



Of Plagues, Invasions and Superstitions: the Middle Ages Reconsidered

SECTION I: Course Overview

Course Code: HIS310FCO

Subject Area(s): History

Language of Instruction: English

Total Contact Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will focus on the long-lasting cultural impact of social and political life during the Middle Ages. The course will provide students with an opportunity to explore the medieval culture, society, and politics to help them better understand how this distinctive historical period shaped the very foundations of Western identity.

Lectures and study excursions will cover a broad chronological span (4th - 13th century) treating the transition from paganism to Christianity in Rome, the consequent changes in the political and socio-economic arrangements, and the impact on the artistic production of the city.

The course will also address the ideological implications of selected phenomena including migrations of past societies, the fear of diversity, and the consequences of protracted wars, such as plagues and death among the medieval populations.

The course readings will include selected historical, archaeological and art historical perspectives, which will provide a theoretical framework for both in-class discussions and study excursions.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Outline the history of Rome and Italy during the medieval period
- Critically discuss the connection between historical events and medieval political, social, and economic structures
- Examine how medieval history shaped Western identity
- Apply methodologies from history, archaeology, and anthropology to the study of the medieval past

ADDITIONAL COURSE FEES

This course requires payment of an additional fee to cover active learning components that are above and beyond typical course costs, such as site visits, entrance fees and other expenses. Please see the Course Overview online for further information.

SECTION II: Instructor & Course Details

INSTRUCTOR DETAILS

Name: TBC
Contact Information: TBC
Term: SEMESTER

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This class will meet once weekly for 150 minutes each session. All students are expected to arrive on time and prepared for the day's class session.

CEA enforces a mandatory attendance policy. You are therefore expected to attend all regularly scheduled class sessions, including any field trips, site visits, guest lectures, etc. that are assigned by the instructor. The table below shows the number of class sessions you may miss before receiving a grade penalty.

ALLOWED ABSENCES – SEMESTER OR SUMMER		
Courses Meeting X day(s) Per Week	Allowed Absence(s)	Automatic Failing Grade at X th absence
Courses meeting 1 day(s) per week	1 Absence	4 th Absence

For every additional absence beyond the allowed number, your final course grade will drop down to the subsequent letter grade (ex: A+ to A). As a student, you should understand that the grade penalties will apply if you are marked absent due to tardiness or leaving class early. In the table below, you will find the grade penalty associated with each excessive absence up to and including automatic course failure.

ATTENDANCE DOCKING PENALTIES				
Absence	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
Penalty	No Penalty	0.5 Grade Docked	1 Grade Docked	Automatic Failure
HIGHEST POSSIBLE GRADE AFTER ATTENDANCE PENALTIES				
Grade	A+	A	A-	F

ATTENDANCE DOCKING PENALTIES

The instructor reserves the right to make changes or modifications to this syllabus as needed

Absence	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th
Penalty	No Penalty	No Penalty	0.5 Grade Docked	1 Grade Docked	1.5 Grades Docked	2 Grades Docked	2.5 Grades Docked	Automatic Failure
HIGHEST POSSIBLE GRADE AFTER ATTENDANCE PENALTIES								
Grade	A+	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	F

CEA does not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. As such, no documentation is required for missing class. Similarly, excessive absences, and the grade penalty associated with each, will not be excused even if you are able to provide documentation that shows the absence was beyond your control. You should therefore only miss class when truly needed as illness or other unavoidable factors may force you to miss a class session later on in the term.

GRADING & ASSESSMENT

The instructor will assess your progress towards the above-listed learning objectives by using the forms of assessment below. Each of these assessments is weighted and will count towards your final grade. The following section (Assessment Overview) will provide further details for each.

Class Participation	10%
Quizzes (3) on field visits	30%
Midterm Exam	20%
Research Paper	20%
Final Exam	30%

The instructor will calculate your course grades using the CEA Grading Scale shown below. As a CEA student, you should understand that credit transfer decisions—including earned grades for courses taken abroad—are ultimately made by your home institution.

