**History 101: Introduction to Medieval and Early Modern Europe**
MWF Severance Hall 108: 10:00-10:50AM

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**Course description:** History 101 provides an introduction to the history of the Mediterranean world and northern Europe from the end of the Roman Empire to the age of absolutism, with a primary focus on the period from 950 to 1650. We will examine the medieval institutions that developed from the crises of the ancient world and the changing political, social, economic and religious landscapes that emerged in the early modern period. During lecture and discussions, we will question preconceptions about these periods: were the Middle Ages a static or even “dark” time, in which people slaved under the twin burdens of bare subsistence and dogmatic belief? Should we understand the breakdowns and breakthroughs that followed—the Renaissance and Reformation, colonialism and capitalism, the Scientific Revolution and the rise of the modern state system—within a context of religious fervor and epic persecution, or rational thought and technological advancement?

Jan van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Wedding*, 1434

**Course goals and expectations:** The course is designed to engage students who are unfamiliar with European history and wish to learn both the subject matter and the methods used to understand history. As you will discover, there is no one correct way of constructing the historical past—we are constantly creating new narratives and new perspectives. This is the art (and fun!) of studying history. My goal is that this course will not only introduce you to some of the major trends and events that have shaped the European past, but also develop three basic tools of the historian: critical reading, analytical thinking and clear communication. To these ends, you are asked to actively attend to lectures, discuss both primary texts and secondary literature in class, and complete several written assignments, including a midterm and a final exam. There will also be three movies shown outside of class time, and you are asked to attend at least two.∗

∗ Popcorn (buttered) provided
Course materials:
All required books are available at the Oberlin Bookstore and are on reserve in the library. I have decided not to assign a textbook—if you want to have a reference book for the material we discuss in the course, you might want to purchase one (recommended ones below).

Required:
Patrick Geary, ed. *Readings in Medieval History*, Volume II (2010) (this is the 4th edition but you can make the 3rd edition work as well)
Thomas More, *Utopia* (many editions, originally 1516)

Recommended textbooks:

Requirements and Grading:
Movie Viewing and Review 15%
Map Quiz 5%
Two 5-page papers 20% each; 40% total
Midterm 20%
Final exam 20%

Grading based on the following: A+ 100-97; A 96-93; A- 92-90; B+ 89-87; B 86-83; B- 82-80; C+ 79-77; C 76-73; C- 72-70; D 65-69, F below 65.

All written work must be turned in to receive credit for this class.

Details:
1. **Map Quiz** 9/19. Learning the basic geography of northern Europe and the Mediterranean world is crucial for understanding its history in the medieval and early modern periods. A week before the quiz, I will post on Blackboard the relevant map and what specifically you should identify, which will include bodies of land and water and cities or regions that figure largely in the time period or events we’re discussing this semester.

2. **Movie Viewings and Review**—We will be showing three movies outside of class, two of them during the week in the evening, and one on a Sunday afternoon. Students should attend two movies (your choice) and write about one of them. Include what it was about and what the filmmaker was trying to convey and how well you think it worked. To the best of your knowledge, did the film do justice to the time period/subject? If you choose to write a review of one of the other films, you will receive extra credit (and extra popcorn)! Your review is **due no later than one week after we see the film** and should be 2-3 pages.

3. **Essays**. You will complete two 5-page essays, each on a question that I will hand out at least one week before the essay is due. These papers will allow you to evaluate both primary and secondary sources and argue a point that you substantiate from those materials. The first is due at the beginning of class on 9/26 and the second on 11/23, just before Thanksgiving.

4. **Midterm and Final Exams**. Based on what you’ve learned from readings and class lectures, you
will complete a range of questions, from map ids to passage identifications. The midterm will not have a longer essay, but the final exam will.

5. **Timelines.** (ungraded-but helpful!) Because we don’t have a textbook, we will together construct chronologies of trends/particular events in small groups in class. Everyone will be expected to contribute. I hope these will serve as a periodic break to iron out any confusion on what was happening and when.

