read before submitting
- should have a clear, but sufficiently complex argument

- should demonstrate an in-depth engagement with the primary source (make sure to back each of your ideas with quotations or paraphrases from the text)

FINAL AND MIDTERM EXAMS:

Both midterm and final exam will consist of

- (1) quotations from primary sources that you will have to identify and discuss
- (2) short essays

POP-UP QUIZZES

Pop-up quizzes will consist of a single short answer question. Pop-up quizzes will be based on lectures and / or reading assignments.

HONORS

Students taking the class for Honors credit need to contact the instructor ASAP.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM:

As a courtesy to your fellow students, I ask that you not to go on the internet during lectures.

HISTORY LAB and WRITING CENTER:

The History Lab and Writing Center are both very useful resource if you want help with your papers. Information can be found here:

<https://history.wisc.edu/thehistorylab.htm>

<http://www.writing.wisc.edu/>

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The University of Wisconsin considers academic honesty to be a very serious issue. I will always enforce the university policies on academic honesty. I suggest that you read carefully the following website dealing with the rules about plagiarism:

http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html

If you have questions about plagiarism, please contact me or your TA. Further information about student codes of conduct is found here:

<http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html#points>

DISABILITY

Disability guidelines for course accommodations are found at the UW McBurney Disability Resource Center site: <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu>

SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

September 8 (W): **Introduction to the Course.**

September 10 (F): **Rise of Christianity.**

WEEK 2

September 13 (M): **Rise of Christianity.**

September 15 (W): **Rise of Christianity.**

September 17 (F): **Barbarian Conquests.**

Reading Assignment: Augustine, *Confessions* (Books I through Book 8; if you wish, you can skip the very beginning (Book 1.1-1.11))

WEEK 3

September 20 (M): **Barbarian Conquests.**

September 22 (W): **Barbarian Conquests.**

September 24 (F): **Monasticism.**

Reading Assignment: Jordanes, *History of the Goths* (entire)

WEEK 4

September 27 (M): **Monasticism.**

September 29 (W): **Byzantium and Islamic world.**

October 1 (F): **Byzantium and Islamic world.**

Reading Assignment: Hrotswitha of Gandersheim (on Canvas)

WEEK 5

October 4 (M): **ZOOM LECTURE (during regular class). Guest speaker: Prof. Ovamir Anjum** (Endowed Chair of Islamic Studies at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of Toledo)

<https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/92485908115?pwd=RGFIMmJOYVZMd3FHZ1R0eDZCcHpiQT09>

October 6 (W): **Byzantium and Islamic world**

October 8 (F): **England and the Carolingian Empire.**

Reading Assignment (required): Ibn Fadlan, “The Land of Darkness” (on Canvas)

Reading Assignment (recommended): Fred M. Donner, “Who is Afraid of Shar’ia Law?” (on Canvas)

WEEK 6:

October 11 (M): **England and the Carolingian Empire.**

October 13 (W): **The Vikings**

October 15 (F): **The Vikings**

Reading Assignment: *Egil’s Saga* (begin)

WEEK 7:

October 18 (M): **The Vikings.**

October 20 (W): **The Vikings.**

October 22 (F): **The Investiture Controversy.**

Reading Assignment: *Egil’s Saga* (finish)

WEEK 8:

October 25 (M): **TAKE-HOME MIDTERM EXAM DUE ON OCTOBER 25th AT 11:59pm (no class)**

October 27 (W): **The Crusades.**

October 29 (F): **The Crusades.**

Reading Assignment: The Crusades (sources on Canvas).

WEEK 9:

November 1 (M): **The Crusades.**

November 3 (W): **The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century.**

November 5 (F): **The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century.**

Reading Assignment: Abelard and Heloise, *The Letters and Other Writings* (Abelard, *The Calamities of Peter Abelard*, pages 1-46).

WEEK 10:

November 8 (M): **The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century**

November 10 (W): **Heresy and Persecutions**

November 11 (Th): **ZOOM LECTURE** (try to attend or watch a recording if you are not able). **Prof. Efraim Lev** (Professor in the Department of Israel Studies and Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Haifa), “The contribution of the Cairo Geniza to the study of medieval Arabic medicine.”

November 12 (F): **Heresy and Persecutions**

Reading Assignment: Abelard and Heloise, *The Letters and Other Writings* (Heloise to Abelard, First Letter, pages 49-62, and Third Letter, pages 71-84).

WEEK 11:

November 15 (M): **The beginnings of Universities. ESSAY DUE AT MIDNIGHT (submit on Canvas)**

With Heloise, we have a rare occasion to study a medieval woman writing about herself, her experiences and her emotions. At first glance, the only emotion that consumes her is her adulation of Abelard. However, is there more to her and her story? Consider the choices Heloise had, the decisions she made, and the way in which she chose to tell her story (she knew that her letters would be widely read). To what extent was she a “prisoner of her time”? To what extent did she succeed, despite unfavorable circumstances, to forge her own destiny? What reputation did Abelard want her to have? What reputation did she want to have? Did she succeed in securing it?

November 17 (W): **Chivalry**

November 19 (F): **Chivalry**

Reading Assignment: *Lancelot* (begin; read through page 113 (line 3588))

WEEK 12:

November 22 (M): **Chivalry**

November 24 (W): **NO CLASS BECAUSE OF ZOOM LECTURE ON NOVEMBER 11**

Reading Assignment (finish by Monday): *Lancelot* (finish)

Watch (finish by Monday): Lancelot of the Lake
https://dllstream.library.wisc.edu/player/index.html?item_id=5978

WEEK 13:

November 29 (M): **The Crisis of the Medieval World**

December 1 (W): **The Crisis of the Medieval World**

December 3 (F): **The Crisis of the Medieval World**

Reading Assignment: The Black Death (documents 1-19)

WEEK 14:

December 6 (M): **The Crisis of the Medieval World**

December 8 (W): **The Crisis of the Medieval World**

December 10 (F): **The Renaissance (from the medieval perspective)**

Reading Assignment: The Black Death (documents 20-38)

Watch: *Passion of Joan of Arc*

WEEK 15

December 13 (M): **The Renaissance (from the medieval perspective)**

December 14 (W): **REVIEW**

FINAL EXAM DUE ON 12/18/2021 AT 11:59 pm (take-home; submit on Canvas)