



Course Syllabus: Europe in the Middle Ages
Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences
HIST 4213 Section 101
Spring 2026 TTH 9:30-10:50 am PY 202

Contact Information

Instructor: Tiffany A. Ziegler, PhD
Office: O'Donohoe 214 and Ferguson 214
Office hours: By appointment
Office phone: (940) 397-4151
E-mail: tiffany.ziegler@msutexas.edu

Instructor Response Policy

The best way to contact me is via e-mail. I will respond to e-mails on business days within 24 hours. E-mails sent after hours will be responded to on the next business day (this means Friday e-mails sent after 5:00 pm will receive a response on Monday).

Course Description

A study of the social, political, and intellectual traditions of western society as they developed after the Germanic invasions. Emphasis will be placed on the evolution of feudal society and its interaction with the community of the Christian Church.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should have a broad knowledge of the people, places, ideas, and themes of the Middle Ages, and students should be able to see how the world was shaped and continues to be shaped by the inhabitants of the Middle Ages. In addition, students will be introduced to basic documentary sources of the Middle Ages. After introducing the procedures historians use to evaluate these sources, students will be required to perform similar tasks through papers and exams. Finally, student will develop historical writing skills through course assignments and exams.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Chris Wickham, *Medieval Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016)—provided on D2L.

A Short Medieval Reader, Barbara Rosenwein, ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2023).

Handouts provided by the professor and/or posted on D2L.

Notes about the readings:

Please note that the 'textbook' for this course, Chris Wickham's *Medieval Europe* is provided for you on D2L. You may read it online or print it out. I refer to it and the required chapters as 'Wickham Chapter X' in the schedule below.

A Short Medieval Reader is a collection of primary sources. It is denoted as 'Rosenwein X' below. You will not need to read every primary source, and you will be provided with which sources to read as time and interest allow.

All readings are required to be successful in this class.

Recommended

K. L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Ninth Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018). [Quick Guide Website.](#)

Study Hours and Tutoring Assistance

Located in Moffett Library, the Office of Tutoring and Academic Support Programs (TASP) offers a variety of resources designed to help students meet the demands of the college classroom, including both on campus and distance education tutoring. For more information go [here](#).

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given).

For example, "cutting and pasting" from any internet source or poorly paraphrasing (i.e. changing a few words with the synonym function) without citing that source is plagiarism. Moreover, generating text via AI and citing it as your own is academic misconduct, and the instructor reserves the right to give

that assignment an F. If you use Grammarly, do not let it rewrite sentences for you. That will register as AI.

When can I use Generative AI like ChatGPT in this course? - The use of Generative AI is allowed in this course for the following: brainstorming your ideas and checking grammar.

When must I avoid Generative AI like ChatGPT in this course? - The use of generative AI is not permitted for the following: Writing a draft of an assignment; and writing entire sentences, paragraphs, or papers to complete assignments.

Why can't I use Generative AI to write my papers? - Learning happens as we read, think, organize, summarize, respond, and engage. We don't want machines to do that for us.

Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct: [Office of Student Conduct](#).

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Grading

The grade for this course will be based on attendance, participation, and discussion; two papers; two exams, and a midterm project.

Assignments	Points
Engagement	150
Paper One	150
Paper Two	150
Exam One	150
Exam Two	150
Project: Innocent III	250
Total Points	1000

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	900

Grade	Points
B	800 to 899
C	700 to 799
D	600 to 699
F	Less than 600

Homework and Quizzes

I am assuming that you are an adult and know that college courses require reading and preparation. I expect you to come to class having read the assignment for the week *before* class starts. Failure to read and to participate will result in weekly quizzes. Do the reading and participate in class and there will be no quizzes and no homework.

Exams and Project

There are two 'regular' exams in this class and one 'project'. Each will cover approximately one-third of the course material. Exam one will be over the Early Middle Ages; the project will be over the High Middle Ages; the second exam will be over the Later Middle Ages. Exam one counts for 15% of the final grade; exam two for 15% of the final grade; and the project for 25% of the final grade. Exam one and two will be take-home exams and will include an Identification section and an Essay section. We will be putting Innocent III on trial for the project. All information about the exams and project will be provided in more detail during the course of the semester

Papers

Students will write two papers. The first paper will cover the Early Middle Ages and the second the Later Middle Ages. We will not write a paper on the High Middle Ages as the period will be covered in the project. Both papers need to use the Wickham book and the primary sources from the course packet, as well as additional primary sources from the Fordham Internet Sourcebook. Each paper is due to the D2L dropbox at the start of class on the day stated in the syllabus.

Extra Credit

No extra credit will be provided.

