Byzantium was the state and civilization that evolved from the Roman order in the Balkan peninsula and Asia Minor, its capital and cultural center being Constantinople (modern Istanbul). Byzantium's long history may be divided into three broad periods: (1) "Late Antiquity," from the later third through the middle seventh centuries (A.D.); (2) the "Middle Byzantine Period," from the middle seventh century to 1204; and (3) "The Late Byzantine Period," from 1204 through 1453, when Constantinople was conquered by the Ottoman sultan Mehemed II "The Conqueror."

In this semester length course, 510:207, we will explore the fate of Byzantium from the eve of the Fourth Crusade (ca. 1204) through the 1460s -- that is, the entire "Late Period." Throughout these last centuries, Byzantium's political and military fortunes were increasingly determined by foreigners -- west Europeans on the one hand, and Turkic peoples on the other. Thus, an important theme of the course will be Byzantium's relationship with neighbors to the west and east, especially the Ottomans -- who eventually succeeded to the legacy of Byzantium in the Balkans and East Mediterranean. A second key theme we will explore is Byzantium's ultimate failure to sustain itself as a viable state in the face of these pressures, and how such failures impacted on cultural and intellectual developments -- which in some spheres were extremely remarkable. A third major theme we will consider is the nature of the Byzantine legacy, including its impact on the cultures of southeastern Europe and the Ottoman successor state.

Typically students are required to purchase the following books:
- Relevant primary sources (Byzantine, Balkan, Western, Ottoman) delivered online.

Grades are based on three in-class examinations, and a short project paper.