

WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY: GRADUATE LIBERAL STUDIES PROGRAM

**SOCS 653 Crusades and the Crusading Ideal**

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No medieval events or ideas are better known and more intriguing than the Crusades. Part piety, part warfare, this series of expeditions has a fascinating and conflicted history, growing out of concerns for pilgrimage, penance, and lawless violence in Europe. Their military and political expeditions brought Europeans into first violent, then sometimes peaceful contact with Eastern Orthodox Christians and the various forces of Mediterranean Islam from Spain to Syria. Eventually, crusading expanded to embrace warfare against Eastern European pagans and Catholic heretics. What's more, the Crusades had direct and sometimes dire implications for Europe's Jewish minority. While the main military activity lasted for about 200 years, the implications, controversy and rhetoric have persisted to contemporary times. By focusing on medieval sources, yet guided by modern historians' writings, this course will attempt to survey the development and significance of the crusading movement. This will include the seven main crusades to the Near East, the Reconquista in Spain, the Teutonic Knights in the East, as well as puzzles such as the children's crusade. We'll also examine the Crusades as an idea from its origins in the "dark ages" of early medieval Europe even to its echoes after the Middle Ages as a synonym for both intolerant war as well as righteous war.

The course will examine such ideas as the theory of the peace of God, the just war, and pilgrimage, asking questions about legalized violence. Special attention will be given to the perception and reaction of non-Catholics to the crusaders, whether Muslim, Byzantine, or Jewish. As important will be the personalities and mythologies that emerged from the crusades and their role in making possible the idea of the chivalric knight and the Christian king, embodied by such people as the emperors Frederick I and II, King Richard the Lionheart, Saladin, St. Louis of France but also in the monastic military orders, pre-eminently the Knights Templar and Hospitallers. Ultimately, we seek to explain why the crusades occurred, how they endured, and why they failed. While focusing on the medieval period, some consideration of early modern Crusading movement and comparable activities in the modern world will also be discussed.

**Readings will include:**

*The Crusades: A Reader*, Edited by S.J. Allen & Emilie Amt;

Thomas Madden, *A New History of the Crusades* ISBN: 0742538230;

Jonathan Riley-Smith, ed. *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*

Possibly limited additional readings and handouts.

## **Expectations:**

### *Papers and Grading:*

In addition to timely reading of assigned sources and participation in class discussion, students will write two papers. One will be 1000-1200 words; the other 1500-2000 words long. These will be based on the scheduled readings, but also on additional ones from Riley-Smith, *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*. More specific assignments will be provided in due course

The first paper will be due on July 19th.

The second paper will be due on August 4th.

Papers should be submitted electronically via email attachment, unless other instructions are given at the time that the assignment directions are circulated.

If students anticipate difficulty completing any of their work in a timely manner, they should contact the professor as soon as possible so that the problem can be discussed. Late work will certainly suffer deductions, especially when no advance notice was given to the professor.

Class participation will also contribute significantly to the student's final grade, varying it by up to one full grade, i.e. from a B+ to a C+ or A+. Most often the variation will be much less than this.

### *Class Sessions:*

Each class will likely span the full three hours but there will be a ten-minute break at an opportune moment. There will typically be a period of lecture or lecture discussion introducing the material for the first part of the class, then general discussion, followed by the break. The latter part of the class will consist of discussion of particular documents previously assigned and then a brief introduction to the next class's materials, sometimes through a short document previously unseen as well as by a brief lecture. The lecture section at beginning and end of the class will also attempt to provide relevant background. This is a schematic plan but the chemistry of the class and the need for more lectures or the pleasure of more discussion may take us towards a different pattern.

Films and videos: There are likely to be three or four sessions in which part of the lecture component will be taken up with videos. This will include screening *Kingdom of Heaven* and possibly other items yet to be confirmed.

No one is presumed to have any previous knowledge of the Middle Ages, the crusades, or medieval religion. The instructor and readings will provide needed background, but additional background readings can be suggested if needed.

