

Medieval Italy
Rutgers University
Department of History
510:351(01)
Tuesday/Thursday 2:50-4:10
Murray Hall 208

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Van Dyck 001

Office Hours: Monday 11:30-12:30

Thursday 11:30-12:30

Course Description –

This course will cover the history of the Italian peninsula from the late Roman Empire to the beginnings of the Renaissance. The history of medieval Italy spans a varied and multi-ethnic trajectory following the decline of the western Roman Empire. Special attention will be paid to developing an understanding of the unique transformations of Italian society that occurred during these centuries. The geographic determinants, the religious components, and the flowering of art and literature will be examined. The course will also concentrate on the contributions of several celebrated individuals to medieval and Renaissance Italian history. These will include a focus on Dante, Petrarch, Machiavelli, and St. Francis of Assisi.

Required Texts –

David Abulafia, *Italy in the Central Middle Ages* (Oxford University Press)

Chris Wickham. *Early Medieval Italy* (University of Michigan Press)

Gene Brucker, (ed.), *Two Memoirs of Renaissance Florence* (Waveland Press)

Andre Vauchez, *Francis of Assisi: The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint*

All books have been ordered through the Rutgers College Barnes and Noble bookstore and New Jersey Books.

Course requirements, assignments, and grading:

This course has been approved for inclusion in the SAS Core Curriculum for meeting the WCR (writing with revision) and the WCD (writing in the discipline) goals. In fulfilling these goals, students will focus on reviewing and editing a finished historical analysis.

Grades will be assigned on the basis of one mid-term examination (20%), one final examination (30%), one analytic book review (30%), one short analytic paper (10%) and classroom 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 covered 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, Andre Vauchez, *Francis of Assisi: The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint*, and various historiographical interpretations of the book. This will require a critical perspective of the primary sources you are reading that will help you analyze the complexities of the arguments raised by Franciscan historians. More detailed descriptions of both the analytic book review assignment and the short paper will be provided in class.

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.

Attendance-

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 Key Readings:

January 19: Introduction and Geography “The Many Italies of the Middle Ages”

January 21: The Late Roman World and Roman Legacy

Wickham, *The Roman Legacy*

January 26: Christianity and the Late Roman Empire

St. Ambrose of Milan, *letters*

Julian the Apostate, *Against the Galilaeans* (on Sakai)

Momigliano, “Christianity and the Decline of the Roman Empire.” (on Sakai)

January 28: Invasions and Ethnic Identities

Wickham, *The Kingdom of Italy 568-875*

Wickham, *Romans, Lombards, Franks, and Byzantines*

February 2: The Rise of the Western Papacy

Gregory the Great, *Pastoral Rule* (on Sakai)

Gregory the Great, *Letters* (on Sakai)

Bede, *A History of the English Church and People* (on Sakai)

February 4: Benedict of Nursia

Gregory the Great, *The Life and Miracles of St. Benedict* (on Sakai)

The Rule of St. Benedict

February 9: The Mixed Political and Ethnic Heritage of Southern Italy

Abulafia, *Law and Monarchy in the South*

February 11: Communes, Signori, Casati, e Grandi

Abulafia, *Cities and Communes*

Abulafia, *The Rise of the Signory*

February 16: Medieval Italian Exchange: Commercial and Cultural

Abulafia, *Trade and Navigation*

February 18: Siena and its Signory
di Battista, *The Political Exigencies of the Merchant Class* (on Sakai)

February 23: Art and Architecture in Medieval Italy
Selections from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art
Hart, "Italy and Italian Art" (on Sakai)

February 25: **Midterm Examination**

March 1: City and Countryside
Wickham, *Cities and the Countryside*
Bartolus, *On Guelfs and Ghibellines* (on Sakai)

March 3: Rome: a Biography of a City
Rowland, *The Crass, Beautiful, and Eternal City* (on Sakai)

March 8: From the Investiture Crisis to the Babylonian Captivity
Selected letters of Gregory VII and Henry IV
Miller, *Power and the Holy in the Age of Investiture* (on Sakai)

March 10: Emperor Frederick II and the Hohenstaufen Legacy
Abulafia, excerpt from *Frederick II: a Medieval Emperor* (on Sakai)

March 15/17: Spring Break

March 22: Knowledge, Power and Class Warfare / Greeks, Muslims, and Jews in Italy
Abulafia, *Language and Culture*
Abulafia, *The Italian Other*

March 24 (25): Field trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Tentative)

March 29: Paper Review Editing Session

March 31: *Il Poverello*: Francis of Assisi
St. Bonaventure, *The Life of St. Francis*
Thomas of Celano, *St. Francis of Assisi*

- Final Draft of analytic book review due on Andre Vauchez, *Francis of Assisi: The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint*.

April 5: film, Roberto Rossellini, *The Flowers of St. Francis* (1950),

April 7: Marco Polo, Prester John and the Challenge of the Silk Road
Marco Polo, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo* (on Sakai)
Edwards, *Wonders and Whoppers*

April 12: Dante's Politics and Language
Selection from *De Monarchia* (on Sakai)
De Vulgari Eloquenti (on Sakai)

April 14: Dante's *Divine Comedy*
Dante, Inferno, Canto V, Canto VI, Canto XIX (on Sakai)

April 19: Italy and the Black Death
Boccaccio, introduction to *The Decameron* (on Sakai)
Cohn, *The Black Death, the End of a Paradigm* (on Sakai)

April 21: Petrarch, Boccaccio and the Italian Literary Tradition
Selections from Petrarch's letters (on Sakai)
Excerpts from *The Decameron* (on Sakai)
Greenblatt, *The Naughty Pleasures of Boccaccio* (on Sakai)

April 26: The Society of Renaissance Florence
Gene Brucker, *Renaissance Florence, "Politics"* (on Sakai)
Gene Brucker, ed., *Two Memoirs of Renaissance Florence*

April 28: Machiavelli
Selections from *Discourses* and *The Prince* (on Sakai)

Final Examination