

## HIST 194-01: Introduction to the Middle Ages

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Old Main 305  
Office hours: Mon. 4-5p, Wed. 10-11a, and by appointment  
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MWF 2:20-3:20pm  
Old Main 111

This course will introduce students to the European Middle Ages, in all its vigor, vibrancy, and violence, from the decline of the Western Roman Empire in the 4<sup>th</sup> century until Martin Luther and the beginning of the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup>. Our purpose will be twofold: to situate medieval Europe in a broader context, and to question received notions about the Middle Ages. Was the period before 1000 really the Dark Ages? Does the central period of c.1000-c.1300 deserve to be called the High Middle Ages? Was the later period primarily a time of decadence and calamity? We will trace the themes of politics and governance, religion, work and trade, and the experiences of everyday life (including social status and gender) as we learn about the events that shaped the period. This class will make use of the full range of sources available to medievalists, including art, architecture, imaginative literature, archaeology, philosophy, law, histories, and more.

### Required readings

Barbara Rosenwein, *A Short History of the Middle Ages*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.  
Einhard and Notker the Stammerer, *Two Lives of Charlemagne*  
*Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, trans. Betty Radice  
*The Trial of Joan of Arc*, trans. Daniel Hobbins

Other readings will be available on the course Moodle site and through library reserves.

### Assignments and grading

Class participation	30%
Discussion leadership	10%
Manuscript description	5%
Primary source analyses (2)	20%
Midterm essay	15%
Cumulative Exam	20%

#### *Participation*

This class will work best when everyone comes to class prepared to engage with the materials at hand. Therefore, you are expected to take an active part in all class discussions and activities,

which may include in-class informal writing. You will need to complete the assigned readings and reflect on them before arriving in class. Bring all relevant readings with you to class each day, either in hard copy or electronically. You are allowed one unexcused absence; sleeping in class counts as an absence.

### *Discussion Leadership*

For each class day in which primary sources are assigned, a team of students will collaborate to lead the discussion of them. To that end, each Discussion Leadership team will develop at least four (4) analytical questions about the sources that will engender class-wide discussion of them. Assume that all of your classmates have read the sources, so do not plan to summarize them as part of your discussion. Creative tactics and approaches are encouraged. Each student will act as Discussion Leader once during the term.

Potential questions might deal with an individual source, a combination of sources from the same day, or sources in relation to with earlier readings and/or discussions. Focus on analytical rather than factual matters (although if you have factual questions, ask me!). Potential posts might deal with an individual primary source, a combination of sources from the same day, sources in combination with the day's required article reading, or sources in relation to earlier readings or discussions. Think about what rhetorical strategies the sources employ (e.g. word choice, shape of argument, tone, style), intended audience, genre (is the source a hagiography, a chronicle, a set of regulations or laws, a work of imaginative literature, court records, a letter?), historical context, intended effects. What does the source say explicitly and what does it imply? How does it play on Christian or aristocratic mores, for example, reinforcing or undermining them? These questions are not meant to be exhaustive, but rather to stimulate thinking as you develop your Discussion Leadership plan.

### *Manuscript description*

During our visit to the Rare Books collection in the library, you will select one of the manuscript items or incunabula on which to write a two-paragraph description. The first paragraph will include codicological details, and the second paragraph will discuss the source's genre. Stay tuned for further information. **Due: Friday, 20 November, by 2:20pm.**

### *Primary source analyses*

In these 2-3-page papers, you will place your source in its historical context, then analyze it for its argument, purpose, audience, and underlying assumptions. You must also include a few questions that your source brings up, which potentially could serve as the point of origin for further research. You may use secondary sources (cite them if you use them), but this is not intended to be a research paper. You will select your source from those assigned for this course, and your analysis will be due on the date your source is scheduled for discussion in class. Sign

up for the topic-date on which you wish to do your analysis via the Moodle sign-up sheet, which will be available during Week 2.

### *Midterm essay*

I will provide a choice of prompts, and you will develop an argument supported by evidence from the materials assigned in the course. Length will be 3-5 pages. **Due: Sunday, 11 October, by 11:59pm.**

### *Final Exam*

This is a take-home exam. I will post it to Moodle on Friday, 11 December, no later than 5:30pm. **Due no later than 2:20pm on Friday, 18 December.**

The standards by which I assess work in this class are as follows:

- A - Outstanding, Excellent, Awesome, etc.
- B - Significantly above requirements, i.e. Good
- C - Meets requirements
- D - Does not meet requirements, but worth of credit
- F - Work that was completed, but at an insufficient level

### **Policies**

#### *Communicating and meeting with me*

- Email is the best way to contact me. I will do my best to respond within 24 hours; it will usually be less than that, but response time might be longer on weekends or over university holidays. Do not expect an immediate response to messages sent after 6pm.
- I recommend signing up for an appointment via my Google calendar, which you can access through Moodle. This will guarantee that I can see you during my office hours. However, you may just come to my office during posted office hours, too.
- If my regular office hours will not work for you, email me or speak to me after class so that we can work out an alternate time.