All written assignments should be typed and double-spaced, with at least ½ in. margins on all sides. All pages numbered! Your grade takes note of the brilliance of your ideas but also the clarity of your expression, the ironclad tightness of your grammar and the impeccability of your spelling. Proofread! Edit! When you have citations and you need to include footnotes and a bibliography, refer to some of the reference guides from the Oberlin History Department that I have posted on Blackboard. When in doubt, get in touch with me.

**Class Policies:**

**Attendance and participation:** The course has both lecture and discussion components and therefore, your attendance and participation is important (we need your insights!) If you are able, please let me know before class begins that you will be absent. 4 or more absences can result in a failing grade or being dropped from the course. If you are over 10 minutes late, you will be counted absent.

**Disabilities:** 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 Jane Boomer in the Office of Disability Services in Peters G-27/G-28.

**Lateness:** Late assignments will be penalized by dropping 3 points from your grade every day a paper is late.

**Plagiarism:** All work turned in for this course must be your own. The College requires that students sign an "Honor Code" for all assignments. This pledge states: "I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment." For further information, see the student Honor Code which you can access via http://new.oberlin.edu/students/policies/2011-2012/11-Policies-Honor.pdf. If you turn something in without pledging the honor code, I will wait to grade it until you do. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me or raise it in class.

**Finding and doing the assignments:** All required books are available at the Oberlin Bookstore and are on reserve in the library. Readings posted on Blackboard are labeled Bb. They are located under Course Documents in the file “Reading Assignments”. For sources from the Geary reader, the assignment will read G and the document number and name. The readings listed for a particular class should be done before that class. ABOVE ALL, BRING READINGS TO CLASS!

**Schedule of Classes and Assignments**

**Section I The High Middle Ages, 950-1300**

**Week 1 Introduction: Christianity and the Roman World**

9/7 What is medieval? How do we know, and what do we know? 
Raoul Glaber, *Histories* (handout)

**Week 2 A Society of Orders; Conflict and Religious Reform**

9/12 Peasants. Bennett, *Cecilia*, skim chapter 1, read chapters 2 and 3. **Movie night!** *The Lion in Winter*. 6PM. King 306.

**Week 3 The Expansion of Europe**


**Map Quiz**

**9/22 (Thursday) at 4:30 PM, Hallock Auditorium, Lewis Environmental Building.** Special Lecture by Robert Chazan, Distinguished Professor of History at New York University on “The First Crusade and Anti-Jewish Violence,” Attendance a must!
9/23 The Crusades II. G: 30. *Four Accounts of the First Crusade.* *Robert Chazan visit.*

**Week 4 Urban, spiritual and intellectual growth**

9/26 The Communal movement

**First paper due beginning of class**

**Week 5 Religious Orthodoxy and Heresy; the height of papal power (or the church and its critics)**

10/3 The papacy under Innocent III. *Please bring your Geary reader to class. Begin reading Mark Pegg, A Most Holy War*, pp. 3-49.
10/5 Apostolic Poverty—problem or solution? Pegg, pp. 50-78, 89-93, 10/7 Discussion of Mark Pegg, A Most Holy War, pp. 141-191

**Week 6 The growth of the secular state and representative institutions**


**Time Line work (bring in 3 trends/events important and approx. when they took place)**

work in small groups

Week 7 *The apogee of learning and belief; Midterm Exam (its nadir?)*

10/19 Learning and Visual culture. * Visit to Special Collections—4th Floor, Mudd
10/21 Midterm Exam

Week 8 10/24-10/28 **No Classes-Fall Recess**

**Section II Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period, 1300-1600**

Week 9 14th Century: Crisis and Renewal


Week 10 Renaissance ideals


Week 11 *The Age of Revolutions: or what does it mean to be early modern?*


Week 12 *Protestant Reformation and its aftermath: the Christian world divided (again)*

11/23 Wars of Religion **Paper due beginning of class**
11/25 Thanksgiving Break-No Class!
Week 13 *The Properties of Belief*

12/2 Witches! Bb. Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze* (selections)

Week 14 *Experimental Solutions*


Week 15 *Conclusion*

12/12 Bringing it all together. Come with your questions, thoughts, concerns and at least ONE theme that you think can be traced throughout the whole course and ONE theme that applies to the second half of the course.

**Final Exam**
Monday December 19 2-4 PM