

History 101: Introduction to Medieval and Early Modern Europe
MWF 10:00-10:50AM; King 306

Professor Ellen Wurtzel
Office: Rice 307
Phone: 775-8528

Email: ewurtzel@oberlin.edu
Office Hours Mondays 11-12, Fridays 11-12:15 and
by appointment in between



Jan van Eyck, Arnolfini Wedding, 1434

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?

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 two movies shown outside of class time.

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)
Betty Radice, ed., *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise* (disputed but probably c. 1130s-40s)
Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron* (original c. 1352)
Thomas More, *Utopia* (original 1516)
Jerry Brotton, *The Renaissance: a very short introduction* (2006)

Recommended textbooks:

Lynn Hunt, et al., *The Making of the West*, 2nd concise edition, Volume I (2007)
Brian Tierney, *The Middle Ages, Volume I: Sources of Medieval History* (1999)

Requirements and Grading:

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Map Quiz | 5% |
| Two 5-page papers | 20% each; 40% total |
| Midterm | 25% |
| Final exam | 30% |

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 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. 9/16
2. Essays You will complete two essays, one 3-5 pp, the other 5pp, 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 9/23 and the second on 11/25, just before Thanksgiving.

Essays 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.

3. 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.

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 for class, 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*

9/4 What is medieval? How do we know, and what do we know?

9/6 When Rome fell...Bb. Peter Brown, "Virtutes Sanctorum: Deeds of Saints," in *The Rise of Western Christendom*, pp. 93-116

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

9/9 Living by The Rule: monastic life in the 9th-century Bb. Lynda Coon, “A Carolingian Aesthetic of Bricolage,” in *Dark Age Bodies* (2011), pp. 42-63; Benedict of Nursia, *Regula*, selections (skim for what is being regulated and how)

9/10 Movie Night! *The Lion in Winter* at 6PM

9/11 Lords and Vassals and oh, yes, peasants Bb. Richard Southern, “The Bonds of Society,” in *The Making of the Middle Ages*, pp. 74-80, 98-117; G. 27. Fulbert of Chartres, *Letter to William of Aquitaine* and 28. Hugh of Lusignan, *Agreement between Lord and Vassal*

*Don’t let me forget to give you the handout, *Background to the Investiture Conflict*

9/13 Clash of the Two Swords: the Investiture Conflict Bb. Harold Berman, *The Papal Revolution*; G. 40. Investiture Conflict (selections on background handout);

Week 3 *Europeans on the Move (into a world already shaped)*

9/16 Islamic Expansion and Encounters in the East (SCAN) Bb. Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair, *Islam* (2002), pp. 79-top 93; Robert Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages, 950-1350*, selections; **Map Quiz**

9/18 The Crusades I. Bb. Marcus Bull, “Origins,” in Jonathan Riley-Smith, ed. *The Oxford History of the Crusades* (2002); Peter Frankopan, “Go East, Young Knight,” in NYT, 2/12/12 http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/19/opinion/sunday/the-true-story-of-the-first-crusade.html?_r=0; G. 30. *Four Accounts of the First Crusade* 1. Fulcher of Chartres I-VI and (skim) 2. Account of Solomon Bar Simson ONLY

9/20 The Crusades II. G. 30. *Four Accounts of the First Crusade* (the rest of Fulcher and Ibn-al-Athir and Anna Comnena)

Week 4 *Urban, spiritual and intellectual growth*

9/23 City and Country **First paper due beginning of class. 3-5pp.**

9/25 12th-century Renaissance Guest Lecture by Grover Zinn, emeritus professor of religion, Oberlin College. **Please bring your Geary!!** Bb. Richard Southern, “Medieval Humanism,” pp. 144-155 (top). Peter Abelard, *History of My Calamities*, in Betty Radice, ed. *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, pp. 3-43

9/27 Gendering Knowledge *Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, letters 2-5, pp. 47-89; letter 115-116 between Heloise and Peter the Venerable, pp. 217-225. Bb. James Brundage, “Prostitution in the Medieval Canon Law,” pp. 79-99.

