



**MERCER**  
COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## COURSE OUTLINE

<b>Course Number</b> <b>HIS 233</b>	<b>Course Title</b> <b>Medieval European History</b>	<b>Credits</b> <b>3</b>
<b>Hours:</b> <b>Lecture/Lab/Other</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Co- or Pre-requisite</b> <b>ENG 101</b>	<b>Implementation</b> <b>Semester &amp; Year</b> <b>Fall 2022</b>

### Catalog description:

Social, economic, technological, political, and religious history of Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa from the fall of the Roman Empire to the 1500s with particular attention given to Byzantium, the Muslim Empires, the Crusades, and the origins of Modern Europe by the early Renaissance.

**General Education Category:**  
**Not GenEd**

**Course coordinator:**  
**Dr. Craig R. Coenen, x3533, coenenc@mccc.edu**

### Required texts/other materials:

Aberth, John, *The Black Death: A Brief History with Documents*. Second Edition. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2017.

Asbridge, Thomas, *The Crusades: The Authoritative History of the War for the Holy Land*. Harper Collins, 2010.

Bennett, Judith M. and Sandy Bardsley, *Medieval Europe: A Short History*. Twelfth Edition. Oxford University Press, 2021.

Boccaccio, Giovanni, *The Decameron*. Penguin Books, 1972.

Conant, Jonathan. *Staying Rome: Conquest and Identity in African and the Mediterranean, 439-700*. Cambridge, 2012.

Fagan, Brian, *The Little Ice Age: How Climate Change Made History, 1300-1850*, Updated Edition. Basic Books, 2019.

Fossier, Robert, *The Axe and the Oath: Ordinary Life in the Middle Ages*. Princeton University Press, 2010.

Gies, Frances and Joseph, *Life in a Medieval Village*. Harper and Row, 1990.

Hanawalt, Barbara A., *Growing Up in Medieval London: The Experience of Childhood in History*. Oxford University Press, 1993.

Herrin, Judith, *Byzantium: The Surprising Life of a Medieval Empire*. Princeton University Press, 2007.

Jordan, William Chester, *Europe in the High Middle Ages*. Penguin Books, 2001.

Kennedy, Hugh. *The Prophet and the Age of Caliphates*. Second Edition. Harlow, 2004.

Miller, Maureen C., *Power and the Holy in the Age of the Investiture Conflict: A Brief History with Documents*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005.

Wickham, Chris, *The Inheritance of Rome: Illuminating the Dark Ages, 400-1000*. Penguin Books, 2009.

-----, *Medieval Europe: From the Breakup of the Roman Empire to the Reformation*, Yale University Press, 2017.

### **Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):**

***Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to:***

1. to read primary and secondary historical sources critically, with an understanding of their validity, perspective bias, audience, and context. (ILG 1, 5, 6,7, 8, 9)
2. to use information technologies in acquiring new knowledge and perspective. (ILG 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)
3. to construct an historical essay that presents a clear thesis, a persuasive argument, and well-researched supporting data. (ILG 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)
4. to identify major personalities of Medieval European History. (ILG 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)
5. to describe major movements, trends, and developments of Medieval European History. (ILG 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)
6. to discuss with authority, either in writing or verbally, the historical forces (e.g., religion, economics, politics, social stratification, gender, individual actors, technology, nature, intellectual and aesthetic thought, etc.) behind the major movements, trends, and developments of Medieval European History. (ILG 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)
7. to analyze other time periods and cultures with little or no ethnocentrism, thus displaying a sense of informed perspective and a deeper appreciation of the common threads of human nature. (ILG 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)

### **Course-specific Institutional Learning Goals (ILG):**

#### **Course-specific Institutional Learning Goals (ILGs)**

1. **Written and Oral Communication in English:** Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

4. **Technology:** Students will use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals.
5. **Social Science:** Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens.
6. **Humanities:** Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.
7. **History:** Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.
8. **Diversity and Global Perspective:** Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.
9. **Ethical Reasoning and Action:** Students will understand ethical frameworks, issues, and situations.
10. **Information Literacy:** Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.
11. **Critical Thinking:** Students will use critical thinking skills to understand, analyze, and apply information or solve problems.

