Reinventing the Middle Ages: Influential Arguments, Ideas and Personalities in Twentieth Century Medieval Historiography

HIST 3110 T01
Fall Semester, 2011

September 8 – December 7th, 2011
Location: 403 Tier
Monday, Wednesday and Friday: 8:30 am - 9:20 am
Voluntary Withdrawal Date: November 16th, 2011
Examination Date/Time: TBA
Instructor: Robert Penner
Office: 455 Fletcher Argue Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday, 9:30-10:30 or by appointment
E-mail: rgp6@duke.edu

Required Texts:
All on e-reserve, JSTOR or other digital databases

Course Content:
The primary purpose of this course is to provide you with a sense of how Twentieth Century historians have constructed their accounts of medieval Europe. We will be pursuing a variety of theoretical and conceptual themes such as the distinction between cultural, political, economic and social histories; the use historians have made of analytical categories such as class, gender, race and religion; big arguments about periodization and causation; what types of sources historians have used and why; the influence of the political present on the imagined past and maybe even a little of the reverse; and of course, what it precisely is that historians mean when they say “the Middle Ages.”

Each week will consist of three classes. In the first we will establish the context, key concepts and theories used by a particular scholar or school. In the second we consider the argument of a single case study or text, and in the third we conduct in-class primary text, video or film work. The course text will be a compilation of articles and individual chapters from the relevant works. Course work will consist of:

1) A historiographical essay on a school, scholar or subject which will be evaluated in three parts: proposal and bibliography due September 30th (5%), draft due October 28th (10%), final version due December 2nd (15%) worth a total of 30%.
2) In-class assignments and reading responses worth 30%
3) A final exam worth 40%.

Policy on Late Submissions:
With the exception of those with documented medical reasons and in cases of family emergency, late assignments will be penalized one-half a letter grade for every 24-hour period they are late. An A becomes a B+; a B+ becomes a B; and so on. Extensions may be granted upon submission of a written request received at least one week prior to the due date. I do not consider broken printers; incompatible file formats; irresponsible pets, family members, or friends; poor time management; or car troubles to be sufficient reasons for last minute extensions.

Academic Integrity:
All University policies concerning plagiarism and academic dishonesty will be enforced. It is your responsibility to know these policies. If you have any questions or concerns, ask. See Section 8 of the General Academic Regulations of the online University Calendar & Catalog for details. See also Section 1200 Policy 1202 of the University of Manitoba Governance by-laws regarding disciplinary procedures and penalties for additional details pertaining to
the consequences of plagiarism, cheating, or impersonation. The University takes these transgressions very seriously and their regulations state, among other things, the following:

“The common penalty in Arts for plagiarism on a written assignment is a grade of F on the paper and a final grade of F (DISC) (for disciplinary action) for the course. For the most serious acts of plagiarism, such as purchase of an essay and repeat violations, this penalty can also include suspension for a period of up to five (5) years from registration in courses taught in a particular department/program in Arts or from all courses taught in this Faculty. The Faculty also reserves the right to submit student work that is suspected of being plagiarized to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism or to other experts for authentication.

**Grading:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>Exceptional work</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>49+</td>
<td>Failure</td>
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</tbody>
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I will not discuss grades the day on which assignments and tests are returned—with the exception of arithmetic errors. If you believe a grade you receive is unfair or mistaken send me written notice the next day, with your arguments included, and we will set up a meeting during office hours to discuss your concerns.

Students who wish to appeal a grade given for term work must do so within 10 working days after the grade for the terms have been made available to them. Any uncollected term work (essays, assignments) will become property of the Faculty of Arts and will be kept in a secure and confidential area of the Department of History for a minimum of four (4) months following the end of the course, after which time they will be confidentially destroyed.

Evaluative feedback will be provided prior to the Voluntary Withdrawal deadline: November 16, 2011.

**Course Outline:**

**Introduction:**
First Class, September 8th: Introductions

Week 1, September 12th, 14th, 16th: “What Really Happened” and all that Rot: The Historiography of the Middle Ages in the Nineteenth Century and the Discovery of the Archive


“Author’s Introduction,” pp. 1-19


Part I: Early Reevaluations:

Week 2, September 19th, 21st, 23rd: The Pirenne Thesis: Locating the Middle Ages

Selections from Henri Pirenne, Mohammed and Charlemagne, (W.W. Norton & Company: New York, 1939), on E-Reserve:


Week 3, September 26th, 28th, 30th: The Politicization of the Middle Ages: Ernst Kantorowicz and the Nazi Appropriation of the Past

Selections from Ernst Kantorowicz, The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology, (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1957) on E-Reserve:


Week 4, October 3rd, 5th, 7th: A Medieval State of Mind: Johan Huizinga and The Waning of the Middle Ages

Chapter One, “The Violent Tenor of Life,” pp. 9- 30


Week 5, October 10th (Thanksgiving), 12th, 14th: Oxford Dons Celebrate the Middle Ages and C.S. Lewis Falls in Love with the Medieval Mind

Chapter One, pp. 1-43.


**Part II: History at Midcentury:**

Week 6, October 17th, 19th, 21st: The Annales Recalibrate the Middle Ages and Marc Bloch Saves The World

Introduction, pp. 1-11 and Book 3, A Critical Interpretation of the Royal Miracle, pp. 229-252


Week 7, October 24th, 26th, 28th: *Past and Present* Repoliticizes the Middle Ages and Rodney Hilton counts some Peasants


Week 8, October 31st, November 2nd, 4th: Microhistory Shrinks the Middle Ages and Carlo Ginzburg and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie Interrogate Heretics

Introduction, p.vi-xvii, Chapter VIII, Body Language and Sex, pp. 139-152


**Part III: After the Cultural Turn:**

**Week 9, November 7th, 9th, 11th (Remembrance Day): American Ethnology and the Middle Ages: Natalie Zemon Davis and Thick Description**


**Week 10, November 14th, 16th, 18th: What about Gender? What about Bodies?: Caroline Walker Bynum Reincorporates the Medieval**


**Week 11, November 21st, 23rd, 25th: A Deconstructed Middle Ages: Umberto Eco and the Medieval Text**


**Week 12, November 28th, 30th, December 2nd: The Archival (re)Turn: The Archive and Memory**

Patrick Geary, “Medieval Archivists as Authors: Social Memory and Archival Memory,” from *Archives, Documentation and Institutions of Social Memory*, edited by Francis X. Blouin and William G. Rosenberg


**Conclusion:**

**Week 13, December 5th, 7th: Medieval History at the University of Manitoba and Wrap Up**
