

History 2401E

Medieval Europe

2025–2026

Instructor: **Dr Michael Fulton**

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Office: **Department of History, Lawson Hall 2265**

Office Hours: **Fridays 12:00-1:20** (or virtually by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will explore the history of Europe from the collapse of the western half of the Roman Empire in the 5th century up to the Renaissance and dawn of the early modern period in about the 15th century. This was a dynamic period in European history, an age of great political transformation, social development, economic transition and religious controversy. Architects built increasingly grand and ornate structures, while artists developed new art forms. Mounted knights secured their place of prominence on the battlefield, only to have it snatched away by the common soldier. Classical knowledge was salvaged from the ashes of Rome, reacquired through foreign caretakers, and ideas were reinterpreted as literacy and education expanded. Modern governmental institutions formed as trade networks expanded and the boundaries of the known world were pushed back.

COURSE SYLLABUS

The first half of the course will trace the narrative of this period, providing a chronological overview of what happened where. The second half will take a thematic look at various aspects of life during this period and how it was experienced by different people. By investigating a range of primary sources, students will gain insights into what life was like during this period, the priorities and concerns of various people, and how historians use these sources to build our understanding of the past.

By their completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Express an appreciation of, and ability to analyze, the principal political, religious and cultural developments of the medieval period, their causes and significance.
- Compare developments in different parts of Europe to identify similarities and differences between political, religious and cultural institutions and traditions.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the course material by constructing arguments, both in speech and formal writing, that reveal an ability to analyze primary sources and conduct historical research.
- Discuss and critically evaluate texts, conveying an awareness of influences, biases and historical significance, as well as the ways in which sources can be interpreted differently, leading to historiographical debates.

This is a draft outline. 2025-26 version. Please see the course site on OWL Brightspace for a final version.

Students are expected to attend all lectures and tutorials. They should arrive prepared (having read the assigned readings) and ready to participate in and contribute to discussions. Students are expected to complete all assignments.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

| | | |
|------------------------|-----|---|
| Tutorial participation | 25% | Weekly |
| Quizzes | 25% | Weekly (complete in class using OWL) |
| Historiography essay | 25% | 14 November, before 11:55pm (upload to OWL) |
| Primary sources essay | 25% | 13 March, before 11:55pm (upload to OWL) |

Tutorial Participation

Students are expected to attend all of their tutorials, arrive on time having completed the assigned readings, and engage in discussions of the weekly primary source materials. Each tutorial will be graded out of five (5): up to two (2) marks awarded for attendance (marks will be deducted for arriving late/leaving early); up to three (3) marks for a student's demonstrated level of engagement, preparedness and insightfulness. Each student's best nineteen (19) tutorial marks will count towards their final grade. A missed tutorial will receive a mark of 0%.

Late policy: no 'make ups' – full attendance is expected (no exceptions).

Quizzes

There will be a short quiz each week relating to the weekly lecture material and accompanying readings. Each student's best nineteen (19) quizzes will count towards their final grade. If a quiz is missed, it will receive a mark of 0%. There will be no extensions or re-writes for missed quizzes (for any reason), but as there will be a quiz each week, a missed quiz should not hurt a student's final grade. For a quiz to be counted, students must attend the corresponding lecture and complete the quiz synchronously in class (i.e. with and at the same time as everyone else).

Late policy: no extensions or rewrites will be offered (no exceptions)

Historiography Essays

This essay of 2,500 to 3,000 words is an opportunity for students to investigate how scholarly interpretations of a topic or issue can vary when different types of evidence are considered or evidence is simply interpreted differently. Students will need to critically examine and a range of scholarly arguments, demonstrating an understanding of their argument, sources of evidence and how they compare to others under investigation. Students will also have the opportunity to contribute their own opinion to this ongoing academic discourse. The assigned topic, documents to be examined and further instructions can be found on OWL.

Primary Sources Essays

This assignment allows students to investigate primary sources directly, and use relevant contemporary documents to formulate a convincing argument in the form of an essay between 2,500 and 3,000 words. Students will need to choose a topic from an approved list and conduct

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focused research in order to formulate a response, supporting their argument with primary source evidence. All evidence should be drawn from the Rosenwein reader (see Course Materials below). The list of topics and further instructions can be found on OWL.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required texts:

- Clifford Backman, *The Worlds of Medieval Europe*, 4th ed. (Oxford, 2022)
 - E-book 180-day rental \$46.99; e-book purchase: \$55.37
- Barbara H. Rosenwein. *Reading the Middle Ages*, 3rd ed. (Toronto, 2018)
 - Paperback: \$80.00; e-book 180-day rental: \$39.00; e-book purchase: \$65.00

Prices are approximate and subject to change.

