Hist 6820: Research Seminar in Medieval History
Medieval Historians and their (Hi)stories, 900-1200

Fall 2010
Prof. Robert Berkhofer
HIST 6820-100 (#43993) Office: 4424 Friedmann
Th 3:30-6:00pm Phone: 387-5352 (use email!)
Dunbar 2205 (1st meeting, then History seminar room) Hours: TR 1:45-3:00
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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will examine how narrative histories were written in the
High Middle Ages (900-1300) in Western Europe and their use for both medieval and modern
historians. Selections will exemplify different types or genres of historical writing and will
emphasize France and England but not to the exclusion of neighboring areas of Western Europe.
The class will also consider the possibilities for doing research on the various types of narratives
or in the regions to which they pertain.

COURSE OBJECTIVES This course will teach PhD and MA students to read different types of
medieval narratives and understand their use and value as historical evidence. This course will
also help prepare history students for field exams by familiarizing them with some current trends
in historical research. For those interested in medieval studies, this course will provide a
theoretical perspective on source problems common to all medievalists.

REQUIRED BOOKS (for purchase, in paperback unless otherwise noted):
Galbert of Bruges, The Murder of Charles the Good, trans. J.B. Ross (New York: Columbia
Patrick Geary, Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First
Chris Given-Wilson, Chronicles: The Writing of History in Medieval England (London:
Rosamond McKitterick, Perceptions of the Past in the Early Middle Ages (Notre Dame: Notre
0340808462.
Leah Shopkow, History and Community: Norman Historical Writing in the Eleventh and Twelfth
Brian Stock, Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past, reprint (Philadelphia: University of
Suger, The Deeds of Louis the Fat, trans. Richard C. Cusimano and John Moorhead
REQUIRED READINGS (not for purchase; on electronic or two-hour reserve):
A variety of primary sources in original language (distributed in class)

The following fascicles of the Typologie des sources du Moyen Age will be particularly relevant (Rare Books and Waldo reference; reprints are available):

RECOMMENDED READINGS: See weekly recommendations in schedule below; consider purchasing the work about which you will be writing your précis.

COURSE FORMAT: The course will be conducted in weekly seminars, which will include extensive discussion, translation, and student presentations, as well as some instructor presentations in Unit I. Discussions will focus on assigned readings and sources for each week. Various written assignments will culminate in a research paper on primary source materials in their original language, chosen by the student in consultation with the instructor. During the latter part of term, the class will meet to review and critique drafts of the research papers.

GRADE COMPONENTS: Class participation, 20%; final paper, 40%; book précis, 10%, peer review of research papers, 10%; class presentation, 10%. You must complete all elements of the
course to receive a passing grade. All late submissions will be penalized, in fairness to students who complete the assignments in a timely fashion. The grade scale is as follows: 93-100 = A, 87-92 = BA, 83-86 = B, 77-82 = CB, 73-76 = C, 67-72 = DC, 60-67 = D, and less than 60 = F.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION: Much of your grade will be determined by your efforts in our weekly meetings. Mere attendance during class hours will not receive credit towards participation, which should instead be indicated through vocal outbursts giving evidence of cognition; in other words, you must talk about your ideas, your reflections on the readings, and the comments of others in class. To be an effective participant, you will need to complete all readings and translations prior to class. A class that only meets once per week cannot be skipped, if you wish to receive a satisfactory grade. Attendance is mandatory, absences must be documented and excused (preferably in advance). More than one absence could result in a lower course grade. Class participation will count for 20% of the final grade.

BOOK PRÉCIS: In unit II, the students will write a short (2-3 page) analytic book précis of a recommended book and will explain the book in class (see schedule below). See attached directions on how to write the précis. These précis will count for 10% of the final grade.

CLASS PRESENTATION: At the end of Unit I, students will present on different genres of historical writing on Sep 30. This presentation will count for 10% of the final grade. During Unit II, each student will choose a week to lead in translating the source(s) for the day. Students will also present the findings of their research paper in summary form during the last class.

RESEARCH PAPER: In consultation with the instructor, students will select a medieval historical work as the focus of their research paper. Students will prepare a preliminary list of possible sources on Sept 23rd. Students will submit a brief research proposal with attached bibliography of sources and readings, due Oct 7th. Students will produce a full working draft of their paper, due Nov 11th, and will conduct peer review of each other’s papers on Nov 18th in class. The narrative portion of the final paper should be no less than 20 pages in length (with apparatus as necessary) and the revised paper is due on the last day of class, Dec 9th. This paper will count for 40% of the final grade.