### **Units of study in detail – Unit Student Learning Outcomes:**

**Units of Study in Detail.** The units of study listed below do not correspond to chapters in a textbook. Rather, the broad units, and the student learning outcomes associated with each unit, are universal for Mercer’s United States history survey courses.

### **Introduction to the course and the West in the later Roman Empire**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Understand all course requirements and assignments **(SLO 1-8; ILG 1, 5-11)**
- Demonstrate an understanding of the periodization and chronology of the course. **(SLO 1-8; ILG 1, 5-11)**
- Identify primary vs. secondary sources and discuss the uses and limitations of each. **(SLO 1-8; ILG 1, 5-11)**
- Explain the personal importance of understanding Medieval history. **(SLO 1-8; ILG 1, 5-11)**
- Demonstrate an understanding of the periodization and chronology of the course. **(SLO 1-8; ILG 1, 5-11)**
- Identify primary vs. secondary sources and discuss the uses and limitations of each. **(SLO 1-8; ILG 1, 5-11)**
- Understand all course assignments. **(SLO 1-8; ILG 1, 5-11)**
- Describe the cause, course, and effects of Roman power and decline in the centuries from 180 to 476. **(SLO 1-8; ILG 1, 5-11)**

### **Unit I: The Early Middle Ages, 400-1000 (SLO 1-8; ILG 1, 4-11)**

#### **1. Romans, Christians, and Barbarians**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Explain what is meant by the “Roman Peace” and how it lasted.
- Define the beginnings of Christianity and understand the major changes in the religion between the first and fifth centuries.
- Identify and analyze the most important political and religious trends of the Early Middle Ages.
- Relay the reasons for the decline of the western part of the Roman Empire.
- Evaluate the rise of an Eastern Roman Empire and its effects on Asia and North Africa.

- Discuss the key barbarian invaders, their impact on the Roman Empire, and their patterns of settlement.

## **2. Early Western Christendom, 500-700**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Compare and contrast the political, religious, and intellectual life of several successor states.
- Explain what is meant by localism and cite examples of localism in the Early Middle Ages.
- Evaluate the significance of the environment in shaping the Early Middle Ages.
- Assess the three main cultures of the era.
- Analyze the origins, growth, and significance of monasticism and understand the different types of monasticism in the Early Middle Ages.
- Describe and assess strengths and weaknesses in Early Medieval civilization.

## **3. The Byzantine Empire, 500-1000**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Explain the major differences between the Byzantine Empire and Western Christendom.
- Identify the major features and individuals of the Byzantine political system and assess their significance.
- Analyze the role of Byzantine religion in the Empire.
- Describe and understand the basic characteristics of Byzantine society, economics, and culture.
- Assess the military and political upheavals of the Byzantine Empire.

## **4. The Islamic Empires, 571-1100**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Explain the origin of Islam and elements of early Muslim beliefs.
- Assess the successes, divisions, and political history of the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties.
- Analyze the ways in which Western Europeans and Byzantines interacted with Muslim communities in the Early Middle Ages.
- Describe areas of scholarship developed and sustained by Muslim scholars in the Early Middle Ages and assess their impact on Western Europe.
- Compare and contrast views on tolerance and “race” in Early Medieval successor kingdoms.

## **5. Carolingian Europe, 700-850**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Understand the factors contributing to the rise and fall of the Carolingian Empire.
- Assess the relationship between the Church and the Carolingian state and discuss how this will have future consequences.
- Compare and contrast Charlemagne’s achievements with those who came both before and after his reign.
- Explain and analyze manorialism as the basis for everyday life in the Carolingian Empire and beyond.
- Analyze the power and complexity of the Carolingian Empire in relation to the Byzantine Empire and Islamic empires.

