

## COURSE SYLLABUS

History 264

**Feudal France**

Fall 2014

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History 264 is an introduction to the history of that part of northwestern Europe that became France during the thousand years between the fifth and fifteenth centuries. 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.

The history of medieval France has its own intrinsic interest, but it also raises some of the most important and controversial questions in the study of history. These include questions about the validity of broad historical categories such as "the Middle Ages" and "Feudalism;" the advantages and disadvantages of focusing historical investigations around the nation-state (especially in eras in which the nation-state did not exist or was only embryonic); and the perennial problem of how confident we can be of our understanding of historical periods where evidence is scarce, scattered and sporadic. History 264 will touch on these questions and others.

Only one book is required for the course. It is an excellent work of synthesis written by one of the most distinguished French medievalists of our time, and is well worth owning and reading. Unfortunately, it is very expensive. Fortunately, it is widely available used from several online sources--including Amazon.com and bookfinder.com--at much more reasonable prices. I recommend that you purchase a used copy.

Georges Duby, France in the Middle Ages, 987 - 1460, Blackwell, 1991.  
ISBN 0-631-18945-9

There will be many other reading assignments in the course, but they will be either from online sources or in the form of handouts.

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. There are also other good atlases available for purchase.

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The history of Feudal France is a field which has produced a huge and still-proliferating literature. 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 264, 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.

There will be two examinations in this course, a mid-term and a final. The examinations will stress 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 264, 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, 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 30%, as will the final exam. The midterm exam will count for about 25%, and your in-class participation (which includes, but is not limited to, attendance) will count for 15%. 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, 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 in advance.

Wednesday, September 3 —Introduction to the course

Reading: none

Friday, September 5 —Lecture topic: The Roman Background

Reading: Handouts

Week of September 8, 10, 12 —Lecture topics: Clovis and the Kingdom of the Franks

Reading: Handouts

Week of September 15, 17, 19 —Lecture topics: The Long-Haired Kings and the Mayors of the Palace

Reading: Handouts

Week of September 22, 24, 26 —Lecture topics: Charlemagne and His Empire

Reading: Handouts and Einhard, Life of Charlemagne, at the Internet History

Sourcebook: <<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/einhard.asp>>

Week of September 29, October 1, 3 —Lecture topics: The Breakup: Dynastic Disarray and the Fury of the Northmen

Reading: Handouts

Week of October 6, 8, 10 —Lecture topics: Feudalism

Reading: Handouts

**Monday, October 13 Holiday. Class held Tuesday, October 14**

Tuesday, October 14, Wednesday, October 15, Friday, October 17 — Lecture topics:

"France" and "Germany;" The Coming of the Capetians

Reading: Duby, Foreword and Chapters 1, 2 and 3

Week of October 20 —Lecture topics: Mid-term review

**Mid-term Exam—Friday, October 24**

Week of October 27, 29, 31 —Lecture topics: Technology, Cluny and the Beginnings of Recovery

Reading: Duby, Chapters 4, 5 and 6

Week of November 3, 5, 7 —Lecture topics: Takeoff: The Rise of the Capetian Monarchy

Reading: Duby, Chapters 7 and 8

Week of November 10, 12, 14—Lecture topics: High Summer: Learning, Architecture, Art

Reading: Handouts and Duby, Chapters 9, 10 and 11

Week of November 17, 19, 21—Lecture topics: The Gathering Storm

Reading: Duby, Chapter 12 and 13

Monday, November 24—Lecture topics: A Sea of Troubles

Reading: Duby, Chapter 14

### **Thanksgiving Break**

Week of December 1, 3, 5—Lecture topics: Crisis and Recovery

Reading: Duby, Chapter 15

**Paper due: Friday, December 5**

Monday, December 8, Wednesday, December 10—Instruction Ends

—Lecture topics: The "Duby Thesis;" Course Review

**Final Exam –Monday, December 15 12:00-2:00pm KCB 102**