Text & Transmission

The ‘Middle Ages’

There are four operative ideas which tie together our plan for a semester-long conversation.

We seek to prepare you to interrogate the idea of an era – the fourth through fourteenth centuries – as “middle.” The first to use “middle” to refer to some thing uniting this particular period was the fourteenth-century poet Petrarch. Petrarch called the Latin literature that was not classical, “medieval.” But it was modern historians who inflated the idea, asserting the power to characterize the political, economic, religious, and social practices of the peoples inhabiting the regions from the Euphrates to Ireland, and from North Africa to Scandinavia, as a unit. This inflated idea supported the plot of modernity: the historical narrative that explained urbanizing and expanding sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe. We will prepare you to interrogate this modernist “medieval” project by starting and ending too early (our first text is of the second-century B.C., and our last from the early thirteenth century A.D.). We will also prepare you to interrogate the “modern medieval” with an alternative geography (our attention is much more firmly fixed upon the cultures of the polyglot Mediterranean, than upon continental Europe).

We will insist that the periodizations, chronologies, and over-arching narratives you use to make sense of our ‘medieval’ colloquium remain multiple. Furthermore, we will insist you see such concepts as constructed rather than given. Our readings broadly progress from earlier to later, but there are frequent overlaps where we will ‘go back’ to an earlier work, following certain ideas and projects across linguistic and geographic boundaries. So that we can watch a number of complex ideas germinate and take root we will hover over some centuries. But we are also finite. Other centuries – with their delightful, confounding complexities – we will skip, entirely.

We rely on you to remain constantly aware of the incompleteness of our course of study.

In our realization of this approach, it is more accurate to say that we are following ideas than that we are covering times: we divided your readings into “conversations” rather than “periods.”

We will equip you with a habit of study attuned to the one thing that does unite the regions and centuries of the traditional medieval: the hand-copied codex. You will train your selves and each other to begin interpretive readings aware of how – to the best of our knowledge – the text you are reading was preserved, transmitted, received, circulated, and eventually printed and translated into contemporary English. Even in our own Digital Age, a persistent kinship between “text” and “book” in the production and transmission of ideas and stories allows us to remain eerily in touch with our medieval cousins. It would be neglect to ignore this connection.

We will not shy away from the question of ‘contemporary issues’. The worlds created by & inflected in the texts we read are worlds with real questions and difficult answers. While insisting we must listen carefully, sensitively, and generously in our readings of these ancient, complex, and translated texts, we will not forget that morally bankrupt ideologies still look to a fantasized ‘medieval’ as refuge, or as source of political & rhetorical power. We seek to understand, but a persistent pursuit of understanding need not preclude critique, nor imply endorsement.
Texts to Acquire

Pre-ordered and available from Broad Street Books to Rent or Purchase:

- Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, translated by Henry Chadwick (Oxford University Press, 2009 most recently) 978-0199537822
- *The Qur’an*, interpreted by Abdel Haleem with English and Arabic (Oxford University Press, 2010) 978-0199570713

Available for order from Cardinal Print and Copy (Instructions Posted to Moodle):

- Course Reader
# SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS & ASSIGNMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Reading/Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M 9.04</td>
<td>9.04</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>Read: Isidore of Seville, <em>Etymologiae</em> (selections) [Handout in your box]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read <em>C &amp; H TEXTBOOK</em> [Cook and Herzman, <em>The Medieval Worldview</em>]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In this order: Chapter 2: “Classical,” then Chapter 1: “The Bible,” then Chapter 3: “Early Christianity”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conversation I: From Memory to Text, Text as Memory (ca. 1(^{st}) c. - 5(^{th}) c.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 9.06</td>
<td>9.06</td>
<td>Pseudo-Callisthenes, <em>The Alexander Romance</em>, Book I (pp. 35-86)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 9.13</td>
<td>9.13</td>
<td><em>Maccabees 1</em> (<em>ALL</em>) &amp; <em>Maccabees 2</em> (1-2) (NRSV translation) [Course Reader]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 9.15</td>
<td>9.15</td>
<td><strong>Friday Meeting:</strong> Mahara Workshop Language Resource Center (LRC) Lab (FISK 207)</td>
<td>Meet with Emmanuel Paris-Bouvret either 12-1p or 1-2p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 9.18</td>
<td>9.18</td>
<td><em>Gospel According to Mark</em> (NRSV translation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 9.20</td>
<td>9.20</td>
<td>Augustine, <em>Confessions</em>: Books 1-4 (pp. 1-71)</td>
<td>Read <em>C &amp; H TEXTBOOK</em>: Ch. 4: “Augustine”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 9.25</td>
<td>9.25</td>
<td><em>Confessions</em>: Books 10-13 (pp. 179-305) <strong>NOTE: TEXT OUT OF ORDER!</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 9.27</td>
<td>9.27</td>
<td><em>Confessions</em>: Books 5-9 (pp. 72-178)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FRIDAY 9/29, 11.59 PM – ESSAY 1 : Traditional 6p Essay (“Close Reading”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 10.02</td>
<td>10.02</td>
<td>Perpetua (and Anon.), <em>The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas</em> [Course Reader]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 10.04</td>
<td>10.04</td>
<td><em>Regula Benedicti</em> (Rule of Benedict) + a few Psalms [Course Reader]</td>
<td>Read <em>C &amp; H TEXTBOOK</em>: Ch. 8: “Western Monasticism”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 10.09</td>
<td>10.09</td>
<td><em>Qur’an</em> (Suwar: 90-114, 7, 1, 74, 17-19, 21)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 10.11</td>
<td>10.11</td>
<td><em>Qur’an</em> (Suwar: 2, 3, 4, 8, 30)</td>
<td>Read <em>C &amp; H TEXTBOOK</em>: Ch. 6: “Islam”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 10.16</td>
<td>10.16</td>
<td>Einhard, <em>Life of Charles</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>THURS 10/19 or FRI 10/20 – ESSAY 2a: Six-hour “Mock Comps” At-Home Written Exam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. 1 Maccabees 1.1  
2. Perpetua and Felicitas 10.15 (p. 119)
Conversation III: Fashion a Community, Fashion an Other (ca. 11th c. – 12th c.)
“Friendship and enmities have to be forgotten.”

