

Medieval Religious Contexts

HUMN 2023/4023, Fall 2022

TR 12:30-1:50, PY 201

Professor Kirsten Lodge

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Office: 217 Bea Wood Hall, 940-397-4363

Office Hours: MWF 12-2 and by appointment

This interdisciplinary course will introduce students to the medieval cultures of the Islamic world, India, Asia, Africa, North and South America, and Europe. During the medieval period (c. 400-1400 CE), these cultures were highly religious; we will therefore emphasize religious beliefs and practices, and we will also go back in time to study the origins of the major world religions. We will also look at other aspects of culture, including history, art, literature, philosophy, and music. Students will thus acquire an understanding of major world cultures during this time period, encounter different ways of viewing the world, analyze, interpret, and think critically about diverse works of art, literature, and music, and learn to take an interdisciplinary approach to the humanities by contextualizing major works, both in class and in regular short writing assignments. Through class participation and in these writing assignments, students will improve their communication skills. As they come to understand the complexity of these parts of the world, students will develop increased respect for other cultures and peoples. Hopefully, they will be inspired to learn more about cultures other than our own.

Aug. 23 Introduction

Chapter 6: Islamic Civilization

25 Islamic Civilization; Religion; Islam, the Ottoman Empire, and Europe; The Quran

Reading: 216-20; 232-33

Writing: Response to the Quran

30 Islamic Art and Architecture

Reading: 221-27; 233-35

Writing: Response to *The Thousand and One Nights*

Sept. 1 Philosophy; Math, Science, and Scholarship; Scholarly Cross Fertilization

Reading: 220-21

4023 Presentation Proposal Due

6 Literature

Reading: 235-38

Writing: Response to Rumi

8 Literature; Music

Reading: 227-30; 238-39

Writing: Response to Any of the Remaining Readings at the End of the Chapter

Chapter 7: Indian Civilization

13 Vedic Period; Hinduism; Literature: The Hindu Classics

Reading: 242-46; 258-61

Writing: Response to *The Bhagavad Gita*

15 Maurya Period; Buddhism; Maurya Art; Mauryan to Bactrian to Kushan; Gupta Era; Gupta Art

Reading: 246-51; 255; 261-63; 265-66

Writing: Response to Buddhist Sermons or Hindu Lyric Poetry

20 Hindu Dynasties; Hindu Temples; Sculpture; Music

Reading: 251-55; 263-65

Writing: Response to *The Ramayana* or *The Pancatantra*

22 Indian Drama; Music

Reading: 255-57; 266-71

Writing: Response to Kalidasa

Chapter 8: Early Chinese Civilization

27 Shang and Zhou Dynasties; Empire: Qin and Han Dynasties; The Six Dynasties

Reading: 274-75; 278-80; 288-89

Writing: Response to *The Book of Songs*

29 Confucianism

Reading: 275-77; 289-90

Writing: Response to Confucius (including additional excerpts posted on D2L)

Take-Home Test on Chapter 6-7 Due

Oct. 4 Taoism

Reading: 277-78; 290-92

Writing: Response to *The Tao Te Ching*, *The Book of Liezi*, or Zhuangzi

6 The Tang Dynasty; The Song Dynasty; Chinese Literature

Reading: 280-86; 292-95

Writing: Response to Any of the Remaining Readings at the End of the Chapter

Chapter 9: Early Japanese Civilization

11 Prehistoric Japan; Religion; Courtly Japan: Asuka and Nara Periods; Courtly Japan: Heian Period; Literature

Reading: 298-303; 310-11

Writing: Response to Japanese Poetry

13 Warrior Japan; Later Warrior Japan; Landscape Painting; Temple of the Golden Pavilion; Japanese Gardens; Literature

Reading: 303-9; 311-17

Writing: Response to Any of the Remaining Readings at the End of the Chapter

Chapter 10: Early Civilizations of the Americas and Africa

18 Mesoamerica; Olmecs; Teotihuacán; Mayan Culture

- Reading:** 320-25
20 Toltecs and Aztecs
Reading: 325-28; 344-45
Writing: Response to Mesoamerican Poems
24 Last Day for ‘W’
25 Cultures of Peru; The Moche; The Inca; North America
Reading: 328-36; 346-50
Writing: Response to Popol Vuh or Neruda
27 North America; Africa
Reading: 333-39; 350-53
Nov. 1 Africa; African Epics
Reading: 339-42; 350-53
Writing: Response to African Epics