Late Work

Because all assignments are provided in advance, no excuses will be accepted for late papers. If you know you will be gone you must hand in the assignment before you leave.

Important Dates

- Last day for term schedule changes: 20 January
- Deadline to file for graduation: 16 February
- Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" 29 April
- Refer to: [Academic Calendar](#) and [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Attendance

I am assuming that you are an adult and that you can make your own decisions about coming to class. While I do not 'take attendance' per se, I do grade your engagement—how often and to what degree are you participating, discussing, showing up and paying attention. If you repeatedly absent, if you constantly show up more than fifteen minutes late for class, if you are consistently unprepared for class, if you fail to pay attention during class opting instead to do other work, and/or if fail to participate in class discussion, your engagement grade will suffer. Your engagement grade is worth 150 points, or 15% of your grade.

INCLEMENT WEATHER STATEMENT: If the university closes due to weather during our assigned class time, we will not meet. Assignments/meetings will be shifted accordingly.

Online Computer Requirements

While this is not an online class, we do rely rather extensively on D2L, which requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. ***Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.** Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. ***Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!!** There are many places to access your class! Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world which is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

Instructor Class Policies

Please refrain from behavior disruptive to the conduct of class, including but not limited to arriving late, leaving early, making trips to the vending machines, talking with other students, and viewing videos on your computer. Do not bring work unrelated to class. Do not watch soccer (or other games) in class. Think carefully about how you are spending your tuition money. If you sleep in class and if you snore, people are likely to laugh at you.

Technology is ever present in our lives, and I am sure you will have phones, watches, and other 'smart' devices with you, such as pens and glasses. I will not restrict you from bringing such items to class, but please do not record without appropriate consent and/or accommodations.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. **HOWEVER**, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Student Wellness Center, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

College Policies

[Campus Carry Rules/Policies](#)

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUREady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled "Run. Hide. Fight." which may be electronically accessed via the University police department's webpage: ["Run. Hide. Fight."](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule:

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 1 20-23 Jan	Introductions to the course, the "Middle Ages," Christianity, and Rome	Rosenwein xv-xviii; Chapter I Wickham Chapter 1 Handout: Conversion of Constantine
Week 2 26-30 Jan	The Decline of the Roman Empire and the Arrival of the Barbarians	Rosenwein I and II Wickham Chapter 2
Week 3 2-6 Feb	Early Western Christendom: Medieval Society and Politics	Rosenwein I and II Wickham Chapters 2 and 3 Handouts, "The Invisible Peasantry;" Charlemagne's General Capitulary of the Missi ; The Capitulary De Villis
Week 4 9-13 Feb	Carolingian Europe	Rosenwein III Wickham Chapters 3 and 4 Paper One Due
Week 5 16-20 Feb	Invasion and Reorganization	Rosenwein IV Wickham Chapters 5 and 6 Handout, "Real Men of the Viking Age"
Week 6 12-27 Feb	Economic and Social Change	Rosenwein IV and V Wickham Chapters 6 and 7

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 7 2-6 March	Toward Christian Domination	Rosenwein V Wickham Chapters 8 and 9 Handouts, #DeusVult" Exam One Due
Spring Break: 9-15 March		
Week 8 16-20 March	Power Politics in the High Middle Ages	Rosenwein V and VI Wickham Chapters 8 and 9
Week 9 23-27 March	The Rise of Empires and Monarchs: The Italian Peninsula, the Papal Monarchy, and the Holy Roman Empire	Rosenwein VI and VII Wickham Chapters 8 and 9
Week 10 30-31 March and 1 April	The Rise of Empires and Monarchs: England and France Holiday Break 2-5 April Start Innocent III Project	Rosenwein VI and VII Wickham Chapters 8 and 9
Week 11 6-10 April	Innocent III Midterm Project	Handouts
Week 12 13-17 April	The "Twelfth Century Renaissance"	Rosenwein VI and VII Wickham Chapter 10 All Midterm Project Materials Due
Week 13 20-24 April	The Later Middle Ages: Crises and Challenges	Rosenwein VIII Wickham Chapter 11 Handouts, "Blood Libel" and "Own Your Heresy"

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 14 27-30 April and 1 May	Transitions: The Rise of the Sovereign State	Rosenwein VIII Wickham Chapter 12 Handout, "Whose Spain Is It, Anyway?" Paper Two Due
Week 15 4-8 May	Changes and Conclusions: The Legacy of Medieval Society, Culture, and Religion	Rosenwein VIII Wickham Chapter 13
Finals 9-14 May	Tuesday, 12 May 8:00 am – 10:00 am, PY 202	Exam Two Due

History 4213/5213: Europe in the Middle Ages

Citing Examples

Historians use footnotes to cite works referenced. This is a history course, and thus you are required to use footnotes. The style that history follows is Chicago (Turabian). The following provides a quick summary of how to do footnotes for the papers.

