

HIST3361 The High and Later Middle Ages

Professor S. Olson

Office: Wood Hall 229 (486-3552)

Office hours: Tues 11:00-1:00 & by appointment

Spring 2016

TuTh 9:30-10:45 MSB415

e-mail: sherri.olson@uconn.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Europe is a creation of the Middle Ages. In this class we survey its historical development over the years (A.D./C.E) 1000-1450. In this period, western societies began to emerge from two centuries of invasion and endemic strife, expanded from their late classical and early medieval roots, and acquired essential features that are still recognizable today. The “fortress mentality” of the early Middle Ages gave way, in the high Middle Ages (1000-1300), to the maturing and stabilizing of a basic framework of political, economic, social and cultural institutions. That stability was disrupted, but not destroyed, by demographic loss and economic upheaval after 1300, the period referred to as the later Middle Ages. In our class we give special attention to questions of communities and community formation, whether political, economic, social or cultural, as well as to peasant life, and the history of religion. These topics, taken together, embrace the experience of all the peoples of the medieval West.

Much of the work for this class will focus on primary sources, the evidence that historians use to reconstruct and interpret the past. Students will learn something about “our medieval ancestors” (Backman, p. xviii), and an eventful and often misunderstood period that lies at the roots of modern western societies. They will also gain an understanding of the great diversity of historical evidence that has come down to us, and a sense of the joys and challenges of interpreting them.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Clifford Backman, *The Worlds of Medieval Europe* (3rd ed.)

Clifford Backman, ed., *A Medieval Omnibus: Sources in Medieval European History*

P. Archambault, ed. & trans., *A Monk's Confession. The Memoirs of Guibert of Nogent*

Frances & Joseph Gies, *Life in a Medieval Village*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Two hourly exams, each worth 25% of the final grade

One final worth 30% of the final grade (All exams are essay and short answer format. A set of essay questions will be handed out one week before each exam).

One 10-page paper worth 20%, due in class on April 14 (full details later). A copy of the course syllabus is on HuskyCT, and a set of lecture outlines will follow shortly. You should come to class having done the reading and prepared to answer and raise questions on the material. Those who contribute regularly and meaningfully to class discussion will receive extra points in the calculation of their final grade.

Note: on days when there are reading assignments in Backman's *Medieval Omnibus*, *Life in a Medieval Village*, or Guibert of Nogent's autobiography, please bring that book to class for 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 (come to class having read for that day):

January

- 19 Introduction to the course: “getting medieval”
- 21 More intro!: Backman, pp. xv-xxi; 597-599; & ‘Primary Sources: What Are They, and How Do We Read Them?’ in *Medieval Omnibus*, pp. vii-xii & reading #10.2
- 26 Medieval husbandry & demographic recovery. Backman, pp. 212-228, 455-460 (and note appendices & glossary of terms, pp. 601-626)
- 28 Gies & Gies, *Life in a Medieval Village*, pp. 1-87

February

- 2 Gies & Gies, *Life*, pp. 88-194
- 4 Commercial recovery & town life. Backman, pp. 228-237, 447-455, 460-480; *Medieval Omnibus*, #13.3
- 9 Town life, cont’d. *Medieval Omnibus*, #15.1, 15.2
- 11 The medieval monastery & the beginning of reform: ideals & realities. Backman, pp. 204-210, 284-293, 310-315
- 16 Reform and the Papal Revolution. Backman, pp. 293-297 (and revisit *Medieval Omnibus*, #10.2)

18 EXAM ONE

- 23 Film: “Into Great Silence” (room TBA)
- 25 Lordship & kingship: North of the Alps & Pyrenees. Backman, pp. 239-268

March

- 1 Lordship & kingship: South of the Alps & Pyrenees. Backman, pp. 268-282
- 3 Byzantium & the First Crusade. Backman, pp. 297-310
- 8 The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century. Backman, pp. 317-338, 346-355; *Medieval Omnibus*, #11.1
- 10 Guibert of Nogent, *A Monk’s Confession*, pp. xi-xl, 3-47
- 22 Guibert of Nogent, cont’d, pp. 47-119
- 24 Guibert of Nogent, cont’d, pp. 121-212
- 29 The University: a great medieval invention. Backman, pp. 338-345, 421-445; *Medieval Omnibus*, #14.1

31 EXAM TWO

April

- 5 Papal monarchy and the rise of heresy. Backman, pp.357-384; *Medieval Omnibus*, #12.4
- 7 Mendicants & Mysticism. Backman, pp. 482-504
- 12 The Thirteenth-Century State. Backman, pp. 389-418
- 14 The ‘Great Pestilence’ (Black Death). Backman, pp. 506-524; **& Papers due in class**
- 19 The Black Death, cont’d. Gies & Gies, *Life in a Medieval Village*, pp. 195-207; *Medieval Omnibus*, #17.2, #17.5
- 21 Schism & Conciliarism in the late medieval Church. Backman, pp. 533-542, 583-585
- 26 Warfare & the State. Backman, pp. 524-533, 567-582
- 28 Late medieval voices. Backman, pp. 544-561; *Medieval Omnibus*, #18.5