EUH-3121: THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

Professor: Dr. Florin Curta

Office: 202 Flint Hall

Office hours: W 1:00-2:30, or by appointment

Phone: 273-3367

E-mail: fcurta@ufl.edu

Class will meet MWF 9:35-10:25 in Flint 119
THE COURSE SYLLABUS

Fall 2018

Course description

"The past is a foreign country." There is perhaps no period in history to which the words of the American historian David Lowenthal may apply better than to the Early Middle Ages. The early part makes it exotic: it is not about gallant knights, courtly love, or crusaders, all of which "happened" much later, after AD 1000. By contrast, this was a world of warriors and missionaries, though the names of Beowulf and Boniface may not be as familiar to you as those of King Arthur and Joan of Arc. Moreover, the study of the Early Middle Ages presents a number of serious challenges, especially the combination of written sources and archaeological evidence. In fact, the lack of written sources explains why some historians refer to the early Middle Ages as the Dark Ages. In this course, we will examine some of these problems and attempt to present, if not a definite picture, then at least a survey of the current knowledge on this topic. Our focus will be on social and cultural history, our approach chronological and sometimes thematic. From Huns to Vikings, we will bring some light into the study of the Dark Ages.

TEXTBOOKS


In addition, there will be numerous readings from the Internet Medieval Sourcebook, compiled by Paul Halsall ([www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.html)).
NOTE: It is essential that you read the assigned sections in the textbook(s) at the time they are due. Class meetings will be organized around a lecture/discussion format and quizzes will necessitate familiarity with the material.

Assignments:

There is no attendance policy, but you are responsible for attending all lectures and reading the required texts. Class participation may be taken into account to determine the overall grade. The basis for evaluation of performance will be four quizzes and two exams (Midterm and Final). The unannounced quizzes are exclusively based on primary source readings from your Andrea and Byzantium books, as well as from the Internet Medieval Sourcebook. All quizzes will consist only of questions (no essay). A careful study of these texts is necessary for a good performance at the quiz. The Midterm and Final exams will cover everything from lectures and readings. Both Midterm and Final will consist of two parts: an identification and/or multiple-choice part, and a short essay, in which you will be asked to synthesize your knowledge of the topic, dropping in facts to show that you understand the concrete aspects of that topic. Only the Midterm will be cumulative. In other words, the Final examination will cover only the material since the Midterm examination. Please review the University's academic honesty guidelines and the Disability Resource Center checklist. Make-up Midterm and Final exam will be given for very serious reasons. There is no make-up for quizzes. Extra-credit work will be accepted only for students with active participation in class discussions. The format of the extra-credit option shall be discussed with the instructor during regular office hours. The following point-system will be used in determining the final grade:

- Quizzes: 40 points
- Midterm: 30 points
- Final exam: 30 points
- Total: 100 points

Grades:

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COURSE WEEKLY TOPICS

Week 1 (August 22-24): Introduction (terminology, purpose, and methods). The Late Roman Empire.

The third-century Roman Empire. The Tetrarchy. [Collins, 1-15; Andrea 19-27; Geanakoplos, 39 (no. 19), 229-230 (no. 164), and 252 (no. 177A)]; see also the on-line map and Ralph Mathisen's essay on Diocletian; see example of red-slip wares and a map of their distribution in the first century A.D.; see reconstructions of three types of Roman amphorae with stoppers; take a tour of the villa rustica in Hechingen-Stein and visit Carthage and Luni Constantine the Great [Collins 16-
30; Geanakoplos, 87 (no. 57) and 127-128 (no. 92); see also the Edict of Milan, Eusebius on the conversion of Constantine, the Nicene Creed, and Hans Pohlsander's article on Constantine; see also a map of Constantinople

**Week 2 (August 27-31): Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages**

- The fourth century [Collins 31-46; Geanakoplos 128-130 (nos. 93-94)]; see also Walter Roberts' article on Valentinian I and David Woods' article on Theodosius I
- The Late Roman Empire and the Church [Collins 61-78; Andrea 34-38 (Augustine) and 38-39; Geanakoplos 131-132 (no. 95 - Eusebius on the universal empire and the universal church) and 179-180 (no. 129 - St. Gregory of Nyssa on mysticism)]; see the mosaic of Christ Victor in the archbishops' chapel in Ravenna; see also the passio of SS. Perpetua and Felicity and the on-line map