Movie Night! 4PM Sunday 9/28 *Vision: from the life of Hildegard of Bingen* (2009)

Week 5 *Religious Orthodoxy and Heresy; the height of papal power*

9/30 The Church, its critics and enemies Bb. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*, pp. 68-99; *Peter Waldo and the Waldensians*; Elizabeth Petroff, *Beguines*, selections

10/2 The papacy under Innocent III. G. 31. *Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council, 1215* (selections); **Please bring your Geary!!**

10/4 Justice Transformed Bb. James Given, "The Inquisitors of Languedoc and the Medieval Technology of Power," AHR (April 1989): 336-359; G. 37. Jacques Fournier, *Testimony of Béatrice de Planissoles* (1320)

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

10/7 England and Iberia Bb: Tierney, *The Development of Medieval Government*, pp. 380-384; 390-403; G. 58. *Las Siete Partidas*; G. 54. *Magna Carta* (selections)

10/9 France and Italy Bb: Tierney, *Medieval Government*, pp. 384-390; G. 47. Joinville, *Life of Saint Louis*, G. 38. Marsilius of Padua, *Defensor Pacis*, read up to Chapter XIII

10/11 Empire and the East Bb. Tierney, *Medieval Government*, pp. 375-380; G. 44 *The Golden Bull* (introduction and titles); John de Plano Carpini, *Voyage to the East*, selections

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

10/14 Scholasticism and the Legacy of Aristotle Bb. Ibn Rushd (Averroes), *On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy*; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*

10/16 Art and Architecture: Medieval or Modern? (come with midterm questions)

10/18 **Midterm Exam**

Week 8 10/21-10/25 **No Classes-Fall Recess**

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

Week 9 *14th Century: Crisis and Renewal*

10/28 Famine, Plague, and Ice Bb. *The Black Death* (selections); Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, Preface, Day I, Introduction, stories 1-6, 10; conclusion; Day II stories 5, 9

10/30 Creeping Tendrils of Doubt Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, Day III story 4, 7, 8, 10, Day IV introduction; Day V story 8, 10; Day VI complete; Day VIII stories 5, 7; Author's Epilogue. Jerry Brotton, *The Renaissance: a very short introduction*, Chapter 3, pp. 58-66 only

11/1 Was it class violence? Hundred Years' War and Peasant's Revolt. Bb. John Keegan, "Agincourt 1415," in *The Face of Battle*, 78-116; G. 49. Jean Froissart, *Chronicles*, read only "The Three Estates", "The Jacquerie", "The Last Days of Etienne Marcel".

Week 10 *Renaissance ideals*

11/4 The quest for human perfection. Brotton, *The Renaissance*, Introduction, pp. 1-18; Bb. Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier* (selections)

11/6 An age expressed through art? *MEET at the Allen Art Museum. Bb. Benevenuto Cellini, *Autobiography* excerpt. Brotton, *The Renaissance*, Chapter 1, pp. 19-37

11/8 Competing narratives. Bb. Joan Kelly, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" in Bridenthal, Koonz, Stuard, eds. *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*. G. 62. Gregorio Dati, *Diary*

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

11/11 New Monarchies and Threats to the East. Brotton, *The Renaissance*, Chapters 2 and 4, pp. 38-57, 79-97

11/13 Europe Looks West. Thomas More, *Utopia*, Book I

11/15 Discussion: Imagined worlds/Christian humanism- More, *Utopia*, Book II

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

11/18 Medieval or Renaissance Man. Brotton, Chapter 3, pp. 67-78; Bb. Martin Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian (1520)," in Hillerbrand, *The Protestant Reformation*

11/20 Wars of Religion. Bb. Barbara Diefendorf, *St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre*, pp. 1-24; Michel de Montaigne, *On Cannibals* (1580s)

11/22 Print Revolution: MEET in Special Collections. Mudd 4th floor

Week 13 *The Properties of Belief*

11/25 Political Revolt, Economic Decline, Religious Crises-oh my. **Second Paper due, 5 pp.**

11/27 Witches: fantasy and fear. Bb. Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze* (selections)

11/29 **Thanksgiving Break-No Class!**

Week 14 *Experimental Solutions*

12/2 Civility and the Scientific Revolution (ending the Middle Ages?). Bb. Galileo Galilei, *Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina* (1615); Steven Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution* (1996), pp. 15-37

12/4 Absolutism in theory and practice. Bb. "The Emergence of the European State System," in *The Western Experience*, pp. 580-588; Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (selections)

12/6 Political Liberty. Bb. *The Western Experience*, pp. 602-607. John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government* (selections). Play the Hobbes/Locke Game to win!

Week 15 *Conclusion*

12/9 The Future is bright. Bb. Immanuel Kant, *What is Enlightenment?* (1784)

12/11 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

Thursday, December 19 2-4 PM