Materials can be purchased from the bookstore (<https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbooks-and-course-materials>) or any other vender. Please note, the listed **edition**, older editions are not the same.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

| FALL TERM | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Week 1.1 | Introduction | No readings |
| | <i>Tutorial 1.1</i> | <i>No readings</i> |
| Week 1.2 | Legacy of Rome | Backman, pp. 3-26, 28-60 |
| | <i>Tutorial 1.2</i> | <i>Rosenwein, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 (pp. 1-8)</i> |
| Week 1.3 | Byzantines | Backman, pp. 116-46, 422-29, 590-93 |
| | <i>Tutorial 1.3</i> | <i>Rosenwein, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 4.8, 4.9, 6.3 (pp. 60-66, 69-78, 199-205, 298-302)</i> |
| Week 1.4 | Gothic Italy | Backman, pp. 62-90 |
| | <i>Tutorial 1.4</i> | <i>Rosenwein, 1.13, 1.15 (pp. 41-42, 44-48)</i> |
| Week 1.5 | Franks | Backman, pp. 149-81 |
| | <i>Tutorial 1.5</i> | <i>Rosenwein, 1.14, 1.16, 2.10, 2.11, 3.11 (pp. 43-44, 48-52, 88-95, 151-58)</i> |
| Week 1.6 | Anglo-Saxons | Backman, pp. 185-217 |
| | <i>Tutorial 1.6</i> | <i>Rosenwein, 2.12, 3.8, 4.16 (pp. 95-103, 135-42, 222-24)</i> |
| Week 1.7 | Anglo-Danes | No readings |
| | <i>Tutorial 1.7</i> | <i>Rosenwein, 4.18, 4.19, 4.20, 4.21 (pp. 228-39, plates 3A, 3B)</i> |
| Week 1.8 | Carolingian Decline | Backman, pp. 253-64 |
| | <i>Tutorial 1.8</i> | <i>Rosenwein, 3.4, 3.6, 3.12 (pp. 115-24, 128-31, 159-61)</i> |
| Week 1.9 | Norman Conquest | Backman, pp. 264-75 |
| | <i>Tutorial 1.9</i> | <i>Rosenwein, 5.15, 5.16, 5.17, 5.18 (pp. 271-78, plate 4)</i> |

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| READING WEEK | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Week 1.10 | England & France | Backman, pp. 395-409 |
| | <i>Tutorial 1.10</i> | <i>Rosenwein, 6.4, 6.12, 6.14, 7.17, 7.18 (pp. 302-5, 223-26, 330-36, 431-37)</i> |
| Week 1.11 | Hundred Years' War | Backman, pp. 543-52 |
| | <i>Tutorial 1.11</i> | <i>Rosenwein, 8.10, 8.11, 8.12, 8.13 (pp. 468-84)</i> |
| Week 1.12 | Warfare | No readings |
| | <i>Tutorial 1.12</i> | <i>See OWL</i> |
| Week 1.13 | Writing class | No readings |
| WINTER TERM | | |
| | <i>No tutorials</i> | |
| Week 2.1 | Germany | Backman, pp. 291-304, 364-90 |
| | <i>Tutorial 2.1</i> | <i>Rosenwein, 4.17, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 6.13, 7.19 (pp. 224-28, 251-57, 326-30, 438-39)</i> |
| Week 2.2 | Italy | Backman, pp. 284-89, 409-18 |
| | <i>Tutorial 2.2</i> | <i>Rosenwein, 6.9, 6.10, 6.11, 6.22, 7.11 (pp. 318-23, 366-71, 412-14)</i> |
| Week 2.3 | Schism | Backman, pp. 552-61 |
| | <i>Tutorial 2.3</i> | <i>Rosenwein, 1.5, 8.14 (pp. 11, 485-88)</i> |
| Week 2.4 | Al-Andalus | Backman, pp. 276-84, 599-603 |
| | <i>Tutorial 2.4</i> | <i>Rosenwein, 1.15, 3.7, 4.3, 6.5 (pp. 44-48, 132-35, 179-84, 305-16)</i> |
| Week 2.5 | Crusades | Backman, pp. 304-16 |
| | <i>Tutorial 2.5</i> | <i>Rosenwein, 5.11, 5.13, 5.14, 6.2, 7.4, 7.5 (pp. 261-63, 266-70, 294-98, 390-99)</i> |
| Week 2.6 | The Social Order | Backman, pp. 226-38, 246-53 |
| READING WEEK | | |
| | <i>Tutorial 2.6</i> | <i>Rosenwein, 4.5, 5.10, 6.17, 6.18, 6.19, 6.20 (pp. 190-95, 259-61, 350-56)</i> |
| Week 2.7 | Economics | Backman, pp. 219-26, 238-44, 587-90 |
| | <i>Tutorial 2.7</i> | <i>Rosenwein, 5.3, 6.7, 6.8, 7.12, 7.13 (pp. 246-47, 316-18, 414-18)</i> |
| Week 2.8 | Monasticism | Backman, pp. 92-114, 317-22, 603-5 |
| | <i>Tutorial 2.8</i> | <i>Rosenwein, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 4.4, 5.21, 5.22, 6.25 (pp. 20-34, 184-90, 284-89, 375-78)</i> |
| Week 2.9 | Knowledge | Backman, pp. 324-62, 431-57, 563-81, 594-98 |
| | <i>Tutorial 2.9</i> | <i>Rosenwein, 5.19, 7.2, 7.3, 7.6, 7.20 (pp. 278-80, 386-90, 399-401, 439-41)</i> |
| Week 2.10 | Belief | Backman, pp. 459-93, 496-522 |
| | <i>Tutorial 2.10</i> | <i>Rosenwein, 2.9, 6.23, 6.26, 7.14, 8.15 (pp. 85-87, 371-75, 378-79, 418-24, 488-89)</i> |
| Week 2.11 | Health | Backman, pp. 524-43 |
| | <i>Tutorial 2.11</i> | <i>Rosenwein, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4 (pp. 447-54)</i> |