In order to create a footnote, place the cursor in the text where you want to the footnote to be located. Select the reference tab. Under the section titled 'footnotes', click 'insert footnote'. This places the superscript note in the text and the footnote below. Type the footnote in the correct citation format.

When you cite a book, you need to follow this format: Author, *Title* (place of publication: publisher, date), page. When citing from *Medieval Europe*, the textbook, follow the example below.¹ The source reader by Rosenwein will have two types of citation: secondary and primary. If you are citing something that the editor wrote (e.g., the introduction to a source), then cite Rosenwein as done below.² This is considered secondary. If you are citing the source itself, then cite as you see below.³ This is primary, and thus the original author needs credit. If you are given a handout, it will most likely come from Fordham Internet Sourcebook, and you should cite it as follows: Author, "Title," *website*, URL.⁴

¹ Chris Wickham, *Medieval Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), page number.

² Perhaps I am intrigued by what Rosenwein has to say about Charlemagne's biographer, Einhard. She notes that he was called 'little nard'. To cite this, I would do as follows: *A Short Medieval Reader*, Barbara Rosenwein, ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2023), 72.

³ This time, I pull from Einhard's account of Charlemagne directly, so I need to cite Einhard IN Rosenwein: Einhard, "Life of Charlemagne" in *A Short Medieval Reader*, 73.

⁴ Augustine, "Account of His Own Conversion," *Fordham Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/sbook.asp>.

You can shorten a citation after you use it the first time, which I did in note three. You can do this with all your citations. I have already referenced the Wickham textbook, for example, so I can use an abbreviated footnote when I cite the work: Wickham argues that his book is about 'change;' so is history.⁵ This is the same for those citations with URLs.⁶ Finally, if you want to explain something in a footnote so that it will not detract from your argument, use a discursive footnote.⁷

⁵ Wickham, *Medieval Europe*, 39.

⁶ Augustine, "Account of His Own Conversion."

⁷ A discursive footnote allows you to talk in more detail about a particular item or to make an argument without detracting from the flow of the paper. This is also a great place to define terms or describe something that you don't want to discuss above.

HISTORY 4213: EUROPE IN THE MIDDLE AGES
Paper One (adapted from Mary Rampolla)
“Those Who Work:” Daily Life in the Middle Ages

PROBLEM: How do historians use ‘unlikely’ sources to construct a view of the past?

BACKGROUND: In your syllabus under the readings for week three, you will find Charlemagne’s *General Capitulary of the Missi* and *The Capitulary De Villis*, which are linked and also located on D2L as handouts. You will also find the *Polyptyque of the Church of Saint-Mary of Marseille* in your primary sourcebook reader (source 3.7). These works are from the ninth century. The handouts on D2L are “capitularies,” which can be roughly defined as laws and acts of various kinds. By this I mean that not only were they new laws issued by the emperor, but they may have been reissued ancient laws, laws issued by the emperor and the church together, basic instructions to the *missi*, etc.⁸ The third source is a *polyptyque*, a register of sorts.

ASSIGNMENT: Your assignment is to imagine that you are a historian and that you have been commissioned to write a short (three pages double-spaced) entry for an encyclopedia entitled “Medieval Peasant Life in the Early Middle Ages.” Complete this task **using only the three documents named above** (note: You may use your textbook and additional handouts but you should rely primarily on the sources). You should describe, as fully as you can, what life was like for a peasant in the ninth century.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this exercise is to get you familiar with the ways in which historians read and use documents. It is also meant to get you thinking about how to extract various types of information you would have not considered possible from various documents. Even though these documents came from the emperor and a bishop, they are still great sources for historians to use to reconstruct daily life in the early Middle Ages. Also, you must remember that most peasants were illiterate, and thus, these types of sources are invaluable for reconstructing their life.

METHOD: Think of yourself as a medieval detective interrogating a witness. This witness, however, does not speak the same language that you do. Thus, you are forced to use the documents associated with their life to get the necessary information. Lucky for you, they are readily available. The three documents can tell you quite a bit about daily life in the Middle Ages. The information may not jump out at you at first, and you may have troubles asking the right questions to get started. Eventually you will start to ask the right questions and see the use in the documents!

⁸ For more information on this topic see François Guizot, *The History of Civilization: From the Fall of the Roman Empire to the French Revolution*, William Hazlitt, trans. (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1850).

