

**CAS RN 410/ HI 410/ GRS RN 710/ STH TX 871**  
**Religion, Community, and Culture in Medieval Spain**

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Catedral de Santa María, Burgos



Mezquita de Córdoba



Sinagoga de Santa María la Blanca,  
Toledo

**Course Description:**

In this course, we will explore interactions between Muslims, Christians, and Jews in medieval Europe's most religiously diverse region - from the establishment of an Islamic al-Andalus in 711 CE through the final Christian "reconquest" of the peninsula and expulsion of the Jews in 1492 and expulsion of the Moriscos (Muslims forcibly converted to Christianity) in 1609. Themes include religion and communal identities, the complexities of cultural engagement in pluralistic environments, and toleration and its limits. You can expect to gain an understanding of current scholarship in the field, to develop familiarity with primary sources and methods for interpreting them, and to engage both of these things in the construction of a substantive research paper (for undergraduates) or scholarly review essay (for graduate students).

**Course Requirements:**

Students are expected to attend and participate in every class. If you know that you will miss class because you are sick or are away from school for an emergency, please try to let me know ahead of time, if possible, via phone or [e-mail](#). More than two unexcused absences during the semester may result in a lower overall grade in addition to an unsatisfactory class participation grade. Graded work for the seminar will include class participation (20%); weekly reading response papers (30%), preparing and leading discussion one week (10%), and a final research

paper (40%). Class participation will be based on attendance; your preparation and the quality of your engagement with the material each week; a reasonable balance of speaking/listening/collaborative communication; communication with me outside of class during office hours or via email; and your general involvement in the seminar.

Note: You have the right to be excused from class for the observance of religious holidays. However, it is your responsibility to notify faculty ahead of time and to arrange to make up any work you might miss. If you plan to miss class for this reason, please let me know at the beginning of the semester.

**Expectations of Integrity:** All students should familiarize themselves with the Boston University [Academic Conduct Code](#) or [College of Arts and Sciences Graduate Academic Conduct Code](#) as appropriate and adhere to it.

**Students with Disabilities:** Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact [Disability Services](#) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations. If you suspect that you may have an undiagnosed disability that is interfering with your success in your coursework, consider making an appointment with Disability Services to learn about your options. You should also feel free to come see me and I will help direct you to the appropriate resources at BU.

**Required Books:**

- Brian Catlos *Kingdoms of Faith: A New History of Islamic Spain* (Basic Books, 2018), ISBN: 978-0465093168
- Olivia R. Constable ed., *Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources*, 2nd Edition (U Penn Press, 2011), ISBN: 9780812221688
- Maribel Fierro, *'Abd al-Rahman III: The First Cordoban Caliph* (One World Publications, 2007 for paperback edition), ISBN: 978-1851685097
- Burton Raffel, trans. *Song of the Cid*, (Penguin Classics, 2009), ISBN: 9780143105657

**Copies of required books will be held on 24 hour reserve in Mugar Library.**

**Other Readings:**

A number of readings are available on the [Blackboard Learn site](#) or through links embedded into this syllabus. **Please bring all readings to class each week.** You may either print out electronic readings or bring a laptop or other device to class.

**Assignments:**

**Discussion Leading:** There will be a [sign up sheet](#) on Google for discussion leading. Take a look and choose a week that works for you in terms of topic, schedule, or both. If every week is taken by the time you sign up, then contact me and we will choose an appropriate week to add a second leader. By 11:59 PM Tuesday night of the week you are scheduled, you should post a brief entry to the Blackboard Learn Blog highlighting some of your thoughts on the document(s), book, or article on which you'll be leading discussion, including several questions

for classmates to ponder. In class, you will give a presentation of around 10 minutes and will be given the opportunity to manage discussion. Feel free to contribute graphics, time-lines, etc.

**Reading Responses:** Students will be asked to write weekly two-page (double-spaced) response papers, due by 11:59 on Wednesday. Students may opt out of this assignment any three weeks of the semester (i.e., you will write ten responses over the course of the semester). Each response will be worth a possible 10 points for a total of 100 points over the course of the semester.

**Final Paper:** Students will write a final research paper on a topic of their own choosing. Undergraduate papers should be 12 pages long, graduate papers should be 15-20 pages long. Guidelines may be found on the Blackboard assignment page.

### **Schedule:**

#### **Sep 6 What is at Stake: Contemporary Politics and the Idea of Religious Pluralism in Medieval Spain**

Maria Rosa Menocal, *Ornament of the World*, pp. 3-50;266-283 [Blackboard]

#### **Sep 13 Christian Visigothic Spain and Its Jewish Minority**

Bernard Reilly, *Medieval Spains*, 17-50 [Blackboard]; Olivia Remie Constable, *Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources*, 2nd ed., 3-29; Rachel L. Stocking, "Early Medieval Christian Identity and Anti-Judaism: The Case of the Visigothic Kingdom," *Religion Compass* 2:4 (2008) 34 [Blackboard]

**Additional Graduate Reading:** Rachel L. Stocking, "Review article: Continuity, Culture and the State in Late Antique and Early Medieval Iberia," *Early Medieval Europe* 15:3 (2007) 34 [Blackboard].