## **6. Division, Invasion, and Reorganization, 800-1000**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Identify and compare and contrast the three main groups of invaders into Western Europe in the ninth and tenth centuries.

- Assess the impact of invaders into Western Europe after the Carolingian decline.
- Analyze the system of vassalage and its relationship to the tumult brought on by invaders.
- Discuss and understand England's politics, economics, and culture up to the year 1000.
- Compare and Contrast the distinct political, social, and economic identity of West Francia, the German states and Italian city-states.

## **Unit II: The High Middle Ages, 1000-1300(SLO 1-8; ILG 1, 5-11)**

### **7. Economic Takeoff and Social Change in the Countryside, 1000-1300**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Compare and contrast the major changes in Western European society between 1000 and 1300 with those in the Byzantine and Islamic Empires.
- Explain the main features of the agricultural revolution.
- Describe and understand the difference between the village, the manor, and the parish and evaluate the impact each of these institutions had on peasants' lives.
- Assess the varying statuses of rural common people as slaves, serfs, and free peasants.
- Analyze the daily life of a medieval person and point out differences between social class.

### **8. Economic Takeoff and Social Change in Town and Court, 1000-1300**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Analyze the main features of the commercial revolution.
- Describe changes in the organization of towns and assess the impact of those changes.
- Evaluate the role of Jews and other minority populations in the development of urban society.
- Identify and discuss major changes in the functions and standards of living of the aristocracy.
- Assess changes in education.
- Explain the economic, social, and cultural impact of urbanization.

### **9. Popes and the Papacy, 1000-1300**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Compare and contrast papal and secular authority in the early Middle Ages with that of the Central Middle Ages.
- Analyze the sources of tension between popes and kings.
- Understand the major areas of Church reform in the Central Middle Ages.
- Explain the philosophical approaches to the relative power of the Church and political leaders.
- Assess the importance of Popes Gregory VII and Innocent III.
- Discuss the development of canon law in the Middle Ages.

### **10. New Paths to God, 1000-1300**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Explain changes in Jewish and Christian theology, philosophy, and practice during the Central Middle Ages.
- Analyze the major heresies of the Central Middle Ages and how they departed from orthodox Christian thought.
- Describe the monastic orders that arose during this period and compare and contrast them with each other and earlier monasticism.
- Identify the main mendicant orders and assess their roles in the Church.
- Address the role of women in the Christian church of the Central Middle Ages.

### **11. Conquests, Crusades, and Persecutions, 1100-1300**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Explain what is meant by the “Europeanization of Europe” in the Central Middle Ages.
- Analyze the rise in persecutions in this era and demonstrate an understanding of who was persecuted and why.
- Detail and assess the geographical expansion of European states into new regions in the Central Middle Ages.
- Assess the reasons for the first Crusades and their successes and failures.
- Analyze the short- and long-term impact of the Crusades in Europe and beyond.

## **12. States Made and Unmade, 1000-1300**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Compare and contrast the power struggle between nobles, the Church, and kings in European states.
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Holy Roman Empire.
- Discuss the growth and development of the English and French government in the Central Middle Ages.
- Describe the ways in which representative assemblies could be both a threat and an asset to kings.
- Analyze the role and place of common people in the political landscape of the Central Middle Ages.
- Explain the reasons why some governments got stronger and other became weaker in the Central Middle Ages.

## **13. Literature, Art, and Thought, 1000-1300**

- Identify the intellectual and artistic contributions to medieval European culture from Byzantium and Islamic civilizations.
- Analyze and explain the major trends in the study of medicine, law, and philosophy.
- Describe and assess the relationship between faith and reason, the debate over universals, and medieval political theory.
- Identify the major literary writers and their works with understanding how they relate to larger themes of the Central Middle Ages .
- Discuss the components of Romanesque and Gothic styles in architecture and know the difference between them.