CEA GRADING SCALE			
Letter Grade	Numerical Grade	Percentage Range	Quality Points
A+	9.70 – 10.0	97.0 – 100%	4.00
A	9.40 – 9.69	94.0 – 96.9%	4.00
A-	9.00 – 9.39	90.0 – 93.9%	3.70
B+	8.70 – 8.99	87.0 – 89.9%	3.30
B	8.40 – 8.69	84.0 – 86.9%	3.00
B-	8.00 – 8.39	80.0 – 83.9%	2.70
C+	7.70 – 7.99	77.0 – 79.9%	2.30
C	7.40 – 7.69	74.0 – 76.9%	2.00
C-	7.00 – 7.39	70.0 – 73.9%	1.70
D	6.00 – 6.99	60.0 – 69.9%	1.00
F	0.00 – 5.99	0.00 – 59.9%	0.00
W	Withdrawal	N/A	0.00
INC	Incomplete	N/A	0.00

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ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

This section provides a brief description of each form of assessment listed above. Your course instructor will provide further details and instructions during class time.

Class Participation (10%): Student participation is mandatory for all courses taken at a CEA Study Center. The instructor will use the rubric below when determining your participation grade. All students should understand that attendance and punctuality are expected and will not count positively toward the participation grade.

CLASS PARTICIPATION GRADING RUBRIC	
Student Participation Level	Grade
You make major & original contributions that spark discussion, offering critical comments clearly based on readings, research, & theoretical course topics.	A+ (10.0 – 9.70)
You make significant contributions that demonstrate insight as well as knowledge of required readings & independent research.	A/A- (9.69 – 9.00)
You participate voluntarily and make useful contributions that are usually based upon some reflection and familiarity with required readings.	B+/B (8.99 – 8.40)
You make voluntary but infrequent comments that generally reiterate the basic points of the required readings.	B-/C+ (8.39 – 7.70)
You make limited comments only when prompted and do not initiate debate or show a clear awareness of the importance of the readings.	C/C- (7.69 – 7.00)
You very rarely make comments and resist engagement with the subject. You are not prepared for class and/or discussion of course readings.	D (6.99 – 6.00)
You make irrelevant and tangential comments disruptive to class discussion. You are consistently unprepared for class and/or discussion of the course readings.	F (5.99 – 0.00)

Quizzes on field visits (30%): three quizzes (each worth 10%) about field visits and onsite lectures will help students synthesize and explain memorize the most important points that were discussed.

Midterm Exam (20%): The midterm exam is designed to establish and communicate to you the progress you are making towards meeting the course learning objectives listed above. It is comprised of questions and exercises that test your abilities in three important areas of competency: the amount of information you master; the accuracy of the information you present; and the significance you ascribe to the facts and ideas you have integrated across your study in this course. The midterm exam will cover all concepts from the first half of the term and will have multiple choice questions, short-answer questions, and an essay-response question.

Research Paper (20%): The purpose of writing a research paper is to clearly communicate what you have learned through your research. You will write a 4 to 6-page research paper on a topic indicated by your instructor in order to critically summarize the results of your investigation. Further instructions and resources for this assignment will be provided during class.

Final Exam (30%): The final exam is designed to establish and communicate to you the progress you are making towards meeting the course learning objectives listed above. It is comprised of questions and exercises that test your abilities in three important areas of competency: the amount of information you master; the accuracy of the information you present; and the significance you ascribe to the facts and ideas you have integrated across your study in this course. The final exam will be cumulative and will address topics covered during the entire course. The final test will consist in series of short questions and a short essay.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES (AICAP)

CEA courses are designed to include a variety of experiential learning activities that will take you out of the classroom and allow you to explore your local, host city. These activities may include field studies, guest lectures and/or activities offered through our Academically Integrated Cultural Activities Program (AICAP). Please check the Forms of Assessment section to find out if AICAP activities are related to any specific form of assessment. The following experiential learning activities are recommended for this course:

REQUIRED READINGS

Reading assignments for this course will come from the required text(s) and/or the selected reading(s) listed below. All required readings—whether assigned from the text or assigned as a selected reading—must be completed according to the due date assigned by the course instructor.