**Week 3 (September 3-7): "Barbarians at the gates?"**

- Monday, September 3: Labor Day - no classes
- Migration(s) and Völkerwanderungszeit; the Adrianople syndrome [Collins 47-60; Geanakoplos 329-330 (no. 243 - Synesius on the Gothic threat)]; see also Ammianus Marcellinus on the battle of Adrianople; see also the on-line map
- AD 476 [Collins 79-98; Geanakoplos 330 (no. 244 - Jordanes on Odovacar)]; see also a brief essay on Romulus Augustulus

**Week 4 (September 10-14): Some barbarians**

- Who were the Goths? [Andrea 41-47, 54-60 (Tacitus and Cassiodorus); Geanakoplos 327-328 (no. 241 - Wulfila converts the Goths)]; see also Jordanes, Getica 25-48 and a brief presentation of the Wielbark archaeological assemblages; see also the first page of the Gospel according to St. Luke in Wulfila's Gothic translation (Codex Argenteus)
- The Huns (Geanakoplos 332-333 (no. 247 - Priscus on Attila the Hun)); for the archaeology of the Hunnic empire, see a few examples of gem-encrusted jewelry (fibulae); see also a modern reconstruction of Hunnic bows, based on the archaeological evidence; see also Jordanes' account of the battle at Campus Mauriacus
Week 5 (September 17-21): Successor states...

- ... in Italy: the kingdom of the Ostrogoths [Collins 99-109; Geanakoplos 331 (no. 245 - Anonymus Valesianus on Theodoric)]; see also Theodoric's letters and the on-line map
- ... in Gaul: the Frankish kingdom [Collins 109-113; Andrea 48-54, 60-68 (Salian Law, Gregory of Tours on Clovis); Geanakoplos 331-332 (no. 246 - Gregory of Tours on Clovis as Roman consul)]; see also the on-line map

Week 6 (September 24-28): The sixth century

- Justinian's Reconquista [Collins 114-132; Andrea 73-81 (Procopius); Geanakoplos 30-31 (no. 12 - Procopius on Justinian's Reconquista), 73-75 (no. 48 - the plan of the Digest), 76-77 (no. 49B - Corpus Iuris Civilis on natural law, law of nations, and civil law), 258-260 (no. 183 - Procopius on the Nika riot), 319-321 (nos. 235-236 - Procopius on Theodora)]; see also the on-line map and other selections from the Corpus Iuris Civilis
- Sassanian Persia and Byzantium [Collins 133-150; Geanakoplos 134 (no. 98A - Theophanes on Heraclius melting down church treasures) and 334-335 (no. 248 - Antiochus Strategus' view of the sack of Jerusalem by the Persians)]; see the on-line map and Judith Herrin's analysis of the Byzantine-Sassanian conflict

Week 7 (October 1-5): Islam

- From Muhammad to the Umayyad caliphate [Collins 133-150; Andrea 87-98 (surahs from the Qu'ran; the Pact of Umar); Geanakoplos 338-339 (no. 250 - Al-Baladhuri on the conquest of Alexandria)]; see also Fred Donner, The Early Islamic Conquests
- Islamic culture; see Oleg Grabar, Ceremonial and Art at the
Umayyad Court; see a picture of a dirham and another of the Dome of the Rock (exterior, interior decoration, and cross section); see also the Great Mosques of Kairouan (prayer hall with two domes and courtyard with minaret) and Cordoba (aerial view, arches, and entrance to the mihrab)

Week 8 (October 8-12): A case study: Spain

- Visigothic Spain [Collins 151-160]; see also selections from the Code of Euric
- Muslim Spain; see Ibn abd-el Hakem on the conquest of Visigothic Spain and the on-line map

Week 9 (October 15-19): Far and not too far from the Empire

- Anglo-Saxon Britain [Collins 173-197]; see also the on-line map, a brief presentation of the Anglo-Saxon village excavated at West Stow, and selections from Gildas' De excidio Britanniae; see an illumination from Codex Amiatinus and a coin of King Offa; see also a map and an image of Offa's Dyke
- The Lombards [Collins 198-219]; see the on-line map of the Lombard kingdom before its conquest by Charlemagne; see also an image of a Lombard king on the so-called helmet of Agilulf

