

GONZAGA-IN-FLORENCE SYLLABUS

Course: HIST 311 Medieval Europe
Credits: 3 Credits
Instructor: Roberto Sabbadini



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SCHEDULE: MONDAY- TUESDAY - THURSDAY 9:35-10:35

OFFICE HOURS: TUESDAY, 10:40-11:40. Contact at: roberto.sabba@libero.it

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course analyzes the development of western European social, political, economic and cultural structures and institutions during the Middle Ages, one of the most complex and fascinating historical periods. The course explores this development in a broad chronological perspective, from the fall of the Roman Empire to the late medieval crisis, and in relation to the other great civilizations that deeply influenced the growth of western Europe's unique history and the evolution toward a peculiar European identity.

The course is chronologically and thematically divided in five main parts. We will first analyze *the origins of the Middle Ages*, as a result of the collapse of the Roman civilization and as a consequence of the interaction of western Europe with Islam and the Byzantine Empire. We will then focus over the birth of *Feudal Europe*, the social, political and economic structure that characterizes a new peculiar civilization. The year 1000 represents a real watershed opening the way to a demographic and economic growth that will provide the framework for the first great *expansion of the West* outside the borders of Christianity. A sort of '*golden age*' will follow, the twelfth and thirteenth century's cultural revival and development of feudal monarchies that will embark Europe on its long road to modernity. The course will conclude by analyzing the *late medieval crisis* symbolized by the great plague epidemic known as the Black Death, another important watershed.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to provide the students with a basic knowledge of the main historical events and personalities; an analysis of the main historical processes; an understanding of the political, social, religious and cultural phenomena that characterized the European society in the Medieval period. Through this approach students will come to understand the roots of the European identity and will be able to relate the historical background to cultural, religious and political issues.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students are expected to be able to:

- demonstrate a confident knowledge of significant historical events and personalities which shaped the history of the Middle Ages.
- engage in the process of historical interpretation through the analysis of documents.
- apply their analytical skills to complex historical questions.
- develop models and concepts for analyzing culture, society and politics that can be applied to many different situations, both historical and contemporary.
- present coherent persuasive arguments in oral and written form.

GRADING AND OTHER POLICIES

Students will be evaluated on the basis of two in-class examinations (mid-term and final), a paper and class participation proportionally broken down as follows:

- 30% Mid-Term Exam
- 30% Final Exam
- 30% Paper
- 10% Class Participation

Students will have a mid-term exam and a final exam organized in the same way and each composed of three parts: a long essay, short answers and short definitions/identifications. The final exam is not cumulative.

Students are required to write one term paper. The dead-line for the paper is November 23rd.

Length requirement for paper: 7-8 pages (i.e. 2000-2300 words), typed (font Arial, size12, double spaced).

Following **grading system** will be observed:

0 - 59 = **F**, 60 - 69 = **D**, 70 - 72 = **C-**, 73 - 76 = **C**, 77 - 79 = **C+**,
80 - 82 = **B-**, 83 - 86 = **B**, 87 - 89 = **B+**, 90 - 92 = **A-**, 93 - 100 = **A**

Course Organization: The course will be structured in lectures, in-class discussions, home assignments and oral presentation of the papers. Individual study of the notes, the readings, and the handouts at home is required on a weekly basis.

Reading Assignments: On your lecture schedule you will find the required readings for each lecture; they should be completed before each class meeting as a homework assignment. The reading assignments will be checked by oral and written questions.

Participation: Participation means bringing the reading material to class, being active in discussions, presenting oral reports of the paper. Participation also refers to regular behaviour in class.

Exams: Students will have a mid-term and a final exam. The evaluation of the exams is done according to the following criteria:

- analytical skills
- comprehension of the reading material and notes
- study of the reading material and notes
- clarity of expression

Paper Assignment: Students are required to write a final paper. The evaluation of the paper is done according to the following criteria:

- well formulated argument
- inquisitive and analytical approach
- good use of bibliography (citing sources for paraphrases, quotations and summaries)
- clarity of expression including quality of style (grammar, spelling)

Attendance

University policy allows a maximum of six absences for a three credit course.

At the seventh absence the student's grade is lowered of a half point grade: from A to A-, A- to B+, B+ to B, and so on.

REQUIRED READING

C.R. Backman, *The Worlds of Medieval Europe*. Oxford University Press, 2009.

COURSE OUTLINE & SCHEDULE

- Week 1: ***Introduction: Medieval Europe***
- Week 2: ***The Origins of the Middle Ages: The End of the Ancient World***
The fall of the Roman Empire. Christianity. The roman-barbarian kingdoms.
Reading: ch. 1-3, pp. 3-74
- Week 3: ***The Origins of the Middle Ages: Byzantium and Islam***
The Byzantine Empire. The rise of Islam. The Franks and the Papacy.
Reading: ch. 5, pp. 111-130; ch. 6, pp. 131-136
- Week 4: ***Feudal Europe: The Revival of the Empire***
Charlemagne. From the Carolingian to the Holy Roman Empire.
Reading: ch. 6, pp. 136-163; ch. 7, pp. 167-178; ch. 9, pp. 226-233
- Week 5: ***Feudal Europe: The Feudal Society***
Feudalism: the manorial system. The tripartite society: peasants, monks, knights
Reading: ch. 8, pp. 195-209; ch. 9, pp. 219-225; ch. 4, pp. 80-101
- Week 6: ***The Expansion of the West: Christianity beyond its Borders***
A new trend: commercial and political expansion. The crusades.
Reading: ch. 10, pp. 274-285
- Week 7: **Review and Mid-Term in-class exam**
- Week 8: ***Feudal Europe: Papacy and Empire***
The investiture controversy. The universal empire: Frederick I and Frederick II
The theocratic church: Innocent III.
Reading: ch. 10, pp. 262-274; ch. 12, pp. 327-350
- Week 9: ***The 'Golden Age': The Urban Civilization***
The government of the city
Reading: ch. 11, pp. 291-326; ch. 14, pp. 377-399
- Week 10: ***The 'Golden Age': The Urban Civilization***
The citizen. The merchant. The friar
Reading: ch. 15, pp. 405-427; ch. 16, pp. 437-450
- Week 11: ***The 'Golden Age': Nation-States and City-States***
The European kingdoms. The Empire. The Italian states.
Reading: ch. 13, pp. 353-371
- Week 12: ***The Late Medieval Crisis and the transition to the Early Modern period***
The Black Death. The Renaissance
Reading: ch. 17, pp. 460-495; ch. 20, pp. 531-542
- Week 13: **Review and Final in-class exam** (date to be announced)