

History 233-01
The Middle Ages, 500-1350
MWF 9:00-9:50am
ARH 324

Professor John Wei
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x9268
Office Hours: MWF 10-11am, 2-3pm
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Course Webpage: <https://pioneerweb.grinnell.edu>

Course Description

This course will provide an introduction to Europe during the period 500-1350. Through lectures, discussion, audio-visual material, and the reading of diverse primary sources, students will develop a rich understanding of the people and places, culture and ideas that shaped Europe during the Middle Ages. Although the main focus will be on Western Europe, we will nevertheless also discuss developments in the Byzantine and Islamic worlds and how these affected medieval European culture and society.

Course Goals

1. To develop a general understanding of what happened during the Middle Ages.
2. To gain an appreciation for the ways in which modern biases shape our view of the past.
3. To learn how to analyze diverse genres of primary sources: edicts, hagiography, chronicles, literary texts, etc.
4. To improve reading and writing skills.

Assignments and Grading

Students' grades will be based on the following criteria:

1. Class participation (10%)
2. Document analysis paper, approximately 4 pages (10%)
3. 10-minute presentation on a book by a modern historian (10%)
4. Review and critique of the book you presented, approximately 6-8 pages (20%)
5. Notes to 3 other panel discussions (15% total, 5% each)
6. Midterm Exam (10%)
7. Final Exam (25%)

Class Participation

Students are expected to come to class on time having already read the assigned reading. Since you cannot participate if you are not present, missing more than two classes will begin to have a detrimental effect on your grade. Be forewarned.

Exams

Both the Midterm and the Final exam will consist of three parts: a map quiz, a short identification section, and a short essay section. About a week before each exam, I will hand out

a list containing the places/geographical landmarks and terms from which the map and short identification sections will be drawn. The short essay question(s) will not be distributed in advance. They will all deal, however, with larger issues discussed in the readings and in class (including the book presentations).

Presentation

The 10-minute presentation will serve as the basis of your second paper. You will be asked to explain the argument and methodology of your book. About two days before the presentation, you and the other members of your panel will be required to meet with me to go over the details of the presentation and to discuss the relationship between your respective books. You should prepare for this meeting by discussing with the other panel members what the larger issues and questions of your topic are.

Notes to 3 panel discussions

In addition to your own panel presentation, you will need to submit a brief paragraph by 7pm the day before three of the other panel presentations. (People presenting before Fall Break should submit notes to panels presenting after Fall Break and vice versa.) In your paragraph, you should identify what you think the key issues for the panel are. You should also include 3 questions that you have about the topic.

Papers

The two papers are designed to exercise different skills. In the document analysis paper, you will be asked to analyze one or more primary sources and to discuss your interpretation of them in light of contemporary events and ideas. The book review will be based on your in-class presentation. In the paper, you will critique a book by a modern scholar. You will need to demonstrate an understanding of the scholar's argument, methodology, and process of argumentation. And you will be asked to evaluate your book in light of class readings and the books assigned to other members of your panel.

Resubmissions and Regrading

Students can submit revised versions of their papers for regrading. The grade for the revised paper will be final, regardless of whether it is higher or lower. The grade of the revised paper can be at most 1 letter grade higher. The deadline for submitting revised papers is two weeks after the original, corrected paper is returned.

Accommodations

If you have specific physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please let me know early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide documentation of your disability to the Dean for Student Academic Support and Advising, Joyce Stern, who is located on the third floor of the JRC (x3702).