Chapter 11: Early Middle Ages and the Romanesque

- 3** Early Medieval Culture; Merging of Christian and Celto-Germanic Traditions; Charlemagne and the Carolingian Era; Monasticism
Reading: 356-62
Take-Home Test on Chapter 8-10 Due
8 Literature
Reading: 374-76
Writing: Response to *Beowulf*
10 Literature; Romanesque Culture; The Feudal Monarchs; Romanesque Architecture
Reading: 362-66; 376-78
Writing: Response to *The Song of Roland*
15 Sculpture; Painting; Decorative Arts; The Chivalric Tradition; Music
Reading: 366-72; 378-81
Writing: Response to Any of the Poetry at the End of the Chapter

Chapter 12: Gothic and Late Middle Ages

- 17** Paris in the Later Middle Ages; Gothic Architecture; Gothic Architecture Outside France; Sculpture
Reading: 384-96
22 Literature: Dante’s *Inferno*; Painting and Decorative Arts; Toward the Renaissance; Naturalism in Art
Reading: 396-404; 406-8; 415-21
Writing: Response to *Inferno*
24 Thanksgiving Break
29 Literature: Boccaccio
Reading: 409-10; 421-23
Writing: Response to Boccaccio
4023 Paper Proposal Due
Dec . 1 Literature; Music; Medieval Calamities; Secular Song; The Medieval Bestiary

Reading: 404-6; 410-12; 423-29

Writing: Response to Chaucer or Christine de Pizan

8 Final Exam, 10:30-12:30

4023 Final Paper Due, 10:30 a.m.

Course Requirements:

1. Participation (2033, 10%; 4033, 5%). It is essential that you participate in class discussion and activities to help you understand and master all of the material we cover. Please note that participation is different from attendance. Participation means **talking in class**.

2. Critical Writing Assignments (2023, 30% total; 4023, 25% total). You will write short critical responses of about one double-spaced page (c. 250 words) to the primary readings in the textbook as indicated in the syllabus. Note: these are the readings at the back of each chapter in the textbook, as indicated by the last set of page numbers. Your response should 1) briefly demonstrate your understanding of the text; 2) offer an interpretation or commentary; 3) briefly situate it within the context we are studying and/or compare and contrast it with other primary texts. One way to situate the text within the context is to do the background reading on it in the textbook and at least say who the author is, what they were known for, or something similar. Another way to put the text in context is to compare it with texts or artworks we have already discussed, or even with works you have encountered in other classes or on your own. The last part of the assignment will teach you how to take an interdisciplinary, contextualizing approach. The quality of your writing (grammar, spelling, and organization) will also be counted for these assignments, which should be considered “mini-essays.” I have posted the rubric on D2L and will distribute it in class.

Please submit your daily assignments through D2L on Tuesdays and Thursdays by 11 a.m. on the day they are due. You may click on the assignment on the course homepage calendar or click on Assessments > Assignments. The Dropbox has already been prepared for all of your assignments, so you may work ahead if you choose to.

3. Tests (2033, 30%; 4033, 20%, 2-3 pages). You will have two take-home tests, each of which will test your knowledge and critical thinking skills. Please note that 2-3 pages means a minimum of two full pages.

4. Final Exam (2023, 30%; 4023, 20%). The final exam will consist of a short critical thinking essay on the last two chapters and a longer essay that will allow you to demonstrate your understanding of the course material as a whole.

5. Research-Based Presentation (4023, 15%). Upper-level students must choose a topic for a 10-15 minute presentation. The topic should complement the textbook, not repeat what it says. You will be expected to consult at least three scholarly sources, and give me an outline of the presentation and a bibliography in MLA or APA style on the day of your

presentation. You should look through the textbook and submit a topic proposal to me by **Sept. 1**, and we will set a date for your presentation.

6. Research Paper (4023, 15%). Upper-level students will write a 7-8 page research paper on a topic of their choice, but not on the same topic as their presentation. **The paper must be in MLA or APA format, including in-text citations.** Please submit a brief paper proposal by **Nov. 29**. The paper is due on **Dec. 8**. If it is late, your grade will be reduced by one-third of a letter grade (e.g., A > A-) per day.

