

## **HIST111: The Medieval World**

**Instructor:** Tobin Johnson

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Contact:** tobinjj@umd.edu or ELMS messages

**Class Meetings:** M/T/W/Th/F 9:30AM-12:30PM, TYD2109

### **Course Description and Objectives**

Throughout the course, we will explore the medieval world, broadly constructed, from a variety of historical perspectives, and so gain a better understanding of the underpinnings of our modern world. We will pay particular attention to themes of the centralizing and decentralizing state, global vs. local perspectives, and cultural contact and exchange.

Students will engage with primary and secondary sources and learn to synthesize and compare views, as well as support an argument with evidence. They will practice articulating their opinions and supporting them in discussion as well as essays, and conduct an independent research project to be presented in class at the end of the course.

### **Texts**

All course readings will be posted to ELMS, so no textbook purchases are necessary for this course.

### **Grading**

Class Participation: 25%

Homework Reading: 25%

Exams: 30%

Research Presentation: 20%

The University's Code of Academic Integrity is designed to ensure that the principles of academic honesty and integrity are upheld. In accordance with this code, the University of Maryland does not tolerate academic dishonesty. Please ensure that you fully understand this code and its implications because all acts of academic dishonesty will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of this code. All students are expected to adhere to this Code. It is your responsibility to read it and know what it says, so you can start your professional life on the right path. As future professionals, your commitment to high ethical standards and honesty begins with your time at the University of Maryland.

It is important to note that Generative AI/ Large Language Models are not acceptable sources for any purpose for this course. Because LLMs are statistical models of words frequently found together and not databases of information, they produce incorrect, biased, or imaginary text at random. This is especially true for our subject, which is frequently misrepresented by the popular sources used to build AI/LLM technology.

### **Assignments**

*Class Participation:* You will receive credit for your regular attendance and active participation in class activities and discussion.

*Homework:* Each class unless otherwise noted, you will turn in a response sheet discussing your readings (see ELMS). You will also complete the museum visit assignment (see below), included in this grade category.

*Weekly Exams:* Each Friday, we will have a brief exam, in which you will choose two prompts from a list and write a short essay responding to each, using your knowledge from the previous classes and your readings.

*Research Presentation:* You will choose a topic for an individual research assignment by the end of week one, focusing on at least one specific primary source and doing some extra reading about it. At the end of the class, you will turn in a bibliography with your sources and give a ten minute presentation with visual aid (handout or powerpoint) to your classmates, explaining the context of your source and making an argument about its implications for our understanding of the past.

*Museum Assignment:* Visit one of the following museums, draw, photograph or find an online catalog entry (please follow the museum's photography policy) for a specific item **from our time period, 400-1600 AD/CE**, and write 2-3 paragraphs discussing its historical context and using it to make an argument about the past. Note that we will informally discuss these in class every so often!

Dumbarton Oaks Museum (free admission)  
11:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m., Tuesday–Sunday

The George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum (free admission)  
Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The National Gallery of Art (free admission)  
Open 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Smithsonian National Museum of African Art (free admission)  
Open every day 10 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

Smithsonian National Museum of Asian Art (free admission)  
Open daily, 10 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

The Walters Art Museum (Baltimore) (free admission)  
Wed-Sun 10AM-5PM, Thurs 1PM-8PM

## **Schedule**

### **Week One, 400-800 CE**

Monday 13: Class Introduction & End of Rome  
(in class) Either Graham Loud & Martial Staub, "Some Thoughts on the Making of the Middle Ages," in *The Making of Medieval History*, eds. Loud & Staub, (University of York Press, 2017) OR Marcus Bull, "2. What are the 'Middle Ages'?" in *Thinking Medieval: An Introduction to the Study of the Middle Ages*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

(read for tomorrow) Barbara H. Rosenwein, Ch. 1, "Prelude: The Roman World Transformed (c. 300-c.600)", in *A Short History of the Middle Ages vol I: From c. 300 to c. 1150*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (University of Toronto Press, 2023).

Tuesday 14: Migration Period/Early Medieval Europe

First reading response due for today's readings

Textile Workshop

Julia M.H. Smith, Ch. 8, "Rome and the Peoples of Europe," in *Europe After Rome: A New Cultural History 500-1000*, (Oxford, 2005).

Neil Price, Ch. 2, "Age of Winds, Age of Wolves," in *Children of Ash and Elm: A History of the Vikings* (Basic Books Hachette Book Group, 2020).

