

History 3360: The Early Middle Ages

Professor S. Olson

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Office hours: Tu 2-3, W 10-12 & by appointment

Fall 2013

TuTh 12:30-1:45 Wgc200

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This course surveys the history of the medieval West from late Antiquity into the 11th century. Our period began with Germanic and ended with Viking and Magyar invasions, and yet it has been called the “formative age” of Europe – evidently more was going on than warfare and destruction. Long-lived institutions were created from a mix of classical civilization, barbarian culture, and Judeo-Christian traditions. We will focus on the decline and transformation of paganism, the emergence of the medieval Church, the expansion of agriculture, and the development of Germanic kingship. Particular attention is paid to the history of religion and belief systems, and how these changed over an era of profound change.

The course is based on lectures, films, and discussion which will usually focus on the primary source materials we are reading: we will talk about the types of evidence that have survived, how they can be used to reconstruct and interpret medieval history, and how they have been used by historians, past and present. We will read together a modern biography of St Augustine, a narrative history written in northern France at the height of the 10th-century time of troubles, and numerous other documents from the period that reveal aspects of economic, social, cultural and political life.

Required Texts

Clifford R. Backman, *The Worlds of Medieval Europe* (2nd ed.)

Alfred J. Andrea, ed., *The Medieval Record: Sources of Medieval History*

T. Martin & A. Fitzgerald, *Augustine of Hippo: Faithful Servant, Spiritual Leader*

S. Fanning & B. Bachrach, eds & trans, *The Annals of Flodoard of Reims, 919-966*

Course Requirements

*Two hourly exams, each worth 25% and one final exam worth 30% of the final grade. All exams are comprehensive and include essay and short answer questions. For the essay portion, one week before each exam a set of five essay questions will be provided to students (on HuskyCT), of which three will appear on the exam. Students will choose one and write a 5-6-page blue book essay. Short answer items (four out of eight) will be taken from lecture and class discussion. (A full set of lecture outlines will be posted shortly on HuskyCT).

*One 10-page essay worth 20% (topic to be discussed): hardcopy due in class on **November 7**.

Late papers will not be accepted without proof of a valid medical excuse.

Final exam: week of December 9-13

Please note: if you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out what you have missed and to make up that work.

Plagiarism: Policy on plagiarism: The *Oxford English Dictionary* (available online at <http://www.oed.com/>) defines plagiarism as “the action or practice of taking someone else's work, idea, etc., and passing it off as one's own; literary theft.” Academic misconduct is discussed in the Student Code at www.community.uconn.edu/student_code.html, Appendix A, and a student tutorial is available at: http://www.irc.uconn.edu/PlagiarismModule/intro_m.htm. The UConn Libraries homepage also has a “plagiarism fact sheet” at <http://www.lib.uconn.edu/instruction/PlagFac.htm#1>.

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. Failure to redo the work will result in an F for the course.

READINGS, FILMS & EXAMINATION SCHEDULE

August

- 27 Introduction to the course (getting medieval): Periodization and Propaganda
- 29 The Later Roman Empire; crises of the Third Century. *Backman*, pp. xiii-xviii, 3-21

September

- 3 The Early Christian Church and “new deeds of heroism.” *Backman*, 23-38
- 5 Film: “The First Christians”
- 10 Constantine: Reform and Revolution. *Backman*, 38-50
- 12 Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History*. *Andrea*, 28-34
- 17 The Origins of Monasticism: St Anthony, St Pachomius, and “a desert peopled with monks.” *Backman*, 80-88
- 19 *Augustine of Hippo*, vii-x, 1-70
- 24 *Augustine of Hippo*, cont’d, 71-149
- 26 First Exam

October

- 1 Film: “The Dark Ages”
- 3 The Barbarian Invasions and successor states. *Backman*, 53-74; *Andrea*, 54-68
- 8 Byzantium: “the Rome that did not fall.” *Backman*, 111-120
- 10 The Genesis of Islam & the Muslim Empire. *Backman*, 120-129
- 15 The Early Medieval Church & Benedictine Monasticism; *Backman*, 75-78, 88-99; *Andrea*, 99-109
- 17 Early medieval society; rise of the Papacy. *Backman*, 102-111; *Andrea*, 109-121
- 22 The Merovingians and the Carolingian “take-over.” *Backman*, 131-136
- Film: “The Age of Charlemagne”
- 24 The Carolingian “experiment in state-building.” *Backman*, 136-150; *Andrea*, 137, 145-151
- 29 The Life of St Liutbirg. *Andrea*, 127-134
- 31 Second Exam

November

- 5 The Carolingian Renaissance. *Backman*, 150-162; *Andrea*, 141-145
- 7 Film: “A World Inscribed: Medieval Manuscripts” & PAPERS DUE
- 12 The Collapse of Empire: invasions of the Ninth & Tenth Centuries. *Backman*, 167-192; *Andrea*, 153-158
- 14 Recovery Begins. *Backman*, 195-225; introduction to Flodoard’s *Annals*, pp. vii-xxxi, 3-12.
- 19 Flodoard, *Annals*, pp. 13-68
- 21 Evidence of Political Recovery. *Backman*, 226-259; *Andrea*, 163-180

December

- 3 Ecclesiastical Reform as evidence of recovery in the 10th & 11th centuries. *Backman*, 262-281; the plays of Roswitha of Gandersheim. *Andrea*, 188-198
- 5 Film: “The Roots of the First Crusade”