It will be helpful to start with some basic questions:

- Who wrote this? And for whom was it written?
- When was it written or produced?
- Where was it written or produced?
- What is it? Describe it to me.
- Why is this particular document important to the study of the Middle Ages?

Then, move on to questions that can be reasonably answered with the documents, such as what kinds of foods did people consume in the Middle Ages (you will find that answer in the second paragraph of the Capitulary *De Villis*)? Now, reread the document, and you will find that more questions will come to you. Keep doing this until a picture of peasant life forms.

A word of caution: the quality of your essay will depend on the quality of the questions you ask. Read the document carefully, extract questions, but try not to be too broad or general. Asking questions and writing in this manner will lead to a broad and general response.

FORMAT: The paper should be typed, double-spaced with 12-point font and one-inch margins. The length should be 3 FULL pages. You simply need to answer the question given with the above three sources; you do not need (and should not use) outside sources with the exception of your textbook/handouts. Please proofread your work. If you cannot communicate your ideas to me coherently and grammatically correctly, you have not succeeded in your task. Finally, you must cite sources properly. If you quote directly from the documents or the book, use quotations marks and cite. If you paraphrase, you still must cite. You do not need a works cited page or a bibliography. If you need help with citing, see the citing examples page in the syllabus.

HISTORY 4213: EUROPE IN THE MIDDLE AGES
Paper Two (adapted from Mary Rampolla)
“Those Who Play:” The Legacy of Medieval Society

PROBLEM: How do historians deal with myths and misconceptions?

BACKGROUND: We began this course with an introduction to some of the myths and misconceptions surrounding the Middle Ages. Although we have hopefully dispelled a number of these, one item remains for detailed consideration: Periodization. According to Isabella Lazzarini, the Later Middle Ages “is possibly the [sub-period] on which the burden of past and current grand narratives weighs the most.”⁹ Is it a period of decline or innovation? Is it a period of crisis or innovation? Is it a renewal or an end? Is it a period of transition or change or continuity? The uncertainty surrounding these questions can be traced back to Petrarch, to *medium aevum*, to an attempt to celebrate the period in which he was living, and to his (and others') glorification of the Roman past.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this paper is to get you to think about periodization. Periodization—which gives names to specific timeframes that signal major transitions or certain characteristics—helps historians to study and understand people, cultures, societies, politics, and more. Although useful, periodization can also be misleading.

While we might point our fingers at Petrarch, as I have done above, historians too are to blame. In 1970 Joseph Strayer wrote, “by 1300 it was evident that the dominant political form in Western Europe was going to be the sovereign state”¹⁰ in his work *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State*. Then, in 1974, William McNeill added the Renaissance and Reformation, arguing that the “twin movements” promoted “the development of a population of responsible individual personalities in Europe [and] prepared the way for the enlargement of Europe’s political liberties in the 18th and 19th centuries.”¹¹

ASSIGNMENT: Consider the period of the ‘Later Middle Ages’, a period of decline, crisis, and uncertainty but ALSO a period of innovation, change, and continuity. With this in mind, comment—simply—on the legacy of the Middle Ages.

METHOD: Although the task is simple, there is nothing simple about this query, and in fact, it requires some thinking and analysis on your part. You cannot successfully answer this question through a one-sided analysis of sources. You must look at both sides. For example, you might argue that although this was a period of decline, it was also a period of innovation. You might argue that there was change but there was also much continuity.

⁹ *The Later Middle Ages*, The Short Oxford History of Europe Series, Isabella Lazzarini, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 2.

¹⁰ Joseph Strayer, *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 57.

¹¹ William McNeill, *The Shape of European History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 9.

It is only in pitting these things against each other and creating the disharmony that we find the truth, the legacy. Most of the myths associated with the Middle Ages come from an incomplete understanding of the period in question. Many of the misconceptions come from assumptions linked to periodization. Move beyond myths, misconceptions, and periodization to find the legacy.

I would return to the beginning of class; go back to the introductory PowerPoint and to chapter one of the textbook. You may use any partition of the reader to make your argument, but your focus should be the last few chapters.

FORMAT: The paper should be typed, double-spaced with 12-point font and one-inch margins. The length should be 4 FULL pages. You simply need to answer the question given with the help of the sourcebook; you do not need (and should not use) outside sources with the exception of your textbook and the sourcebook. Please proofread your work. If you cannot communicate your ideas to me coherently, you have not succeeded in your task. Finally, you must cite sources properly. If you quote directly from one of the two documents or the book, use quotations marks and cite it. If you paraphrase, you still must cite. You do not need a works cited page or a bibliography. If you need help with citing, see the citing examples page in the syllabus.