

The Medieval Mediterranean

History 11
Pomona College
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Description

This course provides a history of the greater Mediterranean world from the first to the fourteenth centuries with particular attention to 1) the competition between its Greek, Latin, and Arabic sectors for hegemony in the region, and 2) the interplay between the Abrahamic and Socratic legacies that shaped the writings of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims who inhabited the region. The sources that make up the readings for this course have been selected with these two overarching themes in mind.

Format

Each of the following week-long units consists of one lecture on Thursday and one small-group discussion the following Tuesday. The lectures are designed to provide the context necessary to understand the primary source readings. The readings provide the raw data for the quizzes and essays (see below), which alternate week by week, and are the focus of the small-group discussions.

Schedule

1. Background: The Hebrew Legacy
Hebrew Bible: Genesis 1-22, Exodus 1-20, I Samuel 1-31

2. Background: The Greek Legacy

- Plato, *Republic* [selections]
- Aristotle, *Politics*, books 1 & 3

3. Hellenism, Rome, and the Jews

- I Maccabees, 1-8
- Philo, *On Creation*
- Philo, *On the Life of Moses*, books I, II.1-9

4. Christianity in its Greco-Roman Milieu

- Luke, Acts
- Justin, *First Apology*

5. The Christian Roman Empire

- Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*

6. Christian Division and Foreign Invasion

- Augustine, *The Political Writings*, pp. 1-153

7. The Rise of Islam and Arabo-Greek Thought

- Qur'an, Suras 1-3, pp. 1-20.
- Al-Farabi (selections), *The Enumeration of the Sciences* (pp. 22-30), *The Political Regime* (pp. 31-42), *The Attainment of Happiness* (pp. 58-81).

8. The Holy Roman Empire and Latin Monastic Culture

- Einhard, *Life of Charlemagne*, pp. 1-16.
- Hrotswitha of Gandersheim, *Plays*, pp. 1-28, 39-77, 105-180

9. Papal Monarchy and Latin Christian Expansion

- Tierney, *Crisis of Church and State*, pp. 7-73.
- Fulcher, *Chronicle of the First Crusade*, Book 1, pp. 9-82.

10. Latin Christian Expansion and the Greeks

- Anna Comnena, *Alexiad*, pp. 3-7 ("prologue"), 29-49 (from Book I:10 up to the end of Book I), 109-146 (Book IV and Book V through Book V:7), 153-185 (Book VI), 273-331 (Book X:5 through Book XI)
- Odo of Deuil, *The Journey of Louis VII to the East* (parts 1 and 2), pp. 3-143 (alt. pages).

11. Islamic Resurgence, East and West

- Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, pp. 86-181, 208-37, 246-52

12. Aristotle in the West: Córdoba, Toledo, and Paris

- Averroes, *The Decisive Treatise*, pp. 163-185.
- Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, Part 2, chapters 32, 36-40, 45.
- Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, Book 1, chapters 1-13

13. Aristotle and the Challenge to Papal Monarchy

- Marsiglio of Padua, *The Defender of Peace* I:1-19, II:1-4, 25-26, III:1-2 (pp. 3-126, 331-64, 425-32)

14. Aristotle and the Dialectic of Muslim History

- Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, pp. 3-48, 65-74, 91-142

Learning Goals

A. Students will learn to read and process primary source materials the way professional historians do. Specifically students will learn to

- consider primary sources within their specific historical and literary contexts;

- unpack primary sources for the data they contain, particularly data that allows for the reconstruction of the mindset of the author and the imagined audience;
- use this data to answer questions consistent with the broader themes of the course.
- craft these questions and answers into essays that are stylistically consistent with the norms of modern historical scholarship.

B. Students will increase their knowledge of the history of the late antique and medieval Mediterranean.

Evaluation

There are no midterms, finals, or term papers in this course. Your final grade will be based on the percentage of points (90-100% = A range; 80-89% = B range etc.) you earn for the quizzes and essays, each of which is worth ten points. If you receive a final grade higher than your percentage would otherwise suggest, it reflects the distinctively high level of your participation in class, particularly in the discussions. If you receive a final grade lower than your percentage would suggest, it reflects the distinctively low level of your participation in class as reflected, for instance, in recurrent absences ("excused" or otherwise) and/or tardiness. Simply put, participation is predicated on presence.

The quizzes, made up of both passages drawn from the week's readings and questions drawn from the lectures, are administered at the beginning of class every other Tuesday. They are designed to model the kind of reading and data selection that is essential for effective historical writing.

The essays are designed to test your ability to select and "digest" relevant information from the readings in response to a specific prompt, and they will be graded in accordance with a set rubric. The essays are due at the beginning of class on those Tuesdays when there is no quiz. They are not to exceed 1,200 words.

Each of you is also responsible for producing an original piece of "art" (any appropriate medium) that captures a theme or an image from the course. Though the projects will not be graded, they are nevertheless required. There will be a "Medieval Mediterranean Art Show" on the last day of class.