COURSE DESCRIPTION: An overview of major themes and scholarly debates in medieval history (ca. 400-1500) covering regions including the Mediterranean basin, northern Europe, and adjacent areas. The course provides a capstone for advanced undergraduates and a foundation for advanced study for graduate students. This version of the course treats important terms, events, and concepts in medieval history, through both classic works and cutting-edge scholarship. Weekly meetings will focus on historical problems which have generated significant debate among historians.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Students will gain an understanding of the “Middle Ages” as concept and field of study within History. They will demonstrate proficiency reading historical interpretations closely and critically, writing clearly and persuasively, and making effective oral presentations.

REQUIRED BOOKS (for purchase, in paperback unless otherwise noted):

REQUIRED READINGS (not for purchase; digital or library reserve—ask for password):


Carlo Ginzburg, “The Inquisitor as Anthropologist” in Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method, 156-64.

Walter Goffart, “The Barbarians in Late Antiquity and How They Were Accommodated in the West,” in Little and Rosenwein, eds., Debating the Middle Ages, 25-44.


Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, “The ‘Cruel Mother’: Maternity, Widowhood, and Dowry in Florence in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries” in Debating the Middle Ages, 264-76.


Jacques Le Goff, “The Autumn of the Middle Ages or the Spring of a New Age?” in The Birth of Europe, 154-193.


Walter Pohl, “Conceptions of Ethnicity in Early Medieval Studies” in Debating the Middle Ages, 15-24.

Jean-Claude Schmitt, “Religion, Folklore, and Society in the Medieval West” in Debating the Middle Ages, 376-87.


Susan Mosher Stuard, “Burden of Matrimony: Husbanding and Gender in Medieval Italy,” reprinted as Ch. 17 in Debating the Middle Ages, 290-8.

Note: All “Sources in Context” (listed below) will be available through e-learning or digital reserve.
COURSE FORMAT: The course will be conducted in weekly seminars, which will include extensive discussion, student presentations, and instructor-led analysis of primary sources related directly to context of historical interpretations being analyzed. Various written assignments will culminate in a historiographic or bibliographic paper, on a topic chosen by the student in consultation with the instructor. Advanced students may include a section on “needs and opportunities” for research, using primary sources in conjunction with a defined body of scholarship. Discussions will focus on assigned readings for each week.

GRADE COMPONENTS: Class participation and presentations, 30%; book reviews/précis, 30%; final paper 40%. You must complete all elements of the course to receive a passing grade. All late submissions will be penalized, in fairness to students who complete the assignments in a timely fashion. The grade scale is as follows: 93-100 = A, 87-92 = BA, 83-86 = B, 77-82 = CB, 73-76 = C, 67-72 = DC, 60-67 = D, and less than 60 = F.

PARTICIPATION: Much of your grade will be determined by your efforts in our weekly meetings. Mere attendance during class hours will not receive credit towards participation, which should instead be indicated through vocal outbursts giving evidence of cognition; in other words, you must talk about your ideas, your reflections on the readings, and the comments of others in class. To be an effective participant, you will need to complete all readings and translations prior to class. A class that only meets once per week cannot be skipped, if you wish to receive a satisfactory grade. Attendance is mandatory, absences must be documented and excused (preferably in advance). More than one absence could result in a lower course grade. Participation will count for 30% of the grade and includes discussions of “sources in context” and presentations.

BOOK REVIEWS: Students will write three short (3-5 page) analytic book reviews on any works listed as “recommended readings” under each week and due on the date the work is listed. All students will write the first review on works in Unit I (weeks 3-5), which will provide early feedback on writing, and then write two others during Units II and III (weeks 6-12). These reviews will count for 30% of the final grade. As part of this assignment, students will also deliver an oral report (maximum 10 minutes) on the book they review in class, explaining its content and relevance to the required reading for that week. I am willing to discuss possible substitute works for those listed below, but all such works must be approved in advance. The schedule of works to review will be determined during the second week of class, so that students may obtain copies of the works well in advance.