Week 10 (October 22-26): The early medieval Church

- Midterm
- Orthodoxy and theological controversies; mission and conversion (Geanakoplos 145-147 (no. 106 - Socrates on the Council of Nicea), 148-150 (no. 108 - the Council of Chalcedon), 152 (no. 110B - the sixth ecumenical council on Monotheletism); see also the chronology of Arianism; see also Bede on the conversion of England and the collection of texts on St. Boniface and the conversion of Germany

Week 11 (October 29-November 2): Western and Eastern Christianity
• Iconoclasm [Collins 220-235; Geanakoplos 152-154 (no. 111 - John of Damascus' defence of icons), 154-156 (no. 112 - the decisions of the iconoclastic Church council of 754), 156-157 (no. 113 - the condemnation of Iconoclasm at the council of 787), and 157 (no. 114 - Emperor Leo V's iconoclastic views)]

• Monasticism east and west [Collins 236-262; Andrea 99-109 (the Benedictine rule); Geanakoplos 165-167 (no. 120 - the Life of St. Anthony), 167-169 (no. 121 - St. Basil's "Longer Rules"), 168-170, and 177-178 (Theodore of Sykeon and the charisma of the monk)]; see also the brief presentation of the Great Lavra at Mount Athos.

• Friday: Homecoming - no classes

Week 12 (November 5-9): Early medieval culture and art

• Early Byzantine art [Geanakoplos 192-195 (no. 139 - the Akathistos Hymn), 196-197 (no. 141 - Paul the Silentiary's description of Hagia Sophia), 393-395 (no. 296 - St. Basil on the Classics), 421-422 (no. 317 - the Life of St. Theodore of Sykeon), and 432-434 (no. 324 - Philoponos against Aristotle)]; visit the basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo and the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia (with the famous representation of Christ as the Good Shepherd) in Ravenna; see a presentation of the Rossano Gospel; visit the Church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople; see a seventh-century icon of the enthroned Virgin with Child (St. Catherine Monastery, Mount Sinai).

• Insular art and the "animal style" on the Continent; for examples of Insular manuscript illumination, see the Lindisfarne Gospels.

Week 13 (November 12-16): New powers

• Monday: Veteran's Day - no classes

• Rise of Bulgaria [Geanakoplos 346-347 (no. 257 - Emperor Nicephorus I's campaign against Krum); 47-348 (no. 258 - the Life of Methodius) and 348-349 (no. 259 - the Annals of St. Bertin on the pagan revolt against Prince Boris)]; see maps of Great Bulgaria and a brief presentation of Kubrat's burial in Malo Pereshchepyne; visit the ruins of Pliska and the Madara Horseman; see a map of Danube Bulgaria during the early Middle Ages and another of Great Moravia;
see examples of the Glagolitic and Cyrillic scripts; see an icon of Sts. Cyril and Methodius

- Carolingian Francia [Collins 160-172, 280-317; Andrea 135-152 (Einhard's Life of Charlemagne, Charlemagne's letters and capitularies); Geanakoplos 356-357 (no. 266 - Michael II's letter to Louis the Pious)]; see also the on-line map and an example of Carolingian script

**Week 14 (November 19-23): The ninth century**

- The decline of the Carolingian empire [Collins 318-343]; see also the on-line map and Agobard of Lyon
  - Wednesday, November 21-Friday, November 23: Thanksgiving - no classes

**Week 15 (November 26-30): The tenth century**

- Vikings and Magyars [Collins 344-370; Geanakoplos 118-120 (no. 89A - Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus on the Pechenegs; 349-350 (no. 260 - the Annals of St. Bertin on the Rus'), 350-351 (no. 261 - Photius on the Viking attack on Constantinople), 351-352 (no. 262 - the Russian Primary Chronicle on the conversion of Olga), and 352-353 (no. 263 - the Russian Primary Chronicle on Prince Vladimir's conversion)]; see also the on-line map and three views on Viking raids in Francia; for Vikings in Russia, see the Russian Primary Chronicle; you may wish to visit the Viking-age sites at Llanbedrgoch (Wales) and Anse aux Meadows (Canada); see also an essay on the Magyar raids
  - Tuesday: Towards A.D. 1000 [Collins 394-429]; see a map of Germany, ca. 962.

**Week 16 (December 3-5): Conclusion and revision for final exam**

- Wednesday, December 12, 12:30-2:30: Final Exam