

HIST2100 The Historian's Craft

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Office hours: Tuesday 12:30-2:00 & by appointment

Fall 2016
TuTh 5:00-6:15 Oak 441
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Course description

HIST2100 is the “gateway” course for History majors. Its purpose is to introduce students to the work of the historian: critical reading, thinking and writing about history by the careful study of primary and secondary sources. Foundational to these tasks is the art of close reading, which we will practice here by reading documents of the medieval Mediterranean and western Europe, from late Antiquity to the end of the Middle Ages (roughly 300-1450 C.E.). Our major theme is “religion, society, and the individual in pre-modern cultures.” We will also read a major essay by an eminent 20th-century medieval historian, and several scholarly articles.

By the end of the semester you should more clearly realize that the study of history is an active effort to interpret the past, not the passive reception of factual knowledge; that the past is infinitely complex and that reasonable people may differ in their interpretations of it; and that even from remote periods a rich variety of sources has come down to us, materials which can speak as witnesses to their era if we know how to question them intelligently.

Required texts

Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (unfinished, 1942; published in France, 1949; English edition, 1953)

Select primary sources & articles (provided on HuskyCT)

Course requirements

**Class participation: 30% **

Two in-class writing assignments: 10% each

Mid-term exam: 25%

Final exam: 25% (a take-home exam will be handed out in the last class meeting of December 8, and will be due no later than our final exam time slot in the week of December 12-16).

For most class meetings you will be asked to read an excerpt or excerpts from one or more primary sources, or an article or essay by a modern historian. These readings will be posted on the HuskyCT website for this class. You must print out the document and bring it with you to class for discussion that day, or if you have a laptop and bring that to class, you can read the documents online (we will discuss the proper use of laptops the first day of class). Either way, **you must have a copy of the document we are discussing that day in front of you in class.** Participation is 30% of your final grade, so plan to contribute regularly and meaningfully to class discussion.

Policy on plagiarism: The *Oxford English Dictionary* (available at <http://www.oed.com/>) defines plagiarism as follows: “to take and use as one’s own (the thoughts, writings, or inventions of another person); to copy (literary work or ideas) improperly or without acknowledgement; to pass off as one’s own the thoughts or work of another.” There is a discussion of academic misconduct in Section VI of the Student Code at www.community.uconn.edu/student_code.html, and a student tutorial about plagiarism available at: http://www.irc.uconn.edu/PlagiarismModule/intro_m.htm. Anyone who commits academic

misconduct will, at the very least, receive an F for that portion of coursework and have to redo the work for no credit.

Readings

Week 1 (August 30 & September 1)

Session 1: Introduction to the course, definition of terms

Session 2: The Setting: Pre-modern Europe and the Mediterranean;

Patrick Rael, "How to Read a Primary Source;"

Emperors Galerius and Constantine, *Edicts of Toleration* (311 & 313)

Week 2 (September 6 & 8)

Session 3: Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, pp. v-xxi, 3-78

Session 4: Bloch, *Historian's Craft*, pp. 79-197

Week 3 (September 13 & 15)

Session 5: Thomas Head, "Hagiography;" & *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* (203)

Session 6: Athanasius, *Life of St Anthony* (c. 356)

Week 4 (September 20 & 22)

Session 7: St Augustine, *Confessions* (397/8) (selections)

Session 8: in-class writing assignment & discussion

Week 5 (September 27 & 29)

Session 9: Gregory the Great, *Life of St Benedict* (594)

Session 10: *The Benedictine Rule* (c. 524) (selections)

Week 6 (October 4 & 6)

Session 11: Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks* (c. 590) (selections)

Session 12: Einhard, *Life of Charlemagne* (c. 820); Charlemagne, *Capitulary for Saxony* (c. 785)

Week 7 (October 11 & 13)

Session 13: *Life of St Liutberga* (c. 870)

Session 14: MID-TERM exam

Week 8 (October 18 & 20)

Session 15: Polyptych of Neullay (c. 820); Foundation Charter of Cluny (910)

Session 16: *Peace of God & Truce of God* (c. 1000)

Week 9 (October 25 & 27)

Session 17: Film: 'Into Great Silence'

Session 18: Frederick of Hamburg, *Charter of Privileges* (1106)

Week 10 (November 1 & 3)

Session 19: Burchard of Worms, *Laws* (1023); Rudegar Huozman, *Charter to the Jews of Speyer* (1080)

Session 20: in-class writing assignment & discussion

Week 11 (November 8 & 10)

Session 21: Stephen D. White, "Proposing the Ordeal and Avoiding It: Strategy and Power in Western French Litigation, 1050-1110."

Session 22: Usamah ibn Munqidh's *Book of Learning by Example* (c. 1185)

Week 12 (November 15 & 17)

Session 23: Solomon Bar Simson, *Chronicle* (written c. 1140)

Session 24: Stephen of Bourbon's account of Peter Waldo and the Waldensians (c. 1250)

Week 13 (November 29 & December 1)

Session 25: Stephen of Bourbon again: his account of St Guinefort the Holy Greyhound, a healer of children since the 13th century (c. 1250)

Session 26: Letter from China of Friar John of Monte Corvino (1305)

Week 14 (December 6 & 8)

Session 27: Letters of Catherine of Siena (1370s)

Session 28: Christine de Pizan, *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc* (1429)

Take-home final handed out and discussed

**FINAL EXAM Week: December 12 – 16:
(the take-home final is due during the scheduled two-hour exam time slot
for our section of HIST2100)**

What is Historiography? (from Webster's Dictionary): **Historiography**, *n., pl. -phies*. 1. The body of literature dealing with historical matters; histories collectively. 2. The body of techniques and principles of historical research and presentation. 3. The narrative presentation of history based on a critical examination, evaluation, and selection of material from primary and secondary sources and subject to scholarly criteria. 4. An official history.