Wednesday 15: Byzantium in Late Antiquity

Library Workshop

Anthony Kaldellis, *The New Roman Empire: A History of Byzantium*, Ch. 2, "Government and the Social Order," (Oxford University Press, 2024).

Alexander Kazhdan & Giles Constable, Ch. 4, "Homo byzantinus before God," *People and Power in Byzantium: An Introduction to Modern Byzantine Studies* (Dumbarton Oaks, 1982).

Thursday 16: Early Islam

Andrew Ippin & Teresa Bernheimer, *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs & Practices* 5<sup>th</sup> ed., ch. 1-2, "Prehistory" and "The Qur'an," (Routledge, 2019).

Bernard Lewis, "The Revolutions in Early Islam," in *Islam in History: Ideas People, and Events in the Middle East*, New Ed. (Open Court, 1993).

Friday 17: Carolingian Europe

Judith M. Bennett, Ch. 4, "Carolingian Europe, c. 700-850," in *Medieval Europe: A Short History*, 11<sup>th</sup> ed. (McGraw-Hill, 2016).

Julia M.H. Smith, Ch. 5, "Labour and Lordship," in *Europe After Rome: A New Cultural History 500-1000*, (Oxford, 2005).

Exam 1

## **Week Two, 800-1200 CE**

Monday 20: Medieval Literature

Morgan Finch, guest lecture on Arthurian lit

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight reading, Book I

Maria Rosa Menocal, Ch. 2, "Rethinking the Background," in *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987).

Tuesday 21 Anatolia & the Caucasus Contested

Manuscripts & Writing Workshop

Christoph Baumer, *History of the Caucasus: At the Crossroads of Empires*, vol 1, "VIII. Between Caliphate, Byzantium and Khazars," I.B. Tauris, 2021).

Alexander Daniel Beihammer, Introduction, "Conquests, modern nations, and lost fatherlands," in *Byzantium and the Emergence of Muslim-Turkish Anatolia, ca. 1040-1130*, (Routledge, 2017).

Wednesday 22 The Fragmentation of the Abbasid Caliphate

Julia Bray, "Men, women and slaves in Abbasid Society," in *Gender in the Early Medieval World: East and West, 300-900*, ed. Brubaker & Smith (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Vernono Egger, Ch. 6, "Filling the Vacuum of Power, 950-1100," in *A History of the Muslim World to 1750: The Making of a Civilization*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Routledge, 2018).

Thursday 23 Vikings & Rus

Neil Price, Ch. 3, "The Social Network," and Ch. 15, "Silver, Slaves, and Silk," in *Children of Ash and Elm: A History of the Vikings* (Basic Books Hachette Book Group, 2020).

Christian Raffensperger, Ch. 4, "Kiev as a Center of European Trade," in *Reimagining Europe: Kievan Rus' in the Medieval World, 988-1146*, (Harvard University Press, 2012).

Friday 24 The Crusades in Context

Judith M. Bennett, Ch. 9, "Conquests, Crusades, and Persecutions, c. 1100-1300," in *Medieval Europe: A Short History*, 11<sup>th</sup> ed. (McGraw-Hill, 2016).

Burnam W. Reynolds, Ch. 1-2, "Frankfurt, 1147: The Baltic Crusades begin," and "A peculiar institution," in *The Prehistory of the Crusades: Missionary War and the Baltic Crusades*, (Bloomsbury, 2016).

Exam 2

### **Week Three, 1200-1600 CE**

Monday 27 Mongols

David Morgan, Ch. 6-7, "The Mongols and Their Coming to Persia," "The early Mongol rulers: Persia under infidel government (663-694/1265-1295)," in *Medieval Persia, 1040-1797* 2<sup>nd</sup>ed., (Routledge, 2016).

Anne F. Broadbridge, Introduction to *Women and the Making of the Mongol Empire*, (Cambridge University Press, 2018).

Tuesday 28 Western Europe in War and Plague

Judith M. Bennett, Ch. 12, "Famine, Plague, and Recovery, c. 1300-1500," in *Medieval Europe: A Short History*, 11<sup>th</sup> ed. (McGraw-Hill, 2016).

Wayne E. Lee, Ch. 7, "Gunpowder in Europe and in the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650 CE," in *Waging War: Conflict, Culture, and Innovation in World History* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

Wednesday 29 Ottomans & Safavids

Presentations

Marc David Baer, Ch. 1 & 5, "The Beginning: Gazi Osman and Orhan," & "A Renaissance Prince: Mehmed II," in *The Ottomans: Khans, Caesars and Caliphs*, (Basic Books, 2021).