#### *Technology*

- Laptops and tablets are permitted in class, but only for the purposes of accessing course readings and taking notes. Phones, iPods, and other personal electronics are prohibited.
  - If I find that you are using your tech to check email, Facebook, ESPN, etc., your tech privileges will be revoked for the remainder of the semester.
- All assignments will be submitted electronically through Moodle, except when specifically noted. Do not email your work directly to me unless Moodle crashes.

### *Late work*

- I will not accept late work on the following assignments: PCRs, Primary Source Analysis, Article Response.
- I will accept late work on the rest of the assignments, but each day overdue will result in a reduction of the assignment's grade by 1/3. That means a B paper would become a B- if turned in during the first 24 hours following the due date, and so on.
- Emergencies do come up, so if you have a legitimate reason for missing a due date, tell me *before* the deadline. Email is the best way to reach me.

### *Formatting your written work*

- All papers must be written in 12-point Times New Roman, double spaced, with 1" margins.
- Page numbers are required.
- Files must be submitted as .doc or .docx file-types.
- Cite your sources, and do so using **footnotes** (not endnotes) following Chicago Manual of Style guidelines.
  - N.B.: You may use in-text citations in certain cases, which I will explain.

### *Plagiarism*

- Plagiarism is strictly prohibited, and failure to abide by the standards of academic integrity will result in serious consequences that could include failure of the assignment, failure of the course, suspension, or expulsion. If you have questions about plagiarism, please talk to me.
- Refer to Macalester's guidelines and procedures on academic integrity at <http://www.macalester.edu/academicprograms/academicpolicies/academicintegrity/>.

## **Statement on disabilities**

Macalester seeks to create a welcoming environment in which all students can reach their academic potential and have equal access to academic opportunities and co-curricular activities. Under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with disabilities are protected from discrimination and assured services. The College is committed to responding in a flexible manner to the individual needs of all members of the Macalester community with appropriate documentation.

Accommodations are made upon the approval of the Associate Dean of Students, Robin Hart Ruthenbeck, who is the designated coordinator of services for students with disabilities at Macalester. Any student who is interested in requesting services should contact the Office of

Student Affairs (651-696-6220 or [studentaffairs@macalester.edu](mailto:studentaffairs@macalester.edu)) early in the semester to schedule an accommodations meeting. For more information, see the Disability Services page at <http://www.macalester.edu/studentaffairs/disabilityservices/>.

**N.B.: This syllabus is subject to revision** during the semester. Any changes to assignments, readings, or topics will be communicated during class and via email, and will be reflected on Moodle, no less than 1 week prior to the change in question.

### **Schedule**

Week 1: Introduction; Inheritance from Rome

Week 2: Germanic Europe; Conversion and monasticism

Week 3: Carolingians

Week 4: Carolingians; Vikings

Week 5: Crusades; Christians, Jews, and Muslims

Week 6: Abelard and Heloise

Week 7: Universities; Heresy

Week 8: Nobility; Chivalry; Fall Break

Week 9: Trade and commerce; Cities and urban life

Week 10: Peasants and rural life; Law and justice

Week 11: Famine, plague, war; Popular uprisings

Week 12: Late medieval religious expressions; Joan of Arc

Week 13: Joan of Arc; Thanksgiving Break

Week 14: Sex and gender; Marriage and family; Men, women, and power

Week 15: Governments and governance; Legacies of the Middle Ages

## How to Analyze a Source

### **1. The Facts**

- a. What is it?
- b. When was it written?
- c. Who wrote it?
- d. Who was the intended audience?
- e. What does the source say explicitly? (In other words, paraphrase it.)

### **2. Going deeper**

- a. What is the argument?
- b. What is the purpose of the source?
- c. How does the author make and support the argument? Why make these choices?
- d. What does the source imply? What does it omit? Why?
- e. What does this source tell you about the time and place in which it was written? (This gets at significance.)

### **3. Looking beyond**

- a. How does the source compare to, fit with, or challenge other things you have read, prior knowledge, assumptions?