Students with Disabilities: You should register your disability with Disabled Student Resources and Services, (269-387-2116 or www.dsrs.wmich.edu). You should discuss any accommodation you need with them and they will give you a form listing the approved accommodations to give to me to sign. This process should be completed by the end of the second week of class.

Late Work: Make-up exams will be given only for valid, university-approved written excuses, at the instructor's discretion. Make-up exams must be taken as soon as possible after the original test, preferably the day the student returns to class, at a time chosen by the instructor (usually my office hours). Unexcused late papers will be penalized two full letter grades per day they are late (e.g., a "B" paper will become a "D" paper).

Email/IP Policy: Students should use their WMU email address for all correspondence related to this course. Students will not reproduce any portion of course materials (including notes on lecture) without the instructor’s express written permission.
READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

The course materials are a combination of primary source texts and related secondary works. The “Sources” listed below are short selections in the original language (usually Latin) for close reading and translation in class; “Sources in Translation” are usually larger selections of the same work in English, which provide context for the original language material. “Readings” are descriptive, methodological, or theoretical works useful for analyzing the sources.

Unit I: Medieval Histories—Definitions, Models, and Types

Week 1 (Sep 9) Defining Historia


Readings: R.C. Van Caenegem, *Introduction aux sources de l'histoire médiévale* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), ch 1, 21-80 (“sources narratives au sens strict”). Waldo Ref: D117 .C22x 1997. [Note: A less complete English version from 1977 also exists in Reference. Special Collections also has copies. You may read the introduction in English, but you must consult the most recent French version for bibliography.]


Week 2 (Sep 16) Medieval Models I: Chronicles and Gesta


Recommended: Van Houts, *Local and Regional Chronicles.*
Week 3 (Sep 23) Medieval Models II: Annals


Recommended: Michael McCormick, Les annales du haut Moyen Age.

Preliminary list of possible historical narrative sources for final paper, with full citations of editions including WMU call number (no less than 3) due today in class.

Week 4 (Sep 30) Modern Approaches to Medieval Historical Writings


Readings (types): Deliyannis, Medieval Historiography, introduction, 1-13 and selected chapters [on reserve]. There are four chapters on early medieval historiography (universal history, national/ethnic history, local/institutional history, and biography/hagiography) and eight on later medieval historiography (the same four, plus dynastic, urban, contemporary, and legendary history). Students will be assigned one of these eight topic areas, read the relevant chapter(s) and report their findings in class.

Class Presentations on Types of History

Unit II: History and History-Writing in High Middle Ages (1000-1200)

Week 5 (Oct 7): Regional Histories, Origin Stories and the Norman Myth


**Research Proposal (1 page) and bibliography of sources and readings due**

Week 6 (Oct 14): History as mundane, miracle, and marvel


Week 7 (Oct 21) Contemporary or eyewitness history


Week 8 (Oct 28) Dynastic history

Sources: Lluís Barrau Dihigo and Jaume Massó Torrents, *Gesta comitum Barcinonensium* (Barcelona, 1925), 3-11. (Chs. 1-8, Genealogy of Counts).

Sources in Translation: *Gesta comitum Barcinonensium* (entire), Trans. Bruce L. Venarde (handout).


**Peer Review Groups determined in class.**

Week 9 (Nov 4) Deeds of Churchmen


Week 10 (Nov 11) Lives of Rulers

Sources: Suger, *Vie de Louis VI le Gros*, ed. Henri Waquet (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1964), 218-31 and 240-50, ch 28 and 30. (German invasion of 1124, Death of Charles the Good), [Note: May be changed to more modern Gasparri edition, if available.]


Recommended: None—work on paper draft.

**Complete Draft of Research Papers due**
Make enough copies for members of your peer review group and Prof. Berkhofer.

Week 11 (Nov 18): (Re)Writing Histories

**Written Peer Review due. Discussion of drafts conducted in class.**

Week 12 (Nov 25): No Class—Thanksgiving

Unit III: Historical Writing Before and After the High Middle Ages

Week 14 (Dec 2): Looking Backward: Problems of Memory


Week 15 (Dec 9): Looking Forward: Triumph of the Vernacular


**FINAL PAPER DUE in class**