David Morgan, Ch. 11-12, "Persia in the Fifteenth Century: The Türkmen dynasties and the rise of the Safawids," and "Shah Isma'il I and the Establishment of Shi'ism," in *Medieval Persia, 1040-1797* 2<sup>nd</sup>ed., (Routledge, 2016).

Thursday 30 The Connected Mediterranean World

Presentations

Cooking & Recipes workshop

Hannah Barker, Ch. 1, "Slavery in the Late Medieval Mediterranean," in *That Most Precious Merchandise: The Mediterranean Trade in Black Sea Slaves, 1260-1500*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

Molly Greene, Ch 4, "The Ottoman Mediterranean," in *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants: A Maritime History of the Mediterranean*, (Princeton University Press, 2010).

Friday 31 Expanding Europe

Presentations

James Casey, Ch. 10, "The Community of the Faithful," in *Early Modern Spain: A Social History*, (Routledge, 1999).

Galina M. Yemelianova, Ch. 2, "Russia and its Muslim Neighbors: 1480-1881," in *Russia and Islam: A Historical Survey* (Palgrave, 2002), excerpts.

Exam 3

## **Course Policies**

For a full list of UMD course policies affecting undergraduate students, please refer to <https://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

UMD has many resources for student needs, ranging from academic resources like the Writing Center to resources for food insecurity or health problems. For a full list, please see <https://sph.umd.edu/academics/advising-resources/undergraduate-center-academic-success-and-achievement/casa-student-resources-and-information>

**Contact:** Students are responsible for checking their UMD email regularly. If there is a problem with your work, class is cancelled, or something else comes up, I will email you. If you set up a forwarding service, you are responsible for making sure it works. That said, I do not expect you to be available 24/7, and neither am I. I will respond to student emails within 48 hours during the work week. I do not check email on Saturdays or holidays.

**Communication and Classroom Environment:** UMD is diverse in terms of both student demographics, and student opinions. Students should maintain a civil and inclusive environment in the classroom, refrain from using insulting or discriminatory language, and respect each other's preferences in how they wish to be addressed. I will do the same. Respectful debate is an integral part of the academic process, and students should come prepared both to form their own opinions and to respect the right of others to disagree.

**Absences:** Student absences due to illness, religious observances, and a few other circumstances must be excused as a matter of school policy. Please contact me ASAP if this applies to you, so that I can make sure you receive any important information and opportunities to make up work if necessary.

**Accommodations:** Official disability accommodations are available through the Accessibility & Disability Service Office (<https://ads.umd.edu>). ADS provides students with reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to education. If you plan to make use of ADS accommodations, please make sure that you send your letter through the ADS portal and follow up with me about any accommodations which require a Detailed Implementation Plan.

## **Reference Works and Databases**

*Brill's Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages*. Leiden: Brill, 2017. Available at McKeldin.

*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, II and III. Leiden: Brill, 2006-. Note that III is more recent, but still in-progress, so many topics can only be found in II. Available online through the library, second edition: <https://umaryland.on.worldcat.org/oclc/827829648> and third: <https://umaryland.on.worldcat.org/oclc/145927975>

*Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Detroit: Macmillan Reference, 2007. Available online through the library: <https://umaryland.on.worldcat.org/oclc/70174939>

*Medieval Jewish Civilization: An Encyclopedia*. New York: Routledge, 2003. Available at McKeldin (non-circulating).

*The New Cambridge History of Islam*, vols. 1-6. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Available online through the library: <https://umaryland.on.worldcat.org/oclc/298184395>

*The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vols. 1-7. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995-2005. Available online through the library: <https://umaryland.on.worldcat.org/oclc/29184676>

*The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991. Available at McKeldin (non-Circulating).

**The following online databases may be useful for finding sources, both primary and secondary:**

EBSEES: European Bibliography of the East European Studies: <https://ebsees.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/index.html>

Feminae: Medieval Women and Gender Index: <https://inpress.lib.uiowa.edu/feminae/Default.aspx>

Index Islamicus: <https://umaryland.on.worldcat.org/oclc/52431288>

International Medieval Bibliography: <https://umaryland.on.worldcat.org/oclc/48432469>

Middle Eastern & Central Asian Studies: <https://umaryland.on.worldcat.org/oclc/61256981>

Oxford Bibliographies Online (available through the catalog, via various subject-specific database links)