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

Email Policy: Email is usually the best way to contact me. Emails requiring a response will typically receive one within 48 hours (excluding weekends and holidays) unless I have established that I will be unable to reply promptly. If your question is about course or assignment requirements, ensure that you check for the answer to your question on the syllabus, OWL and other course documents before sending me an email. I also reserve the right to ask you to attend office hours if your question is too complex or detailed to be answered over email (but email is often the best place to start for a quick answer).

To email me, please only use your Western account (@uwo.ca), and note in the body your email:

- your name
- your student number
- the course code (History 2401E).

Course announcements, should they be necessary, will be issued in class or via the Announcements tool in OWL.

Extensions and Late Policy: Students are expected to submit all work on time.

No extensions or exemptions will be granted for quizzes – these cannot be rescheduled or retaken for any reason. Likewise, missed tutorial marks cannot be made up. In both instances, there is ample opportunity to succeed, as not all quizzes nor all tutorials will count towards a student's final grade, allowing for unexpected issues to arise.

Extensions will also not be granted for essays; however, students have a one-week grace period (168 hours) following the due date to submit their work without a grading penalty. The cutoff point following this grace period will be enforced strictly (to the second) without exceptions – keep in mind, essays are *due* seven days before the end of the grace period. Requests for further accommodation issued by academic advising will not be considered unless the issue in question includes one full week before and after the due date (i.e. the entire grace period plus the week preceding the due date) and only in the most dire circumstances. The grace period is effectively a blanket extension granted to everyone in acknowledgement that things come up (people get sick, accidents happen, technical issues arise, schedules get busy, unexpected tragedies occur, etc.), but further extensions will not be granted on top of this. Students are encouraged to turn in work early to avoid potential problems – updates can be submitted until the end of the grace period. There is no limit on the number of a student can submit for grading, only the latest (most recent) will be marked. Essays submitted after the due date, however, will not receive feedback or comments, due to timing limitations.

Please note: This late policy supersedes all requests for academic consideration as per the University's current policy on Academic Consideration.

Use of Electronic Devices: The use of electronic devices for the purposes of taking notes is allowed; however, the use of any device to record audio or video during lectures and/or tutorials is forbidden.

Collaboration: Although discussion of topics is to be expected, all work produced and presented for grading needs to be the product of the individual, independent and original efforts of the student in question

Privacy: Students' names may be divulged in the classroom/OWL, both orally and in written form, to other members of the class. Students who are concerned about such disclosures should contact the course instructor to identify whether there are any possible alternatives to such disclosures.

AI: All work submitted by students in this class is to be original and entirely their own, and the use of generative AI tools (such as, but not limited to, ChatGPT) is not permitted in any form unless it is explicitly stated otherwise in the instructions of an assignment. If instructions allow the use of AI for a particular evaluation, its use should be limited to the specific ways stipulated in the instructions, including a full explanation of its use if required. The use of AI in any way beyond those explicitly permitted is not allowed.

Copyright and Intellectual Property: The educational materials developed for this course, including, but not limited to, videos, lecture notes, slides, PowerPoint files and displays, handout materials, assignments, evaluations, and any original materials posted to OWL, are the intellectual property of the course instructor. These materials have been developed for student use only and they are not intended for wider dissemination and/or communication outside of a given course. Posting or providing unauthorized audio, video, or textual material of lecture content, or any other materials developed for this course, to any third-party violates an instructor's intellectual property rights, and the Canadian Copyright Act. Recording lectures in any way is prohibited in this course unless specific permission has been granted by the instructor. Failure to follow these instructions may be in contravention of the university's code of student conduct and/or academic integrity policies, and will result in appropriate penalties. Participation in this course constitutes an agreement by all parties to abide by the relevant university policies, and to respect the intellectual property of others during and after their association with Western University.

Submitting Work: All evaluations must be submitted using OWL. Any work submitted by email, as a hardcopy, or in any other manner will not be accepted. If a grace period applies, any work submitted after this expires (even a second after) will not be accepted.

Technical Issues: Technical issues will not be considered grounds for any extra accommodation (such as an extension, exemption, or re-write). Please plan ahead, do not leave things to the last minute/day, and ensure you have access to a stable and reliable internet connection when submitting assignments and completing quizzes.

Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.