

History 181

Europe Transformed: From Rome to the Renaissance

Prof. Cotts

Office: Maxey 211

Office Hours: Mon, Thus 1:30-3:00; Fr 10-10:50

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The title of the course serves to underscore what will be one of its recurring arguments:, that European civilization between 400 and 1400 CE repeatedly transformed itself. Different and sometimes irreconcilable traditions collided with each other periodically to re-shape and re-energize the cultural world of the west. Thus, while our popular culture tends to view the Middle Ages as easily identifiable and historically motionless (see, for example, the work of directors Mel Brooks and Quentin Tarantino), we will explore how the very notion of a distinct and monolithic “medieval period” cannot be taken for granted. We will begin by examining the traditions that shaped medieval civilization (especially the Christian, Classical and Germanic strands) and conclude with reflections on the ways historians divide historical time into (allegedly) manageable units. You will note competing methodologies in this course, as some aspects of the Middle Ages will be approached through a smattering of short (but engrossing) documents, while others will creep out from denser, longer sources and display the collision of different cultural forces. If, at the end of the course, you can identify and employ the different ways by which we can approach medieval civilizations, you have come a long way towards becoming not only a successful student, but also something of a historian yourself.

Required texts for purchase (available in the College Bookstore):

- Judith M. Bennett and C. Warren Hollister, *Medieval Europe: A Short History*, 10th ed. (McGraw-Hill) ISBN 0-07-295515-5
- Bernhard Scholz and Barbara Rogers, trans., *Carolingian Chronicles* (University of Michigan Press) ISBN 0-472-06186-0
- Christopher Dawson, ed., *Mission to Asia* (Medieval Academy/University of Toronto Press) ISBN 8-8020-6436-1
- Guibert of Nogent, *A Monk's Confession*, trans. Paul Archambault (Penn State University Press) ISBN 0271014822

In addition, many readings will be available through Penrose Library on electronic reserve

Course Requirements:

1. *Class attendance and participation.* You are expected to attend all class meetings and to participate vigorously, insightfully, and respectfully in class discussions. While attendance and participation represent 10% of the course grade, non-attendance is grounds for *failing the course*. If you have a legitimate reason for missing a meeting (defined as a medical or family emergency or an college-related extracurricular activity) please provide the appropriate documentation from the Dean of Students. If you feel uncomfortable speaking in class, please come chat with me about how we can create an encouraging environment in which you can share your ideas with your colleagues.
2. A midterm examination (15% of course grade) and a final examination (25%).

3. Two short (4-5 pages) papers, formatted according to the conventions found in the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition, written in response to questions provided by the instructor. Each paper will count for 25% of your course grade. Due dates for the papers are noted on the syllabus. Late papers will receive a grade penalty of a half-letter per day late. Extensions will be granted only in the case of documented medical or family emergency (please consult with the Office of the Dean of Students). *Please note that the press of other academic work is **NOT** considered appropriate grounds for an extension.*
4. In order to facilitate discussion (and as a mild incentive to read thoroughly and carefully), I may also periodically assign brief reaction papers. These pieces will consist of short (four to six sentences) responses to questions on specific readings. You should expect to share your responses in class with your colleagues, and your performance on these exercises will be factored into the evaluation of your class participation. Failure to complete these assignments will be considered grounds for failing the course.

Course schedule

WEEK ONE: Introduction

Tuesday, August 28: Nuts-and-bolts session; introduction to the course

30: The Roman Empire and the traditions of ancient Europe

Reading: Hollister, 1-16

Plotinus, "On Beauty," from *The Enneads* (e-reserve)

WEEK TWO: Conversion and the end of Rome

Monday, September 3: The conversion of the Empire (c. 300-550 CE)

Reading: Hollister, 16-29

The Gospel of John 1: 1-18 at:

<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john;&version=15;>

Pliny and the Emperor Trajan on the early Christians at:

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/pliny1.html>

Tertullian on Athens and Jerusalem at:

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/200Tertullian-pagan.html>

The Conversion of Constantine:

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/conv-const.html>

Jerome on classical learning:

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/jerome1.html>

4: The "Barbarian" migrations

Reading: Hollister, 30-49

Tacitus, selections from *Germania* at:

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/tacitus1.html>

6: Primary source discussion: Narrative and hagiography

Reading: Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*, Book I, Prologue, chapter 1; Book II, Prologue, chapters 27-43 (e-reserve)
The anonymous *Life of Clothild* from the collection *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages* (e-reserve)

WEEK THREE: Sibling cultures in the early Middle Ages (c. 590-750)

10: Culture and society in the early medieval West

Reading: Hollister, 50-67
Gregory the Great's letter to Augustine of Canterbury, from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (e-reserve)

11: Byzantium and the "Greek East"

Reading: Hollister, 68-81
St. John of Damascus, "In Defense of Icons," at:
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/johndam-icons.html>

13: The expansion of Islam

Reading: Hollister, 81-96
Sources on the Muslim arrival in Spain from *Medieval Iberia*, ed. Olivia Remie Constable (e-reserve)

WEEK FOUR: The Carolingian Synthesis (c. 750-850)

17: The coming of Charlemagne and why it matters

Reading: Hollister, 97-111
The Royal Frankish Annals, in *Carolingian Chronicles*, 37-82
The capitulary for Saxony at:
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/carol-saxony.html>

18: The Carolingian "Renaissance"

Reading: Hollister, 111-18
Royal Frankish Annals, 82-99
Hucbald, "In Praise of Bald Men" at:
<http://repositories.cdlib.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1176&context=cmrs/comitatus>

20: Discussion: Nithard and the dissolution of the Carolingian Empire

Reading: Nithard's *Histories*, in *Carolingian Chronicles*, 129-74
Hollister, 119-121.