Course Policies:

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, including on the daily assignments. If you deliberately plagiarize on any assignments or papers (that is, copying or cutting and pasting), or engage in any other form of academic dishonesty as defined by the MSU Student Handbook, you will get an F in the course and disciplinary proceedings will be initiated.

Midterm Progress Report: I will submit a Midterm Progress Report to your WebWorld account. Midterm grades will not be reported on your transcript; nor will they be calculated in the cumulative GPA. Students earning below a C at the midway point will receive an email from Tutoring and Academic Support.

Books: Please bring your books to class when we read primary texts to consult them during class discussion.

Cell Phones: No cell phones should be visible in class at any time! If I see you use your cell phone during class, you may be marked late or absent without any warning. You may not leave class to use your cell phone except under exceptional circumstances, of which you have informed me beforehand. You may not use your cell phone during the final exam. The same policy applies to iPods and other electronic devices. Exception: if you wish to read an assigned text from your cell phone or another device, please inform me beforehand.

Food: In accordance with the building policy, you may bring only bottled water to class.

Computers: No computers are permitted in class unless you are using it to consult the text during class. If this is the case, please inform me beforehand.

Attention: Please be alert and do not lay your head down on your desk during class, or I may mark you late or absent without warning.

Class Dismissal: Please do not start to pack up your things or leave until I have dismissed the class. If you believe I have gone over the allotted time, please raise your hand and let me know.

Email Communication: The only way I can communicate with you outside of class is through D2L email. You should set up D2L so that D2L emails are delivered to your email

account. *You are responsible* for checking your email or D2L daily for any reminders, clarifications, or other communications from me.

Safe Zone Statement: This class is a “safe zone” in which all students will be treated and will treat one another equally, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Diversity of thought is encouraged.

Other Important Information:

Office Hours: My office hours are given above, and I am always happy to help you with any questions you may have, whether they are about the texts we are reading, assignments, exams, absences, or anything else—or you may just come by to talk. If you can’t make my office hours, we can make an appointment.

D2L: Study questions, handouts, and additional course-related material, required or recommended, will be posted on D2L.

Academic Accommodations: If you require special accommodations, please contact Disability Support Service, 168 Clark Student Center, 397-4140, at the beginning of the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Arrangements cannot be applied retroactively.

Required Text (available at the College Bookstore or Amazon, and on reserve at the library):

Benton, Janetta and Robert DiYanni. *Arts and Culture: An Introduction to the Humanities*. Vol. 1. 4th ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2012.

Additional Assistance:

Office Hours: I will be in my office at the times listed at the top of the syllabus. If these times do not work for you, we can schedule an appointment. We can also set up a Zoom or telephone meeting to discuss any questions you may have.

D2L Problems: If you are having trouble submitting an assignment, or if you are having any other technical, please also email me and let me know. It may be a glitch in D2L that I can easily fix, and I can inform other students of the problem as well as assisting you. You may also go to the D2L homepage and click on “Report a Problem.” Fill out the form and submit it. An alternative is to send an email to D2Lhelp@msutexas.edu describing your problem in detail and providing the full course number and title.

Tutoring Support: Tutoring and Academic Support Programs (TASP) provides free drop-in tutoring for MSU students. Located on the first floor of Moffett Library, TASP's Learning center provides tutoring support in a number of core courses and subject areas. Please see our schedule for more information about times and offerings.

Writing Center: Take advantage of the MSU Writing Center, located off the 2nd floor atrium of Prothro-Yeager! Writing tutors will not edit your papers for you, but they will provide support and feedback at every stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to drafting, revising to proofreading.

Research and Creative Activity Opportunities at MSU

Enhancing Undergraduate Research Endeavors and Creative Activities (EURECA) is a program that provides opportunities for undergraduates to engage in research and creative activities with faculty. EURECA provides incentives and funding through a system that supports faculty and students in a cooperative research process. For more information contact the Office of Undergraduate Research, (940) 397-6275 or by sending a message to eureca@mwsu.edu or better yet, stop by the UGR office located in the atrium of the Clark Student Center, room 161. Information and resources are available at www.mwsu.edu/eureca. I myself am seeking a student to collaborate with next semester on a critical edition of Lev Tolstoy's *Hadji Murat*, a novel about the Russian conquest of the Caucasus. Please contact me if you might be interested.