HISTORIOGRAPHIC/BIBLIOGRAPHIC PAPER: In consultation with the instructor, students will prepare a paper, preferably directly related to the main themes of the course. The paper should take the form of either a historiographic essay (a critical evaluation of the strengths or weaknesses of previous historical approaches to a topic) or a bibliographical essay (a critical synthesis of standard works on a given subject) and it should deal with seven to ten items at a minimum. Students may use topics in Unit III provided by Prof. Berghofer as starting points or develop their own topic in consultation him. Either way, students are expected to develop their own bibliography. Students must have met with Prof. Berghofer and submitted a proposed topic by week four and must submit and preliminary bibliography of works being considered by week six. Students preparing for research may write a "needs and opportunities" section of their paper, which explains possible avenues for future research. Every paper will have a bibliography of relevant historical works (if about “needs and opportunities,” this will include primary sources, source editions, and finding aids). The narrative portion should be 15-20 pages and bibliography as necessary and the paper will be due at the end of the class. This paper will count for 40% of the final grade.
**PAPER SUBMISSION POLICY:** You are also responsible for providing an electronic copy of your final paper in addition to submitting a hard copy (due when you hand it in). This electronic copy must be readable by MSWord.

**Students with Disabilities:** You should register your disability with Disabled Student Resources and Services, (269-387-2116 or www.drsrs.wmich.edu). You should discuss any accommodation with them and they will give you a card listing the approved accommodation, which you should show to the instructor. This process should be completed by the end of the second week of class.

**Late Work:** Make-ups will be given only for valid, university-approved written excuses, at the instructor's discretion. Unexcused late papers will be penalized two full letter grades per day they are late (e.g., a "B" paper will become a "D" paper).

**Email/IP Policy:** Students should use their WMU email address for all correspondence related to this course. Students will not reproduce any portion of course materials (including notes on lecture) without the instructor’s express written permission.

**READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**Week 1 (Jan 12): Introduction I – The Middle Ages**

**Required Reading:** Marcus Bull, *Thinking Medieval*.

**In-Class Reading:** Various maps of Europe and the Mediterranean for different years from 200-1600 to see what “stories” they imply, Wikipedia entry on the “Middle Ages.”

**Week 2 (Jan 19): Introduction II – Medieval History as discipline in Europe and America**

**Required Reading:** John Arnold, *What is Medieval History?*

**Assignment:** Look up one of the “key terms” distributed in class in the following resources: *Lexikon des Mittelsalters* (available online through Brepols), *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. Joseph Strayer, *Dictionnaire encyclopédique du moyen âge*, ed. André Vauchez.

**Recommended:** Le Goff, Jacques, ed. *Medieval Callings*, Marc Bloch, *The Historians’ Craft* and consider reading a medieval history textbook for orientation to key events, places, and terms.

*Selection of 2nd and 3rd book review topics completed this week.*

**Unit I: The Issue of Time - Periods and Periodization of the “Middle Ages.”**

**Week 3 (Jan 26): Early Middle Ages and “Late Antiquity”**


Week 4 (Feb 2): The Central Middle Ages and the “Renaissance of the Twelfth Century”


Sources in Context: Route of Memorial Roll of Count Guifré of Cerdaña, ed. Jean Dufour, *Recueil des rouleaux des morts* (VIIIe siècle-vers 1536) 1:693-4 and first entry in latin (pp. 139-41).


Week 5 (Feb 9): The Later Middle Ages, the Renaissance and Reformation, and Early Modern History


Sources in Context: Hubert and Jan van Eyck, The Ghent Altarpiece (completed 1432).


**First Book Review assignment completed by this week.**
Unit II: The Issue of Space – Europe and the Mediterranean

Week 6 (Feb 16): The Organizing Sea - The Mediterranean


Sources in Context: Twelfth-century T-O Map based on Isidore of Seville’s Etymologiae, ch. 15 de terra et partibus, Hereford *Mappa Mundi* (1399), and Portolan Map of Europe from Cresques Abraham’s *Catalan Atlas* (1375) (BnF Esp. 30).


Week 7 (Feb 23): The Organizing Land - Europe


Paper Topics and Bibliography due this week.


Unit III: Selected Problems in Medieval History

Week 8 (Mar 1): Peoples, Ethnicity, and Nations: Imagined Communities?


Sources in Context: Ammianus Marcellinus, Roman History, Book 31, c. 1-5 (Description of the Goths and Huns), trans. C. D. Younge (from Project Gutenberg).


SPRING BREAK

Week 9 (Mar 15): Charlemagne: The Once and Future King?


Week 10 (Mar 22): To Be or Not to Be Feudal?


Week 11 (Mar 29): Forces Shaping Women’s Lives, Women Shaping History?


Week 12 (Apr 5): Popular Beliefs and Evidence for Them?


**Unit IV: The Long Shadow of Modernity – The Middle Ages and the Historical Profession**

Week 13 (Apr 12): Past and Future of Medieval History


Week 14 (April 19): Reports on Final Papers

Students will present for 10 minutes on the arguments of their final papers.

**FINAL PAPER DUE**