Why do we care what others believe? Does the construction of the self rely on the demonization of the other? Does it necessarily inspire violence? By exploring the history of Jewish, Muslim and Christian relations in the Middle Ages we will examine how these groups, in violence and peace, shaped their own and each other’s identities for centuries to come. In light of contemporary discussions of orthodoxy and heterodoxy and the nature of difference, we will analyze two pivotal encounters, the Crusades and the Reconquista of Spain. The Crusades and the Reconquista, both movements of Europeans to retake what they believed to be Christian territory from Muslim hands, created bitter divisions among these groups and new solidarities within them. So too, did the war waged against Christian heretics in southern France in the 12th and 13th centuries. In the last part of the course, we will focus on the disturbing legacy of these interactions in a post 9/11 world and discuss ways of moving beyond them.

Course goals and expectations: There are several goals I hope we accomplish. We are together exploring some of the fundamentals of historical inquiry—understanding sources, deconstructing narratives, plunging into the debates about these particular developments—and I hope we will all come away with a greater sense of just how complex and rich they are. We are not just trying to understand past concerns, however, but also discern the continuing relevance of the “deep” past. The Crusades, the
Reconquista of Spain, and the Albigensian Crusade allow us to discuss the importance and fragility of historical memory: why the events of 800 or 500 years ago still matter to us today and how these histories are constantly being invoked in the creation of modern national, ethnic and religious identities, sometimes in divisive and sometimes in constructive ways. I don’t think these goals are incompatible—the usefulness of studying the past for the present day coupled with an understanding of its irreducible alterity—because I hope the course is more about engendering a sense of responsibility for those uses rather than denying their importance.

More generally, Heretics and Infidels is a first year seminar and as such, it is designed to introduce you to liberal arts learning. That means that I hope it will spark your interest in this period in history and the kinds of questions we’ll raise, but also allow you to work on skills that will help you navigate through the next four years successfully: critical reading, analytical thinking, clear communication and information literacy. To these ends, you are asked to come to class prepared to discuss both primary texts and secondary literature in class, and complete several written and oral assignments and produce a final project that rests both on your in-depth research of the past and your conceptions of the contemporary world. And because we are privileging group discussion rather than lecture, I ask that we are all both respectful of each others’ viewpoints and unafraid to closely examine them in class.

Finally, we also are lucky enough to have a writing tutor with us this semester. Jake Purcell, a double-degree student (bassoon), college senior, and future medievalist will be working with all of you in helping you brainstorm paper ideas, go over drafts, meet individually and/or meet in larger groups. He will set up office hours shortly and post in Blackboard. I know that you will enjoy working with him as much as I do.

This FYS can be applied for credit in History, including the major and minor. Successful completion also gives WRi credit.

Course materials:
All required books are available at the Oberlin Bookstore and are on reserve in the library. I do not have a textbook in mind—if you want to have a reference book for the material we discuss in the course, you might want to purchase one (I can recommend a few) or spend some quality time with the Dictionary of Medieval History (ed. Joseph Strayer, in the reserve section of the library).

Required Readings:
Amin Maalouf, In the Name of Identity (2003)
Robert Chazan, In the Year 1096 (1996)
Renée Levine Melammed, Heretics or Daughters of Israel? (1999)
Anouar Majid, We Are All Moors (2009)
Geraldine Brooks, People of the Book (2008)
Requirements and Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>20%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-7 page paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Responses</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project (oral presentation and written paper)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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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:

Participation (and attendance): This course is a seminar, which means your participation is ESSENTIAL for making it work; we need you there and wide awake! If there is an emergency and you must miss a class, please let me know before class begins that you will be absent, or similarly, if you can come to class but have not been able to do the reading, please come and see me and we’ll set up a time to talk.

5-7 page paper: This paper will analyze the Crusades narratives and some of the secondary sources that we will be reading together and 1-2 articles that you will be reading on your own. Overall the paper should be about how historical narratives are constructed, with what audience in mind, and what that can tell us about the concerns of the authors and the communities from which they came. You may make an argument about one of the traditions (Christian, Jewish and Muslim) that we are reading or compare two or more of them. We will discuss the topic more in the next few weeks.