Required Texts

Judith M. Bennet and C. Warren Hollister. *Medieval Europe: A Short History*. 10th edition.
Barbara H. Rosenwein, ed., *Reading the Middle Ages: Sources from Europe, Byzantium, and the Islamic World*, 2006.
Lewis Thorpe, ed. and trans., *Two Lives of Charlemagne*, 1969. (Penguin Classics)

Schedule

Friday
Aug. 29 Introduction

Week 1: The End of the Roman World

Monday The Roman World
Sept. 1 Bennet 8-13

Wednesday Christianity and the Roman Empire
Sept. 3 Bennet 13-29
 Rosenwein 1-10, 17-20

Friday Barbarian Invasions
Sept. 5 Bennet 30-49
 Rosenwein 58-70

Weeks 2-3: The Emergence of Three Civilizations: Latin Christendom, Byzantium, Islam

Monday Barbarian Kingdoms
Sept. 8

Wednesday The Roman Legacy in the East: Byzantium
Sept. 10 Bennet 68-81
 Rosenwein 72-85

Friday The Rise of Islam
Sept. 12 Bennet 81-95
 Rosenwein 86-96

Monday Al-Andalus – PRESENTATIONS
Sept. 15 Rosenwein 167-71

Wednesday Western Monasticism
Sept. 17 Bennet 50-67
 Rosenwein 28-57

Friday Catholicizing the West
Sept. 19 Rosenwein 97-128

Weeks 4-5: The Carolingian World

Monday The Early Carolingians
Sept. 22 Bennet 97-104
 [Three Accounts of the Battle of Tours](#)

- Wednesday
Sept. 24 Charlemagne
 Bennet 104-18
 Einhard's *Life of Charlemagne*
Document Analysis Assignment handed out
- Friday
Sept. 26 Mohammed and Charlemagne
 [Kenneth W. Frank, "Pirenne Again: A Muslim Viewpoint" \(JSTOR\)](#)
 [Review of Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*](#)
- Monday
Sept. 29 The Carolingian Renaissance
- Wednesday
Oct. 1 Decline of the Carolingians
 Bennet 119-28
 Rosenwein 258-62
 [Agobard, *On the Division of the Empire*](#)
 [Annals of Xanten](#)
- Friday
Oct. 3 The Holy Roman Empire
 Bennet 139-44
Document Analysis Assignment Due

Week 6: Post-Carolingian Chaos?

- Monday
Oct. 6 What is Feudalism?
 [Brown, "The Tyranny of a Construct" \(JSTOR\)](#)
 Bennet 133-39
 Rosenwein 213-18
- Wednesday
Oct. 8 Peace of God and Truce of God
 Rosenwein 219-21
- Friday
Oct. 10 Breakdown of Public Order – PRESENTATIONS
 [Stephen D. White, "The Politics of Anger" \(Course Reserves\)](#)

Weeks 7-9: Towards a New European Order

- Monday
Oct. 13 **Midterm Exam**
- Wednesday
Oct. 15 Agricultural Revolution
 Bennet 156-67
 Rosenwein 277-78
- Friday
Oct. 17 Commercial Revolution – PRESENTATIONS
 Bennet 167-74
 Rosenwein 278-79

-----**Oct. 18-26: Fall Break**-----

Monday
Oct. 27 Church Reform and the Investiture Controversy
 Bennet 201-207, 240-46
 Rosenwein 281-85

Wednesday
Oct. 29 The First Crusade
 Bennet 225-28
 Rosenwein 286-303

Friday
Oct. 31 Nobles, Chivalry, and Courtly Love – PRESENTATIONS
 Peters 314-20
 Rosenwein 384-94, 473-76

Monday
Nov. 3 New Learning – PRESENTATIONS
 Bennet 246-49, 307-19
 Rosenwein 313-26

Wednesday
Nov. 5 Heresy and New Religious Orders: How do they differ?
 Bennet 186-201, 207-13
 Rosenwein 404-409

Friday
Nov. 7 Innocent III and the Fourth Lateran Council
 Rosenwein 395-400

Weeks 10-11: Unification and Expansion

Monday
Nov. 10 England and France in Comparative Perspective
 Bennet 128-39, 267-83
 Rosenwein 304-309, 350-59, 371-74, 378-83

Wednesday
Nov. 12 Aragon, Italy, and the Western Mediterranean

Friday
Nov. 14 Rural and Urban Communities – PRESENTATIONS

Monday
Nov. 17 Minority Groups – PRESENTATIONS
 [István Bejczy, “Tolerantia: A Medieval Concept” \(JSTOR\)](#)