### **Unit III: The Later Middle Ages, 1300-1500(SLO 1-8; ILG 1, 5-11)**

## **14. Famine, Plague, and Recovery, 1300-1500**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Understand and assess the ways in which the Later Middle Ages differed from the Central Middle Ages.
- Analyze the economic, climatic, and demographic crises of the early fourteenth century.
- Discuss the social, economic, and cultural impact of the Great Pestilence.
- Address the aftermath of the Plague and understand both the short-term and long-term effects for peoples of all stations.
- Describe how the Plague affected the Church.
- Analyze ways in which the Church changed that were not related to the Plague and why.

## **15. Toward the Sovereign State, 1300-1500**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Identify the most and least powerful states in Europe and assess why these places were strong or weak.

- Explain the factors that enabled some states to be more unified and others hopelessly divided.
- Analyze the beginnings, course, and outcome of the Hundred Years' War.
- Discuss what is meant by the term "New Monarch" and offer examples.
- Evaluate the impact of states on the periphery of Western Europe at 1500 on the development of the Holy Roman Empire, Italian States, France, Spain, England, Portugal, and the Netherlands.

## **16. Diversity and Dynamism in Late Medieval Culture, 1300-1500**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Assess the reasons for the increase in literacy and writing in vernacular languages and the impact that this had on daily life.
- Identify major figures in Humanist education, philosophy, and political thought and their connection to past scholars.
- Analyze the ways in which travel writing and maps of the world show European understanding of themselves and the rest of the world.
- Explain the main trends in late medieval art and architecture.
- Assess the extent to which early modern developments in art, scholarship, and religion were a bridge to the renaissance.

### **Optional instructional units:**

#### **Terry Jones' the Crusades**

This is an interactive assignment requiring parts of 3-4 class periods to complete. This role-playing activity would commence with students viewing selections from Jones' documentary on the Crusades and would include groups and presentations and interactive activities to better understand this time period.

#### **Terry Jones' Medieval Lives**

This is an interactive assignment requiring parts of 3-4 class periods to complete. This role-playing activity would commence with students viewing selections from the Medieval Lives documentary series and would include groups and presentations and interactive activities to better understand this time period.

#### **A Game of Thrones**

This is an interactive assignment requiring parts of 4-6 class periods to complete. Students would read and watch selections from A Game of Thrones and other associated readings and compete as characters from the books in a number of solo and interactive exercises to earn points for the right to sit on the Iron Throne.

### **Evaluation of student learning:**

**Examinations and Required Work.** Describe general guidelines for course work, assignments, tests. Explain how assignments (quizzes, tests, essays, projects, portfolios, practicums, etc.) are designed to evaluate the course objectives.

Instructors have some discretion in determining the format and content of required work. However, written and verbal assignments in any history course should be designed to help students develop the General Education skills (historical perspective, critical thinking, information literacy, writing, and public speaking) listed above. Instructors should emphasize these goals in their assignments and should state them in their written and verbal instructions to the students.

History courses must, therefore, utilize essay examinations, written reports and oral presentations as standard methods of assessing student learning. Below are the parameters within which instructors may operate:

**Reading Assignments**

- ♦ Textbook as well as primary documents should be clearly assigned to the students

**Exams & Quizzes**

- ♦ At least two (2), one-hour exams
- ♦ A Final Exam
- ♦ Exams must include an essay component.

**Writing Assignments** (to assess discipline specific knowledge, communication skills, and critical thinking skills). Students are expected to develop the ability to construct narratives—written or verbal or both—that clearly present their own thesis based on solid evidence that has been thoroughly and critically evaluated. Students are directed in developing competencies in accumulating evidence from a variety of sources, assessing the validity of the evidence, and extracting substantive generalizations from what they have discovered (Information Literacy).

- ♦ At least two (2), but preferably three (3), writing assignments
- ♦ At least one (1) essay should concentrate on the primary documents
- ♦ At least one (1) one assignment should incorporate library or internet research or both; this assignment may be a term paper or group presentation or some other type of project
- ♦ Length of the essays may be determined by the instructor; short (e.g., two-page) essays are acceptable

Course content related assessments should comprise at least 50% of graded assignments.