WEEK FIVE: Cultural Options in the Central Middle Ages (c. 850-1050)

24 Norse civilization

Reading: *Hrafnkel's Saga* (e-reserve)
Hollister, 121-28

25 Political fragmentation and the problem of “feudalism”

Reading: Hollister, 128-147.

27 Discussion: Hroswit of Gandersheim and the “Ottonian Renaissance”

Reading: Hroswit of Gandersheim, *Dulcitius*, from the collection *Medieval Women Writers* (e-reserve)

*****Friday, September 28: First Paper Due*****

WEEK SIX: Piety and the Growth of the Papacy (c. 1000-1100)

Monday, October 1: The church and Monasticism

Reading: Joseph H. Lynch, “The Church in the Year 1000,” in *The Medieval Church: A Brief History* (e-reserve)
The Benedictine Rule at:
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/rul-benedict.html>

2 Church reform and investiture

Reading: Hollister, 240-46.
The “Papal Election Decree” of 1059 at:
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/papal-elect1059.html>
The “Dictatus Papae” at:
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/g7-dictpap.html>
The deposition of Henry IV at:
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/g7-ban1.html>
The deposition of Gregory VII (online—link TBA)

4 Discussion: St. Anselm and monastic thought

Reading: Anselm of Canterbury, selections from *Proslogion* at:
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/anselm.html>
Anselm, selected prayers (links TBA)

WEEK SEVEN:

8 NO CLASS

9 NO CLASS

11 Review Session/catch-up day

WEEK EIGHT: The First Crusade and the Crusader States (1095-c. 1140)

*****October 15: Midterm Examination*****

16 The First Crusade

Reading: Hollister, 215-35

Urban II's call for crusade (e-reserve)

Albert of Aachen on the Peasants' Crusade (e-reserve)

Solomon bar Samson on massacres of Jews (e-reserve)

Letter of Pope Paschal on Jerusalem (e-reserve)

Song of Abu l-Muzaffar al-Abiwardi on Jerusalem (e-reserve)

(all selections from *The Crusades: A Reader*)

18 Crusade or Colonization? The Latin states of the Levant

Reading: The laws of the Kingdom of Jerusalem (e-reserve)

Selections from the *Travels of Saewulf* (e-reserve)

Selections from the *Travels of Ibn-Jubayr* (e-reserve)

(all selections from *The Crusades: A Reader*)

WEEK NINE: Guibert of Nogent and "the Renaissance of the Twelfth Century"

22 The "Spiritual Awakening"

Reading: Hollister, 186-201, 207-12

A Monk's Confession, Book I

23 Intellectual revival

Reading: *A Monk's Confession*, Book II

25 Discussion: Self and society in the towns

Reading: Hollister, 156-85

A Monk's Confession, Book III

WEEK TEN: Administration and Centralization (1066-1216)

29 The development of the English monarchy

Reading: Hollister, 266-77

The Constitutions of Clarendon at:

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/ccclarendon.html>

The Assize of Clarendon at:

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/aclarendon.html>

30 Political problems on the Continent

Reading: Hollister, 240-54, 277-88

Frederick II's "Statute in Favor of Princes" at:

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/fred2-princes.html>

November 1 Discussion: The formation of a persecuting society?

Reading: John Boswell, "Making Enemies," from *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* (e-reserve)

Hollister, 206-06, 235-38, 254-259

Decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council (handout)

WEEK ELEVEN: The Gothic Synthesis (1215-1300)

5 Urbanization and the economic foundations of Gothic culture

Reading: Robert S. Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages, 950-1350*, 85-122 (e-reserve)

6 Thomas Aquinas and the scholastic movement

Reading: Hollister, 289-300, 307-19.

Selections from Aquinas at:

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/aquinas1.html>

8 Gothic architecture as a cultural form

Reading: Hollister, 300-307.

WEEK TWELVE: Europe in a wider world (1215-1300)

12 Excursus: can medievalists do comparative history?

Reading: Jerry Bentley, "Hemispheric Integration, 500-1500 CE," *Journal of World History* 9.2 (Fall, 1998): 237-54, available through the Proquest Research Library database at

<http://www.whitman.edu/penrose/sources/>

13 Cultural encounters of the Gothic age

Reading: *Mission to Asia*, 79-156

15 Discussion: the journey of William Rubrock

Reading: *Mission to Asia*, 156-220

*****THANKSGIVING BREAK*****

WEEK THIRTEEN: Crisis and Re-organization in the Fourteenth Century

26 Cracks in the synthesis: The decline of the papacy

Reading: Hollister, 260-64, 336--44

Clericis laicos at:

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/b8-clericos.html>

Unam sanctam at:

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/b8-unam.html>

27 Demographic catastrophe and the social response

Reading: Hollister, 321-35

Selections on the Black Death from the collection *The Black Death: The Great Mortality of 1348-1350* (e-reserve)

29 War and state building

Reading: Hollister, 346-65

Joan of Arc's letter to the king at:

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/joanofarc.html>

*****Friday, November 30: Second Paper Due*****

WEEK FOURTEEN: The problem of the "Renaissance"

December 3 The traditional narrative of change

Reading: Hollister, 366-83

4 Defining the Renaissance

Reading: Joan Kelly, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" (e-reserve)

Thomas Brady, et. al, "Introduction" to *Handbook of European History* (e-reserve)

6 Summary and Review

*****Final Examination: Thursday, December 13 at 2:00pm*****