Wednesday
Nov. 19 Venice, Byzantium, and the Fourth Crusade
 [Robert de Clari’s Account of the Capture of Constantinople](#)
 [Pope Innocent III’s Letter immediately after the capture](#)
 [A Byzantine Account of the Capture](#)

Friday Mongols and the East

Nov. 21 Rosenwein 414-27

Weeks 12-13: Waning of the Middle Ages

Monday Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII

Nov. 24 Bennet 283-86
Rosenwein 455-59

[William of Hundlehy, *The Outrage at Anagni*](#)

Wednesday The Knights Templar

Nov. 26 [St. Bernard, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*](#)
[Primitive Rule of the Templars](#)

Friday **Thanksgiving Break: No Class**

Nov. 28

Monday The End of the Capetians and the beginning of the Hundred Years' War

Dec. 1 Bennet 347-56

[Extracts from Jean Froissart's *On the Hundred Years' War*](#)

Wednesday Black Death

Dec. 3 Bennet 321-36

Rosenwein 483-91

[The Black Death and the Jews](#)

Friday Beginnings of the Italian Renaissance

Dec. 5

[Petrarch's Letter to Boccaccio on the Italian Language](#)

Week 14: Portrayals of the Middle Ages

Monday The Christian Middle Ages

Dec. 8 [Van Engen, "The Christian Middle Ages as an Historiographical Problem"](#)
[\(JSTOR\)](#)

Wednesday Old and New Medievalisms

Dec. 10 [Freedman and Spiegel, "Medievalisms Old and New" \(JSTOR\)](#)

Friday End of Course Evaluations; Review

Dec. 12

Tuesday Final Exam

Dec. 16

Sept. 15 – Al-Andalus

Roger Collins, *The Arab Conquest of Spain*, 1989.

Jessica Coope, *The Martyrs of Córdoba*, 1995.
María Isabel Fierro, *'Abd al-Rahman III: The First Cordoban Caliph*, 2005.
Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 1988.

Oct. 10 – Breakdown of Public Order

Robert Bartlett, *Trial By Fire and Water: The Medieval Judicial Ordeal*, 1986.
Wendy Davis and Paul Fouracre, eds., *The Settlement of Disputes in Early Medieval Europe*, 1986. (Interlibrary Loan; Univ. of Iowa)
Lester Little, *Benedictine Maledictions: Liturgical Cursing in Romanesque France*, 1993. (Interlibrary Loan; Univ. of Iowa)

Oct. 17 – Commercial Revolution

Olivia Remie Constable, *Trade and Traders in Muslim Spain: The Commercial Realignment of the Iberian Peninsula, 900-1500*, 1994.
Edwin Hunt, *The Medieval Super-Companies: A Study of the Peruzzi Company of Florence*, 1994.
Robert Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages, 950-1350*, 1971.
Richard K. Marshall, *The Local Merchant of Prato*, 1999.

Oct. 31 – Nobles, Chivalry, and Courtly Love

Constance Bouchard, *Strong of Body, Brave and Noble*, 1998.
David Crouch, *William Marshal: Court, Career, and Chivalry*, 1990.
Maurice Keen, *Chivalry*, 1984.

Nov. 3 – New Learning

Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, 1927.
Charles Radding, *The Origins of Medieval Jurisprudence*, 1988.
Charles Radding and William Clark, *Medieval Architecture, Medieval Learning: Builders and Masters in the Age of Romanesque and Gothic*, 1992.
R.W. Southern, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe*, 1995. vol. 1.

Nov. 14 – Rural and Urban Communities

Thomas N. Bisson, *Tormented Voices: Power, Crisis, and Humanity in Rural Catalonia, 1140-1200*, 1998.
Barbara Hannawalt, *The Ties that Bound: Peasant Family Life in Medieval England*, 1986.
Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou*, 1978.
Ann Wroe, *A Fool and His Money*, 1995.

Nov. 17 – Minority Groups

Mark Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages*, 1994.
R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250*, 1987.
David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecutions of Minorities in the Middle Ages*, 1996.