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HIST 319  
EUROPE IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

This course provides an introduction to post-Roman, early medieval Western Europe—roughly from 500 to 800 CE. Our guide will be a survey by the world’s preeminent historian of the period: Peter Brown’s *The Rise of Western Christendom* (10<sup>th</sup> ed., 2013). Beginning in Week 3, we will alternate our reading of Brown with discussion of primary sources in translation (available on Canvas, marked with an \* below). Following Brown, our emphasis will be on religion and culture, broadly defined.

The course objectives are threefold: 1) to practice reading attentively and critically, whether of primary sources from the Middle Ages or the work of modern scholars; 2) to analyze primary source texts and write logical, compelling essays that interpret them; and 3) to gain an understanding of late Roman and early medieval society, as it evolved over the course of several centuries in various regions of Europe, insofar as the written or material evidence allows.

Students are expected to come to class having read the texts, prepared to ask and answer questions about them. You are strongly encouraged to print out the materials provided via Canvas in order to highlight and comment upon them as you read, and in order to have them available during class discussion. This course is structured more along “Socratic” lines than as a lecture course.

Regular quizzes, as well as active discussion, will assess your engagement with the material. Quizzes might be unannounced, in-class writing assignments, but more often students will be asked to prepare answers to questions to turn in at the beginning of the next class. Quiz topics will be noted in class, and also emailed to the entire

class through Canvas. Students are responsibly for knowing pre-announced quiz topics by one of these two means.

As a general rule, your written reponses to pre-announced quizzes will feed directly into class discussion; quizzes must, therefore, be turned in at the start of class (and not after taking notes on our discussion). They may be typed or handwritten, so long as they are completely legible. Please do not email your quizzes to me unless the circumstances are exceptional.

Quizzes will be graded according to a simple scale: check-plus, check, or check-minus.

Approximately 10 quizzes will be assigned throughout the term. However, only 8 will count toward your participation grade. Students may either elect to skip a quiz, take a pass for absence or illness, drop their lowest quiz grades, or some combination. Class participation over the quarter will be averaged with these 8 quizzes, calculated at double the value of a quiz. Altogether, quizzes and participation in class discussion comprise 30% of your final course grade.

In addition, two short papers and a take-home final exam provide the opportunity to show deeper mastery of course themes and progress toward course objectives.

The grade distribution is as follows:

Participation/Quizzes	30%
Papers	20% each
Final Exam	30%

For the two short papers, students may choose among various topics due at different points in the quarter, but may not submit more than two (whether for extra credit or make up). You are encouraged to edit carefully and submit your best work. The basic standards by which all written work will be evaluated are those for the History Department as a whole, available [here](#). For more information about my own expectations for student writing, click [here](#). All papers are due in class on the date indicated; late papers will be penalized and after one week will not be accepted.

If you have any questions about the course or an assignment, either before it is due or after it has been returned to you, please do not hesitate to contact me by email, drop by during my office hours, and/or make an appointment.

## SCHEDULE

### **Week 1**

Oct 2 – Welcome to the course

Oct 4 – Introducing the end of Rome: Issues (Intro, pp. 1-34)

### **Week 2**

Oct 7 – Introducing the end of Rome: Background (Ch. 1, pp. 37-52)

Oct 9 – Christianity and Empire (Ch. 2, pp. 53-71)

Oct 11 – Christian times (Ch. 3, pp. 72-92)

### **Week 3**

Oct 14 – Saints (Ch 4, pp. 93-122)

Oct 16 – On the frontiers (Ch 5, pp. 123-41)

Oct 18 – \*Gregory of Tours, *Histories*, on Clovis

### **Week 4**

Oct 21 – *Reverentia & rusticitas* (Ch. 6, pp. 142-65)

Oct 23 – \*Gregory of Tours, *Miracles*

Oct 25 – Gregory the Great (Ch. 8, pp. 190-215)

### **Week 5**

Oct 28 – \*Gregory the Great, *Pastoral Care*

Oct 30 – Monasticism (Ch. 9, pp. 219-31)

Nov 1 – \*Benedict's Rule

### **Week 6**

Nov 4 – \*Life of Radegund

Nov 6 – Education and Culture (Ch. 10, pp. 232-41; \*Cassiodorus)

Nov 8 – Columbanus and Continental Monastic Revival (Ch. 10 cont., pp. 241-47; Ch. 11, pp. 248-66)

### **Week 7**

Nov 11 – Irish Christianity (Ch. 14, p. 321-39)

Nov 13 – Christianity in Britain (Ch. 15, 340-54)

Nov 15 – \*Bede

### **Week 8**

Nov 18 – “Micro-Christendoms” (Ch. 16, pp. 355-79)

Nov 20 – Manuscript Culture (\*M. Brown, *Painted Labyrinth*, pp. 14-37)

Nov 22 – A New Continental Order (Ch. 18, pp. 407-33)

### **Week 9**

Nov 25 – Missionaries (\*Boniface)

Nov 27 – Charlemagne (Ch. 19, pp. 434-62)

Nov 29 – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

### **Week 10**

Dec 2 – \*Einhard

Dec 4 – Scandinavians and Christianity (Ch. 20, pp. 463-89)

Dec 6 – Wrapping up: Issues (Preface to 10<sup>th</sup> edition)

FINAL EXAM – due at the regularly scheduled exam time: Wed Dec 11 at 10:15 am