#### **Sep 20 Muslim Arrival and the Establishment of al-Andalus**

Catlos, *Kingdoms of Faith*, 1-72; Constable, *Medieval Iberia*, 31-66; Jessica Coope, *The Martyrs of Córdoba: Community and Family Conflict in an Age of Mass Conversion* (Lincoln, NB, 1995), xv-xvii, 1-34 [Blackboard]; Janina Safran, "Identity and Differentiation in Ninth-Century al-Andalus," *Speculum* 76 (2001) [Blackboard] [Chronica Prophetica](#), trans. Kenneth Baxter Wolf

**Additional Graduate Reading:** Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain* (Cambridge, 1988) [[Library of Iberian Sources Online](#)]

#### **Sep 27 The Umayyad Caliphate**

Catlos, *Kingdoms of Faith*, 129-208; Constable, *Medieval Iberia*, 75-100; Maribel Fierro, 'Abd al-Rahman III: The First Cordoban Caliph, pp. 53-end; Abraham ibn Daud, "The Succession of the Rabbinite," *Book of Tradition*, Gershon Cohen, ed., trans., 63-67 [Blackboard]; *Andalus: Moorish Songs of Love and Wine*, trans. T. J. Gorton (London, 2007), pp. 28-29, 32, 36, 41-52; [Blackboard]; Peter Cole, *Dream of the Poem*, 23-69 [Blackboard]

#### **Oct 4 Conquest, (Re)conquest, and Frontiers**

Catlos, *Kingdoms of Faith*, 208-298; Constable, *Medieval Iberia*, 131-141; 273-292; Jonathan Ray, *The Sephardic Frontier: The Reconquista and the Jewish Community in Medieval Iberia* (Cornell University Press, 2006) 1-54; 145-179 [Blackboard]; Oldradus de Ponte, Consilium 72, "Whether a war against the Saracens of Spain is licit [Blackboard]"

### **Oct 11 Conquest and the Christian Imagination: The Poem of the Cid**

Burton Raffel, trans., *The Song of the Cid*

### **Oct 18 Class Does Not Meet: independent research day**

Watch research video online before class time; use class time to conduct preliminary research for final paper.

### **Oct 25 Art, Letters, and Religious Identity**

Alfonso X, *The Songs of Holy Mary*, trans. Kathleen Kulp-Hill (Tempe AZ, 2000), excerpts [Blackboard]; Peter Cole, *Dream of the Poem*, 121-135; 143-164; 173-191 [Blackboard]; Jonathan Decker, *Iberian Jewish Literature: Between al-Andalus and Christian Europe*, Introduction and Chapters 1-2 [Blackboard]; Katrin Kogman-Appel, "[Hebrew Manuscript Painting in Late Medieval Spain: Signs of a Culture in Transition](#)," *The Art Bulletin* 84 (2002)

### **Research Paper Proposals Due October 25, 11:59 PM**

### **Nov 1 Urban Space and Religious Identity (Barcelona, Toledo, Granada)**

Elka Klein, *Jews, Christian Society, and Royal Power in Medieval Barcelona* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2006), Chapters 1-2, and brief conclusion [Blackboard]; Maria Menocal and Jerrilynn Dodds, *The Arts of Intimacy: Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the Making of Castilian Culture* (New Haven, 2009), 45-94; 132 [Blackboard]; Constable, *Medieval Iberia*, 110-130; Peter Cole, *Dream of the Poem*, 37-48 [Blackboard]

### **Nov 8 Christianity and Conversion**

Amy Remensnyder, [The Virgin Mary at War and Peace, Chapter 6](#); Constable, *Medieval Iberia*, 399-414; Paola Tartakoff, *Between Christian and Jew: Conversion and Inquisition in the Crown of Aragon* (Philadelphia, 2012), 1-10; 63-98 [Blackboard]; David Nirenberg, "Conversion, Sex, and Segregation: Jews and Christians in Medieval Spain," *American Historical Review* 107 (Oct. 2002) [Blackboard]

### **Annotated Bibliographies Due November 8, 11:59 PM**

### **Nov 15 Expulsion of the Jews and the Conquest of Grenada; Converted Jews and Muslims in late medieval and early modern Spain I**

Constable, *Medieval Iberia*, 496-523; 535-546; Lu Ann Homza, ed., trans., *The Spanish Inquisition: An Anthology of Sources* (Indianapolis, 2006) 1-60; 238-247 [Blackboard]; Renée Levine Melammed, [Heretics, or Daughters of Israel? The Crypto-Jewish Women of Castile](#), Chapters 4, 7, and Conclusion [Blackboard]

**Additional Graduate Reading:** Renée Levine Melammed, *Heretics or Daughters of Israel?*, entire

**Nov 22 Happy Thanksgiving! No Class**

**Nov 29 Expulsion of the Jews and the Conquest of Grenada; Converted Jews and Muslims in late medieval and early modern Spain II**

Olivia Remie Constable, [To Live Like a Moor: Christian Perceptions of Muslim Identity in Medieval and Early Modern Spain](#), Chapter 4; Michelle Alexander, et al., "Diet, Society, and Economy in Late Medieval Spain: Stable Isotope Evidence From Muslims and Christians From Gandia, Valencia," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 2015 (156): 263–273 [Blackboard] Mary Elizabeth Perry, *The Handless Maiden : Moriscos and the Politics of Religion in Early Modern Spain* (Princeton, 2005), Chapters 1-3 [Blackboard].

**Additional Graduate Reading:** Mary Elizabeth Perry, *The Handless Maiden*, entire

**Dec 6 Rethinking "Convivencia"**

Re-read Maria Rosa Menocal, *Ornament of the World*, pp. 3-50; 266-283; Jonathan Ray, "[Beyond Tolerance and Persecution: Reassessing Our Approach to Medieval 'Convivencia'](#)" *Jewish Social Studies*, New Series, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Winter, 2005), pp. 1-18; Kenneth Baxter Wolf, "[Convivencia in Medieval Spain: A Brief History of an Idea](#)," *Religion Compass* 3 (2009) Maya Soifer Irish, "Beyond Convivencia: Critical Reflections on the Historiography of Interfaith Relations in Christian Spain" (*Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 1 (19-35) [Blackboard].

**Thursday, Dec 13: Final Papers Due. Submit to Learn site by 11:59 PM**