- I. REQUIRED TEXT(S):** You may purchase or acquire the required text(s) prior to departure or upon program arrival. The required text is listed below:

Backman, Clifford, R. *The Worlds of Medieval Europe*, Oxford University Press, 2015.

- II. SELECTED READING(S):** The selected readings for this course are listed below. You will not need to purchase these readings; the instructor will provide these selected readings to you in class (either in paper or electronic format).

Borri, F, 2013, “Arrivano I Barbari a cavallo! Foundation myths and origins gentium in the Adriatic Arc” in Pohl, W. and G. Heydemann (eds), 2013, *Post-Roman Transitions: Christian and Barbarian, Identities in the Early Medieval West*, Turnhout, pp. 215-271.

Castles S. and Miller M. J, 2009, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, Palgrave Macmillan.

D’Amico, E, 2017, “Approaches and Perspectives on the origins of Venice” in *National Narratives and the Medieval Mediterranean* “Memoirs of the AAR Volume LXII”, University of Michigan Press.

Dodwell, C.R, 1993, *The pictorial arts of the West, 800-1200*, Yale University Press.

Geary, P, 2002, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe*, Princeton.

Jensen, R, M, 2001, *Understanding Early Christian Art*, London and New York.

Krautheimer, R, 2000, *Profile of a City, 312-1308*, Princeton University Press.

McCormick, M, 2001, *Origins of the European Economy, Communications and Commerce AD 300–900*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Snyder, J, 1989, *Medieval Art*, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, New York.

Stalley, R, 1999, *Early Medieval Architecture*, Oxford University Press.

White, J, 1987, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1250 to 1400*, Penguin Books.

Wickham, C, 2009, *The Inheritance of Rome*, Penguin Books.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

The recommended reading(s) and/or text(s) for this course are below. These recommended readings are not mandatory, but they will assist you with research and understanding course content.

Abulafia, D, 2004, *Italy in the central Middle Ages*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Birch Debra, J, 1998, *Pilgrimage to Rome in the Middle Ages*, Boydell Press.

Delogu, P, 2002, *Introduction to medieval history*, London.

Gilmour, D, 2011, *The Pursuit of Italy*, Penguin Books.

Pirenne, H, 2001, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, Dover Publications, Inc., Mineola, New York.

Smith, A, 2009, *The ethnic origins of nations*, John Wiley & Sons.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In order to ensure your success abroad, CEA has provided the academic resources listed below. In addition to these resources, each CEA Study Center provides students with a physical library and study areas for group work. The Academic Affairs Office at each CEA Study Center also compiles a bank of detailed information regarding libraries, documentation centers, research institutes, and archival materials located in the host city.

- **UNH Online Library:** As a CEA student, you will be given access to the online library of CEA's School of Record, the University of New Haven (UNH). You can use this online library to access databases and additional resources while performing research abroad. You may access the UNH online library [here](#) or through your MyCEA Account. You must comply with UNH Policies regarding library usage.
- **CEAClassroom – Moodle:** CEA instructors use Moodle, an interactive virtual learning environment. This web-based platform provides you with constant and direct access to the course syllabus, daily schedule of class lectures and assignments, non-textbook required readings, and additional resources. Moodle includes the normal array of forums, up-loadable and downloadable databases, wikis, and related academic support designed for helping you achieve the learning objectives listed in this syllabus.

During the first week of class, CEA academic staff and/or faculty will help you navigate through the many functions and resources Moodle provides. While you may print a hard copy version of the syllabus, you should always check Moodle for the most up-to-date information regarding this course. The instructor will use Moodle to make announcements and updates to the course and/or syllabus. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have access to all Moodle materials and that you monitor Moodle on a daily basis in case there are any changes made to course assignments or scheduling.

To access Moodle: Please log-in to your MyCEA account using your normal username and password. Click on the "Academics" tab. There you will see a link above your schedule that says "View Online Courses" select this link to be taken to your Moodle environment.