Reading responses: There are four reading responses marked on the syllabus, two before Fall Break, and two after. These are shorter writing pieces designed to give you space to grasp the reading: 1. what is the author trying to prove (the argument) and what kinds of evidence does the author use to substantiate her point and 2. evaluate it (how successful do you think the author was in making this argument, and why?). The responses should be 2-3 pages in length (approx. 500-600 words), so do not spend lots of time on summarizing without leaving room for your analysis. Feel free to link your thoughts to previous weeks’ readings/discussion. You are asked to complete all four responses, but the lowest grade will be dropped.

Final Project: This is your chance to think creatively with the theoretical and historical tools discussed during the semester. Your first paper on the Crusades will be on the construction of history, this project should explore something about the uses to which history is put and what we can learn from it. The paper will have two parts: 1. something you do (can be research paper, can be an art piece, music, editorial piece for a newspaper, etc.) that you will describe to the class/demonstrate in your presentation and 2. a paper that explains what you were trying to achieve and what thinking and research lay behind your choices. In general terms, this project involves thinking about how the historical past is used in contemporary situations, thus it could be something about the recent
Norwegian massacres, the situation in Sudan, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in which the Crusades themselves have been invoked specifically, or a situation in which you think ‘othering’ has been occurred that relies on assumptions about the past, and that can be in a negative or positive way. The paper should be between 10-12 pages.

**Evaluation in general:** I will be handing out grading rubrics before written and oral assignments are due so you get a clear idea of what is expected. But in general, what I look for is a sense that you are learning how to understand and evaluate what we are reading and discussing and that you are able to express your point of view with thought and as much clarity as you can muster! All written assignments should be typed and double-spaced, with at least ½ in. margins on all sides. All pages numbered! 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, please get in touch with me or Jake.

**Other Class Policies:**

**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 affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment." For further information, see the student Honor Code which you can access via Blackboard->Lookup/Directories->Honor Code. If you turn something in without pledging the honor code, I will wait to grade it until you do. There are many gray areas with plagiarism, especially in the age of digital browsing, and so 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**

* Some assignments might change during the course of the semester-think of the schedule as scaffolding rather than a brick house!
Part I. Construction of Self and Community

Week 1

Week 2
9/12 The Nature of the Beast: Individual Rights and Communal Identity
Amin Maalouf, On the Nature of Identity, Sections I-II (all), Section III, Chapters 2-4, Section IV, Chapters 2, 5 and the Epilogue (pp. 9-83, 95-109, 128-134, 151-164) Bb.
Georg Simmel, Strangers (1908)

Due: Reading response to Maalouf’s work. What is the problem of identity, for him, and what causes it? What does he propose to do to solve the problem? Do you agree with 1. his conception of the problem and 2. how to fix it? Why or why not? If you would like to comment on/incorporate Simmel (an early and brilliant sociologist), you may do so but are not obliged.

9/14 The Art of Othering. Class will meet in the lobby of the Allen Memorial Art Museum (AMAM)
Bb: Mark Cohen, Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages (2008) Chapter 2, 17-29, Chapters 6-7, 107-128. Who are Christians, Jews and Muslims? Cohen provides a good deal of background on the relationship between Judaism, Christianity and Islam, as well as the place of Jews (and other outsiders) in both Christian and Muslim societies in the Middle Ages. Although during class we will be talking about the images we’re seeing at the museum, rather than this reading, do bring your thoughts and questions about it to class the following week.

Due: Revised response (post discussion) on Maalouf.

Part II. The First Crusade

Week 3

9/21 Jews in the Rhineland-Martys or Survivors?
Chazan, In the Year 1096, chapters 3, 4, 6, pp. 52-103, 127-147. We will read some primary source accounts in class. Jen Starkey, one of our wonderful reference librarians, will join us to discuss finding secondary sources on line and in print, which you will need to do for your second paper.
**Special Lecture** 9/22 (Thursday) at 4:30 PM. Hallock Auditorium, Lewis Environmental Center. Robert Chazan’s talk is entitled “The First Crusade and Anti-Jewish Violence”.

