

COURSE SYLLABUS  
History 201  
**Medieval Europe**  
Fall 2013

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History 201 is an introduction to the history of medieval Europe. In English, as in most languages, “history” can mean either the past itself or the study of the past. In this course, we will consider both what happened in the past and how it is possible for us to know what happened.

Three books are required for the course. The first is a textbook, but is unlike a traditional textbook in that it is one distinguished medievalist’s attempt to synthesize a lifetime of studying the period, and does not attempt to deal comprehensively with every subject. The second is one of the greatest extended essays ever written on the elements that, when forged together, became medieval European civilization. The third is a collection of documents written by medieval people. Here is the list:

Morris Bishop, The Middle Ages, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, [1968], 2001.

R. W. Southern, The Making of the Middle Ages, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1953.

James Bruce Ross and Mary Martin McLaughlin, eds., The Portable Medieval Reader, Viking Press, New York, 1949.

From time to time during the semester additional readings may be assigned. These will usually be in the form of handouts or directions to internet sites where the reading can be found. These assignments will be announced in advance in class.

Because understanding historical events frequently requires an understanding of the geographical setting in which they took place, you will also occasionally be provided with maps. Of necessity, the maps that are handed out will be photocopied and relatively small. You may find that having your own historical atlas is a useful study aid. The best is probably William R. Shepherd, Shepherd’s Historical Atlas, 9<sup>th</sup> revised edition, Barnes and Noble Imports, 1980—but it is very expensive. You can, however, always consult the copies in the reference section of Mugar Library.

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The history of medieval Europe is a huge field, comprising a millennium or more. In one semester, we will necessarily be moving very fast and touching only selected topics. To learn more about any topic, your most important resource is Mugar Memorial Library, the University's research library. Visit it often. The staff there, especially in the Reference Department, are extremely knowledgeable and are trained to help you find the books and articles that you need. Rely on them. I am also always glad to provide suggestions for further reading: don't hesitate to ask.

The Internet can be a helpful servant, but is a bad master. In the discipline of history, unlike in some scientific disciplines, it is not customary for new scholarship to be posted to the Web. Nor are most of the significant articles, monographs and books of earlier generations routinely available online. Finally, most of what is on the Web is unedited: it has not been reviewed for accuracy or cogency. Beware. When in doubt, go to the library.

Writing is an integral component of studying history. As a student in HI 201, you will be required to write a research paper of about 10 pages in length. In preparing this paper, you will be expected not only to analyze primary sources, but you will also be asked to support your argument with secondary source material. For both of these, you will need to use Mugar Library. The work you produce should be your own both in thought and expression, and should also demonstrate proper use of the English language, including correct grammar and punctuation, as well as proper format and citation. More information regarding your paper assignment will be provided for you in class.

Each student will also be asked to choose one of the documents (or a small group of documents) in The Portable Medieval Reader and make a brief in-class presentation about it: you will summarize what if anything is known about the author, what the author's purpose was in writing the document, and what can be learned, either directly or by inference, about the author and his times by a careful reading and a thoughtful questioning of the document. This is what real historians do, and the purpose of the exercise is to give you practice in thinking like a historian.

There will be two examinations in this course, a mid-term and the final. The examinations will include essay questions that will give you the opportunity to demonstrate your ability to think historically, but there will also be questions that will test your knowledge of historical fact. There may also be short quizzes from time to time; these will be factored into the class participation portion of your final grade.

*Honesty is essential in academic life.* Plagiarism and other forms of cheating destroy the foundations on which scholarship is built. Submitting work that is not your own is plagiarism, and is not acceptable. It will result in your receiving an F for the paper or the exam and probably for the course itself. It will also be referred to the Academic Conduct Committee for their consideration, and for possible further action. You should study carefully the Academic Conduct Code and adhere to it precisely. If you have any question about what

constitutes plagiarism, or about the standards of academic honesty, please speak to the instructor. As a quick reference, The Boston University Academic Conduct Code describes plagiarism as:

“Representing the work of another as one’s own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following: copying the answers of another student on an examination, copying or restating the work or ideas of another person or persons in any oral or written work (printed or electronic) without citing the appropriate source, and collaborating with someone else in an academic endeavor without acknowledging his or her contribution. Plagiarism can consist of acts of commission-appropriating the words or ideas of another-or omission failing to acknowledge/document/credit the source or creator of words or ideas (see below for a detailed definition of plagiarism). It also includes colluding with someone else in an academic endeavor without acknowledging his or her contribution, using audio or video footage that comes from another source (including work done by another student) without permission and acknowledgement of that source.” A more detailed discussion with examples appears in the code. It is your responsibility to read these pages carefully and know exactly what constitutes plagiarism.