<p>COURSE CALENDAR</p> <p><i>Of plagues, invasions and superstitions: The Middle Ages reconsidered</i></p>			
SESSION	TOPICS	ACTIVITY	READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS
1	<p>Course Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syllabus, Classroom Policies How to compare the Medieval world with recent historical events: using academic and narrative resources 	Course Overview	<p><u>Reading Assignment:</u></p> <p>Wickham, C., Introduction and Chapter 1, pp.3-50</p> <p>Geary, P. Introduction, pp.1-14</p>
2	<p>Imperial Rome and the Barbarian migrations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 4th century crisis and the beginning of the Middle Ages History of Migrations in Europe 	Lecture & Discussion	<p><u>Reading Assignment:</u></p> <p>Backman, C., Chapter1-2-3, pp.3-86</p> <p>Castles S. and Miller M. J., Chapter 3, pp. 48-66</p>
3	<p>The Rise and Development of Christianity I:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The arts in Ravenna and Rome Santa Maria Maggiore 	Study Excursion	<p><u>Reading Assignment:</u></p> <p>Krautheimer, R. Chapter 2, pp. 33-58</p> <p>Stalley, R., Chapter 1, pp.17-35</p>
4	<p>The Rise and Development of Christianity II:</p> <p>Visit of SS. Cosmas and Damian, Santa Sabina</p>	Study Excursion	<p><u>Reading Assignment:</u></p> <p>Snyder, J, Chapter VI, pp. 99-101; 111-125</p> <p>Dodwell, C.R., Chapter 10, pp.1-10</p>
5	<p>The Rise and Development of Islam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artistic influence from the Eastern World The Crusades The trade system and the connections between the Christian and Islamic worlds 	Lecture & Discussion	<p>* Quiz on Santa Maria Maggiore</p> <p><u>Reading Assignment:</u></p> <p>Backman, C., Chapter 5, pp.112-142</p> <p>Snyder, J, Chapter XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII pp. 255-305</p> <p>Wickham, C, Chapter 12, pp. 279-297</p>

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6	Charlemagne and the Dawn of Europe	Lecture & Discussion	<u>Reading Assignment:</u> Backman, C, Chapter 6, pp. 144-176 McCormick, M., Chapter 21.2, pp.618-633
7	The Catacombs of St. Calixtus	Study Excursion	<u>Reading Assignment:</u> Jensen, R.M. <i>Understanding Early Christian Art</i> , pp. 8-31
8	Discovering a Hidden City: Rome's new profile and the organized disappearance of Medieval Rome	Lecture & Discussion	* Quiz on the Catacombs of St. Calixtus <u>Reading Assignment:</u> Backman, C., Chapter 10, pp. 284-315 White, J, pp.148-161
9	MIDTERM EXAM		
10	A Walk in Medieval Rome: the Crypta Balbi	Study Excursion	<u>Reading Assignment:</u> Krautheimer, R., Chapter 4, pp. 89-108
11	Of Plagues and Fear of Death	Lecture & Discussion	* Quiz on Crypta Balbi <u>Reading Assignment:</u> Backman, C., Chapter 17, pp. 506-542
12	Minorities and the Fear of Diversity	Lecture & Discussion	<u>Reading Assignment:</u> Backman, C., Chapter 19, pp. 567-585
13	The Western Identity: The Modern Uses of the Medieval Past	Lecture & Discussion	<u>Reading Assignment:</u> Geary, P., Ch. 3,4,6 Borri, F., pp. 215-270

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			D'Amico, E., pp. 209-230
14	Review for the Final Exam	Review	Research paper due
15	FINAL EXAM		

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SECTION III: CEA Academic Policies

The policies listed in this section outline general expectations for CEA students. You should carefully review these policies to ensure success in your courses and during your time abroad. Furthermore, as a participant in the CEA program, you are expected to review and understand all CEA Student Policies, including the academic policies outlined on our website. CEA reserves the right to change, update, revise, or amend existing policies and/or procedures at any time. For the most up to date policies, please review the policies on our website.

Class & Instructor Policies can be found [here](#)

General Academic Policies can be found [here](#)