A frontier is always a creative center, volatile, dangerous, ruthless. It is always transient and transgressive. Between *ca* 400 and 1300 C. E., the area called “Germany” was a frontier moving in two directions. It traveled south, into Italy, seeking to conquer something old: that is, to recover the power of the Roman Empire. It campaigned east, deeper and deeper into central and eastern Europe, to the borders of Russia, seeking to conquer something new: that is, in a crusade to subject non-Christian peoples to the dominance, including the religion, of western Europe.

This course sketches out the contours of “Germany” as a frontier where European civilization was created and constantly reshaped for roughly a thousand years. “Germany” was one of a number of frontiers, but it was the longest of them in time and space. We shall be concerned with the moving frontier called “Germany” and also with what happened to areas after they were settled—generally through conquest, colonization, and more or less forced re-acculturation—and ceased to be frontier territories. Readings and lectures are designed to provide social and political framework. Discussions and written exercises let people at the creative center, including women, speak for themselves.

Weekly written assignments and a paper on one medieval historical text assigned for this course will be required. In line with SAS *desiderata* the objectives of this course are: (1) to understand the development of Germany in a pattern that did not lead to centralized monarchy (as in England and France), (2) to examine critically the ideals read into history by medieval writers, (3) to communicate complex ideas effectively in standard written English.