<http://www.bu.edu/academics/academic-conduct-code/>

A recent phenomenon is the availability for purchase of “class notes” that are prepared and sold by outside companies. Learning to take accurate and comprehensive notes on lectures and class discussions is one of the important skills you are meant to acquire in college. Enrolled students do not have the instructor’s permission to take notes for anyone but themselves, nor do they have permission to make their notes available for sale. Selling or buying of class notes is not permitted in HI 201, and violations of that rule will be treated as plagiarism.

Class attendance is required, and attendance will be taken. You are expected to arrive on time, to have read the assigned readings before the lecture and section meetings, and to bring with you the books that will be discussed.

Your final grade will be determined by the instructor. I will use the following approximate weights for the various components of the course: the research paper will count for about 25%, as will the mid-term exam; the final exam will count for about 30%; your in-class presentation, which is described above and will be further discussed in class, will count for about 10%, as will class participation (which includes, but is not limited to, attendance). Please understand that grading is an exercise in judgment. It is my goal to assign a grade that fairly and accurately reflects the quality of the work you do in this course. That is why I stress that the weights given to the various tasks are only approximations. I retain, and will use, the right to assign grades based on my best judgment, and taking into account all relevant factors.

I have regular office hours, which are listed at the beginning of this syllabus, and I am eager to see students to answer questions, to discuss the subject matter of the course, and to offer advice about intellectual, academic or career issues. Please make it a point to come to

see me if I can be helpful. If for any reason it is difficult for you to visit me during my posted office hours, I am glad to arrange to see you at a mutually convenient time.

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The reading assignments are listed below. They aim to track the class lectures and discussions to the extent possible. But achieving a perfect match between each class and a reading assignment would result in a choppy series of assignments of wildly varying lengths, so that has not been attempted here. Most of the time the class lectures will be about material that has already been assigned, but occasionally it will be necessary for the lecture to anticipate material that will be read later. In general, it is always best to read ahead. You will also see that some of the later readings are not yet assigned. This permits the assignments to be adjusted to the needs of the course as it develops. These assignments will be announced in class, well in advance of when they are due. It is also possible that, as the course proceeds, it may be necessary to adjust to some extent the assignments that are listed here. If any such changes are made, they will also be announced well in advance. Please note that the assignments from The Portable Medieval Reader will be made in class, so that you can (to the extent possible) choose the documents on which you will be reporting.)

Wednesday, September 4 and Friday, September 6— Introduction to the course

September 9, 11, 13 — The Fall of the Roman Empire in the West

Reading: Bishop, chapter 1, pp. 7-21

September 16, 18, 20 — The Barbarian Kingdoms

Reading: Bishop, chapter 1, pp. 21-39; chapter 2 (all)

September 23, 25, 27 — The Rise of Islam

Reading: Bishop, chapter 3; Southern, chapter 1

September 30, October 2, 4—Feudalism

Reading: Bishop, chapter 4 and chapter 7

October 7, October 9, October 11— Feudalism (continued)

Reading: Southern, chapter 2

Church and State

Reading: Southern, chapter 3

Monday, October 14 Holiday, Class held Tuesday, October 15

Tuesday, October 15, October 16, October 18— Church and State (continued)

Reading: Bishop, chapter 5

Week of October 21— Lecture topics: Mid-term review

**Midterm Exam—Friday, October 25**

October 28, October 30, November 1— The Crusades  
Reading: TBA

November 4, 6, 8— The Medieval Economy  
Reading: Bishop, chapter 6

November 11, 13, 15— The Medieval Economy (continued)  
Reading: TBA

November 18, 20, 22 — Medieval Thought  
Reading: Southern, chapter 4

**Research paper due: Monday, November 25**

**Thanksgiving Break**

December 2, 4, 6 — Medieval Thought (continued)  
Reading: Bishop, chapter 8

December 9, 11 — Crisis and Change  
Reading: Bishop, chapter 10  
Course Review

Wednesday, December 18— **12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Final Exam 143 BSR, Room 106**