Harvest of the Middle Ages
Medieval Civilization
Department of History
Rutgers University
510:211:01/667:282:01
Frelinghuysen A2: Tuesday: 9:50-12:50

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Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00-2:00
Thursday: 1:00-2:00

Course Description –

Harvest of the Middle Ages hopes to provide students with an understanding of the key aspects of the history of Europe from the time of the First Crusade to the beginnings of the Renaissance. The High Middle Ages saw the development of such institutions as the medieval university and the construction of the great Gothic cathedrals. The rise of market economies the development of the centralized nation-states were threatened by the spread of the Black Death and a series of peasant revolts. The term “Harvest” of the Middle Ages suggests that special attention will be paid to the late medieval crises that signaled the shift to the Renaissance.

Required Texts –

Maurice Keen, The Pelican Medieval History of Europe (Penguin)
Judith Bennet, C. Warren Hollister, Medieval Europe: A Short History (McGraw Hill)
Carlo Ginzburg, The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller (Penguin)
Jean Froissart, Chronicles (Penguin)

All texts have been ordered through the Rutgers University BookStore.

Assignments –

Grades will be assigned on the basis of one mid-term examination (25%), one final examination (35%), one analytic book review (30%), and participation/preparation (10%). The midterm and final examinations will test your knowledge of both lecture material and assigned readings from the texts. They will be divided into two sections. The first section (Identifications) will require you to identify and describe the historical
significance of a selection of people, places, or concepts. This section is designed to test
the level of detailed knowledge you have acquired in the course. The second part of the
examination (Essay) will require you to answer essay questions that deal with a general
theme in the course. In answering such a question, you should be able to display
independent, analytic thought about broad historical developments in the period covered
by the course. You should also be able to integrate material from lectures and assigned
readings and develop a consistent argument that addresses the issues raised in the essay
question.

The analytic book review is designed to allow you to analyze historical arguments in a
systematic fashion. This will require a critical perspective of the book you are reading
that focuses both on the strengths and weaknesses of the text, Carlo Ginzburg’s, *The
Cheese and Worms* and various historiographical interpretations of the book. More
detailed descriptions of the analytic book review assignment will be provided.

**Class Meetings-**

I will provide a class outline for each of our meetings that contains a variety of
information to help you assimilate the lecture and readings for that day. These outlines as
well as the power points and primary source documents will also be posted to the class
Sakai site. Class discussion is an essential part of the course, and will focus on
broadening and clarifying your understanding of the various themes of medieval history
that we will discuss. In the listing of readings below, I have provided chapter names
rather than page numbers because there are numerous editions of the texts that we are
using available both on-line and through various booksellers. If the title of the chapter
doesn’t seem to match your text, please let me know and I will clarify the reading
assignment.

**Attendance-**

Because of the unique nature of the course schedule, regular and punctual attendance is
required. Missing more than one class will result in the loss of credit towards your final
grade. Exceptions will be made only for extended medical or personal problems that can
be satisfactorily documented. Therefore, students are expected to attend all classes; if you
expect to miss one or two classes please use the University absence reporting website:
https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/ to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email
will automatically be sent to me.
Schedule of Lectures and Required Reading

January 17
An Introduction to Medieval society.

January 24-
The Rise of the new Religious Orders & the Crisis of the Church
Reading: Hollister and Bennett (Chapter 9) New Paths to God;
Keen(Chapter 7) New Movements in Thought and Letters.
Froissart, “Papal Affairs and the Great Schism,” “The Great Schism.”

January 31-
The Growth of Towns and Trade in the High Middle Ages
Reading: Hollister and Bennett (Chapter 7), Economic Takeoff and Social Change;
Keen (Chapter 6), The Expansion of Europe .

February 7-
The Rise of the Gothic
Reading: Hollister and Bennett (Chapter 12), Literature, Art and Thought.

February 14-
High and Low Culture: Palio and Carnival in Medieval Europe
Reading: Peter Burke, “The World of Carnival” (on Sakai)
Dundes and Falessi, “La Terra in Piazza” (on Sakai)

February 21-
Medieval Love and Medieval Marriage
Reading: Marauder, “The Enduring Popularity of Courtly Love” (on Sakai)
Ackerman, “The Heart’s Rebellion” (on Sakai)

February 28-
Midterm Examination

March 7 -
The Black Death and Medieval Conceptions of Disease.
Reading: Hollister (Chapter 14) Famine, Plague, and Recovery.
Froissart, “Black Death, Flagellants and Jews.”

March 14-
Spring Break

March 21-
Popular Rebellions and Peasant Revolts
Reading: Keen (Chapter 18) Politics and Political Society in an Age of Wars;
March 28- Heresy and the Medieval Inquisition
   – Analytical Book Review due: Carlos Ginzburg’s *The Cheese and the Worms*.

April 4- Film: *The Return of Martin Guerre* (1982) dir. Daniel Vigne

April 11- The Political Development of England and France
   Reading: Hollister (Chapter 12) *States in the Making*;
   (Chapter 14) *Towards the Sovereign State*
   Froissart, “Preliminaries of the Hundred Years War,”

April 18- The Hundred Years’ War and the Transformation of Medieval Warfare
   Reading: Keen (Chapter 17) *The Hundred Years’ War*;

April 25 - Intimations of the Renaissance
   Reading: Hollister (Chapter 16) Diversity and Dynamism in Late Medieval Culture; Keen (Chapter 21) *The Break with Traditional Attitudes*.

**Final Examination**