*Key point: Be willing to ask questions at any time. Never imagine the question is stupid. There's almost always someone else thinking the same thing or it's something we'd all do well to pause and consider.*

Permission to use computers or other electronic devices must be cleared with the professor. Generally, electronic distractions are to be discouraged. The internet and all other extra-classroom connections should be turned off or left outside of the class, even where computers are used for note-taking.

Generally, students should endeavour to minimise disruption by lateness, coming or going, or by other behaviours that might be thought rude, but common sense will prevail, I'm sure.

Class attendance is a crucial part of learning and evaluation in this course. Conversation is integral as well and student participation is will be measured by the overall quality of a student's contributions but consistent participation is a good way to demonstrate quality and improvement.

## The Topics

1. July 6: Introduction: The Middle Ages and the Background to the First Crusade: 312-1095 (Ridley Scott's *Kingdom of Heaven*, I)
2. July 8: The Crusades Begin: Religious Enthusiasm, Papal Power and Military Luck (Ridley Scott's *Kingdom of Heaven*, II)
3. July 11: The Catholic Presence in the East: The Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Military Orders through the Second Crusade
4. July 13: The Third Crusade: Kings, Chivalry, the Noble Enemy and the Loss of Jerusalem
5. July 18: Corruption of the Ideal: The Fourth Crusade and the Politics of Compromise
6. July 20: The Crusade as Papal Political Tool: Kings, emperors and heretics
7. July 25: European Crusades: Frederick II and the German Crusades (Teutonic Knights)
8. July 27: The Reconquest of Spain and The Crusades from the Arab and Byzantine perspective
9. August 1: Mounting Failures and The Fall of the Latin Kingdom and the Templars
10. August 3: Just Wars, Religious Intolerance and the Great Enemy: From the Turk to the Jihadist

## Readings

(instructor may adjust readings as necessary giving as much notice as possible):

1. July 6: Introduction: Madden, *The Crusades*, 1-13; Allen & Amt, 1-13, 17-20 (20-24), 28-35.
2. July 8: Madden, 15-35; Allen & Amt, 39-80 (trim).
3. July 11: Madden, 37-61; Allen & Amt, 85-86, 93-120, 181-207, 211-17.
4. July 13: Madden, 63-95; Allen & Amt, 133-38, 148-77.
5. July 18: Madden, 97-120; Allen & Amt, 225-40, 249-51.
6. July 20: Madden, 121-41; Allen & Amt, 241-48.
7. July 25: Madden, 143-65; Allen & Amt, 285-95.
8. July 27: Allen & Amt, 297-326, 331-39, 341-75 (selections tba); Riley-Smith, 217-59
9. Aug. 1: Madden, 167-212; Allen & Amt, 410-17.
10. Aug. 3: Madden, 213-25; Riley-Smith, 365-91

*FOUNDATION OPTION:*

Those students undertaking the foundation option will have an enriched course experience, focussed on the cultivation of historical writing and the necessary critical thinking that grounds historical work.

The foundation option includes the writing of two additional papers and three meetings with the professor, two about the assignments, and a third at the end of the course used to discuss and assess the student's progress.

Foundation Option Essays:

1. Critical exposition of an historical argument:
  - a. For this assignment, the students will select one of the otherwise unassigned chapters from Riley-Smith and will read it and write a paper that identifies the argument that the author is making, attempts to understand the positions that the author might also be opposing, attempts to assess the strength of the case made by the paper, and finally offers possible lines of criticism of the chapter's argument.
  - b. The product will be a 1200-1500 word critical essay.
  - c. The student will have a discussion with the professor after the paper is graded to discuss its success and possible areas of improvement.
  
2. Research as Synthesis:
  - a. In this assignment the student will undertake a short research paper. The paper should reflect a topic that the student is interested in learning about or learning more about. The precise topic will be developed in the context of consultation with the instructor through a required office visit. The source emphasis will be on a chronicle or historical sources and especially the challenges of determining the reliability and character of a source.
  - b. The product here will be a 2500-3000 word essay, advancing a clear and historically interesting argument.