

The Middle Ages

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The Course:

History 307 is an examination of Medieval Europe, covering the late Roman period (4th century) through the 14th century. The Middle Ages is generally broken up into three periods: The Early Middle Ages, the High, or Central Middle Ages, and the Later Middle Ages. History 307 will help students identify major themes throughout The Middle Ages, and focus on key questions relative to each period. For example, how have historians defined the fall of Rome? When and why did it occur? What were the implications this had on the future of Europe?

In the High Middle Ages, how did the feudal system develop and how did this reflect the changing political and social landscape of Western Europe after the fall of Rome? How did the relationship between secular rulers and religious leaders change during the High Middle Ages? In the Later Middle Ages, how did the developments in the fourteenth century create the foundation for the Renaissance?

This course will examine key events in all three periods and readings will be devoted to major political, economic, military, social, and religious events and conditions. Not only will this course address issues related to Europe, it will focus on key developments throughout the Mediterranean to include Byzantium and the Islamic World.

Furthermore, the course will require extensive study of primary source materials. This serves two purposes. First, learning the primary sources will help us better appreciate the evidence upon which interpretations are based. Secondly, reading primary sources will help us develop the skill of analyzing and assessing such evidence, which is often foreign, obscure, and intractable.

Since the Middle Ages is such a long period, we will not be able to cover every single event in detail. We will, however, address the major events, and pay close attention to the way political and religious developments shaped social and economic conditions.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of History 307, students will be able to:

- identify the major people, events, and ideas relating to Medieval Europe;
- analyze significant issues in the Middle Ages;
- describe the social, economic, cultural, political, and religious developments of Europe and the Islamic World from the 4th century through the 14th century;
- use critical and analytical skills to discuss historical controversies and primary source material;
- discuss historical literature significant to particular eras and develop an awareness of historical sources
- understand primary and secondary sources and formulate a concise interpretation of The Middle Ages

Required Texts:

John M. Riddle, *A History of the Middle Ages: 300-1500, Second Edition* (Lanham, Boulder, NY, Toronto, Plymouth UK: Rowan and Littlefield, 2016).

Patrick J. Geary, ed. *Readings in Medieval History, Fifth Edition* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 2010).

Exams and other graded work:

- A. Exams: 20%
- B. Papers: 40%
- C. Quizzes: 20%
- D. Discussion Board: 20%

Grading Scale:

- A. 90-100
- B. 80-89
- C. 70-79
- D. 60-69
- E. 59 and below

Exams:

There will be two take-home exams throughout the term. The exams will consist of identifications, short answers, and essays. You will be asked to identify places, people, or events in a short answer format. The essays will consist of broader questions, and you will be asked to use information from primary sources, lecture notes, and other secondary materials to formulate a response.

Papers:

Writing is the cornerstone of History, so this course will challenge you to develop writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills. There will be two 5 page papers assigned during the term. Detailed instructions will be provided on Blackboard. Each paper will require analysis of change, continuity, and context with respect to historical developments in the Middle Ages. You will always be looking into material not discussed in class, while drawing upon the foundation of the investigations we do conduct in class.

Quizzes:

There will be two quizzes throughout the semester, which will consist of the changing political geography as well as important physical topography (mountains, rivers, etc.) of Western Europe and surrounding areas during the periods covered by the course.

Discussion Board:

Each week, we will be reading primary sources and chapters in the assigned textbooks. Students should prepare at least two or three talking points over the primary source material to post on the discussion board.

This is an online class, meaning that you will most likely work more than you would in an “in-class” class. You will have to master the technology of Blackboard, and Blackboard discussion

boards as well as posting written assignments to this site. You will need to manage your own time and participate-actively and extensively-in online discussions related to the weekly readings

Each week, you will read one chapter from the assigned textbook and/or primary sources and secondary literature pertaining to the topic. Please be prepared to have all readings completed and take notes before the discussion boards open. Discussion board questions will open on Monday morning each week. You will have until **Wednesday at 10:00pm** (CST) of each week to post your own original response to the original questions. You have until Friday at noon (CST) to post **at least 3** responses to your classmates' responses. Your original post should be well thought out, extensive, and address in great detail, the topics listed in the questions. Your responses to others in the class do not have to be as extensive, but thorough and thought-provoking. A simple "I agree" will not be substantial and you will not receive full credit for that week.

Questions will primarily address the weekly readings, but you may also be assigned additional readings for particular chapters which will appear in the discussion board questions, as well.

For any given week, you should shoot for at least 4-5 total posts. You may post more than that if you wish, but four is the required minimum. I look forward to your insight and working with you this semester.

I will post a series of 4-5 questions each week. For your original post, you should answer 2-3 of those questions in great detail. The remainder of your posts should be responses to other students' posts, incorporating the other questions you did not address in your original post.

Class Attendance:

1. **Attendance** is required for the participation grade. Class participation is critical to students' understanding of the material covered in class. Students who accumulate **two** unexcused absences (no activity on Bb for a given week) will be penalized an entire letter grade. Students who accumulate **three** unexcused absences will receive a failing grade for the course. Any absence must be documented in order for it to be excused. Excused absences will include extreme emergencies, and be left up to the discretion of the instructor to determine the nature of the absence. Students will be expected to participate actively in class discussions. These discussions will be over primary sources and other materials (film clips, scholarly articles, etc.) and will be assigned in class.

Disability Policy:

If you need an accommodation because of a documented disability, you are required to register with Student Disability Services each semester. Please follow the instructions on registration here:

https://www.wku.edu/sarc/registration_process.php

Academic Dishonesty:

All Western Kentucky University faculty and students are bound by principles of truth and honesty that are recognized as fundamental for a community of teachers and scholars. Western

Kentucky University expects students and faculty to honor, and faculty to enforce, these academic principles. The University affirms that it will not tolerate academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, violation of academic rights of students and student offenses. (University Statement on Student Rights and Responsibilities (WKU Catalog, 333-5).

Information about the academic rights of students and academic offenses and students' right to appeal can be found in the Student Conduct System (Due Process Clause)
http://wku.edu/judicialaffairs/due_process.php

Plagiarism:

Webster's New World Dictionary defines the word plagiarize as follows: "to take and pass off as one's own ideas, writings, etc. of another." Cheating or plagiarizing can take many forms on the college campus including: copying (this includes cutting and pasting) from any sources without using quotation marks; copying passages from any sources, altering some of the wording; rewording an idea found in any source without giving credit to the source; having someone else write papers for you; copying work someone else has written; using an assignment or essay written for another class without the instructors' consent; having someone correct the mistakes on your written work (someone else may read your paper, suggest revisions or re-organizations, but you must do all the revising and re-organizing).

All work must be written in your own words, edited, and produced for this course, this semester. Evidence of plagiarism, or any form of academic dishonesty on any work for the course will receive an automatic failure (or zero) for the exercise in question. The instructor may also take additional steps consistent with WKU regulations. If you receive help with your work, be sure to give credit for the help you have received in your paper/exercise.

Instructor's Right:

The Instructor reserves the right to change any part of the course schedule and readings as well as the terms of the syllabus as needed during the semester. Any significant changes in the terms in the syllabus will be announced on Blackboard and through email.