Week 4
9/26 Christians and Infidels
*The Song of Roland* sections 1-193, 271-298; pp. 29-114, 145-156
*The Song of Roland* is an epic poem written about the time of the First Crusade (so late 11th or early 12th century) but about a battle in northern Spain during the 8th century that involved Charlemagne and his beloved nephew Roland.

**Due:** Reading response to *The Song of Roland*. The following questions might be jumping-off points: How does this author portray Charlemagne and his (various) men, and how does he describe their various Muslim foes? What are the attributes associated with each religion? And what surprised/impressed/horrified you about this account?

9/28 Muslims assess the damage

9/30 (Friday) **Due.** Either by email or in person, hand in the bibliographic reference for the 1-2 secondary sources you will be discussing with the class on Monday. That means author’s name, title of work, date of publication and where found (journal, internet medieval sourcebook, and its url, etc.).

Week 5 **Your perspective on the First Crusade**
10/3 **Due:** Discussion of your secondary source(s). Each of you will have 5-10 minutes and we will work in two groups.

10/4 **Due:** Turn in first draft (electronic please) by 4 PM

10/5 Peer review/discuss drafts

10/7 **Due:** Second draft by 3PM

**Part III Divisions from Within-Heresy**

Week 6
10/10 The Danger of Dissent—what’s the difference between rivals and dissenters? What does dissent do—strengthen group, creativity, allow freedom or cause...dissension?
from outside the discipline of history (anthropology and sociology) can be thought of as "good to think with". How might these readings help you understand the particular historical circumstances we’re discussing? The Bourdieu reading in particular is very dense/difficult-take your time with it and it will reward the effort.

10/12 Medieval Muslim and Jewish dissent in a longer perspective

Professor Jafar Mallahati (Religion Department) will be joining us for this session.

Week 7
10/17 Papal conviction and the creation of Christian heresy

We will begin preparation for our debate in class.

10/19 Did the Cathars really exist?
Pegg, A Most Holy War (2008), 141-191

Debate: the ‘fact’ of Christian heresy in the 12th-14th centuries. Did it really exist? How can we define heresy?

10/21 (Friday) *Extra Credit! 2-page write up of your post-debate thoughts.

Week 8 10/24-10/26 Fall Break No Classes!!

Part IV. Reconquest

Week 9
10/31 Love Conquers All
Geraldine Brooks, People of the Book
please come with some thoughts in mind for your final project-initial brainstorming session

Due: Reading response to Brooks

11/2 Convivencia or Careful Segregation?

Jen Starkey will meet with us and we will begin to discuss final projects
Week 10
11/7 And now...the Spanish Inquisition

11/9 Gender and Identity
Finish Melammed, chapters 5-6, 8, Conclusion, pp. 94-139, 150-174

Professor Margaret Boyle in Hispanic Studies will be joining us for this session.

Week 11
11/14 New Worlds, Old Conceptions
Bb. Patricia Seed, skim introduction and read “The Requirement: a protocol for conquest,” in Seeds of Possession, pp. 69-99; Bartolomé Las Casas, Thirty Very Juridical Propositions and Juan de Sepúlveda, Democrates Alter. These two held a famous debate in the mid 16th century on the nature of the native Americans and the necessity of Spanish conquest. Try and guess who won the debate.

Due: Reading response to Las Casas, Sepulveda and Seed. You may make it a little longer if you need to but try and think how they complement one another succinctly.

Part V: Modern Resonances

11/16 Bringing our history with us
Begin Anouar Majid, We are All Moors. Chapters 1-2, pp. 31-85

Week 12
11/21 Identity and Violence (encore, but different)
Finish Majid, Introduction, Chapter 4, Conclusion, pp. 1-29, 123-176.

Due: Works in Progress. We will discuss where you are on your final projects and any problems/debates you are having

11/23 NO CLASS

Week 13
11/28 Enlightenment Reimagining
Baron de Montesquieu, Persian Letters (selections)

11/30 Cosmopolitanism

Week 14
12/5-12/7 (5) Presentations of your final project

Week 15
12/12 (the rest) Presentations of your final project and end!

12/20 Due: Paper for your final project at 12PM