M 10.23 START FALL BREAK
W 10.25 Chronicle of Ahimaaz [Course Reader]

THURS 10/27 or FRI 10/28 – ESSAY 2b “Mock Comps” 20-min Oral Exam

M 10.30 Fulcher of Chartres, Chronicle of the First Crusade (from Books I & III) [Course Reader]
Read C&H TEXTBOOK: Ch. 10: “Church, State, and Society”
W 11.01 Anna Komnena, Alexiad (selections TBA)
Read C&H TEXTBOOK: Ch. 5: “Byzantium”
M 11.06 Anna Komnena, Alexiad (selections TBA)
W 11.08 Usama ibn Munqidh, The Book of Contemplation (selection) [Course Reader]

Conversation IV: The Self between God and Society (ca. 12th c.)
“He knew ... this aspiring group ... could only be saved in their own way.”

M 11.13 Ibn Sina – Risalah fi’l-‘ishq (Treatise on Love); further selection TBD [Course Reader]
Read C&H TEXTBOOK: Ch. 11: “The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century”
W 11.15 A Monk of St. Alban’s, Life of Christina of Markyate
M 11.20 Al-Ghazzali, Path to Sufism: His Deliverance from Error (al-Munqidh min al-Dalal)
W 11.22 THANKSGIVING BREAK
W 11.27 Ibn Tufayl, Hayy ibn Yaqzan (pages 95-119)
Read Moodle-posted selections on “Al-Andalus”
W 11.29 Ibn Tufayl, Hayy ibn Yaqzan (pages 120-166)
M 12.04 Wolfram von Eschenbach, Parzival
W 12.06 Wolfram von Eschenbach, Parzival

FINAL ASSIGNMENT:
OPTION A: Traditional Essay (ca. 6pp), DUE: during Final Exam Period
OPTION B: “Mock” Comps Essay (max 1800 words):
1. Thurs Dec. 7 or Fri Dec. 8: At-Home Written Essay
2. [During Final Exam Period]: 20-min Oral exam

---

3 Anna Komnene, The Alexiad. Prologue, sec. 2. (p. 4)
DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

I. Oral Presentation Skills
1) One textual history: a succinct but informed 5-minute Presentation in which you convey the significant textual history of one reading (i.e. the history of its transmission in manuscripts, then critical editions, then translations). Tell us:
   a. Who would/might have read this text in the ‘medieval’ period (i.e., manuscripts)?
   b. Who decided this text was significant, and when (i.e., crit. edition & print edition)?
   c. Who adapted the text into the form we are studying right now (i.e., translation)?

2) One Discussion Facilitation:
   a. Students will be paired and assigned to lead the discussion for a particular class
   b. Each pair will meet with the instructors to collaborate on a discussion plan before the relevant discussion (almost always over lunch, immediately before class). This involves:
      i. … carefully reading the relevant textbook chapter (if one is assigned).
         1. Kick off the discussion by highlighting for classmates essential/key concepts that should have been grasped
         2. Explain one or two particularly difficult concepts, or note a concept that you hope will come up / be examined in discussion
      ii. …preparing to lead discussion (bring to meeting with profs) by deciding:
         1. What is the “big takeaway” that the class should get from this text?
         2. What passages need to be addressed in discussion, either because they are particularly difficult, or are key for the “big takeaway”?
         3. The Plan: concoct two ways to get from passages to takeaway.

II. Written Presentation Skills
3) An Ongoing Individual Mahara website.
   a. Submit a post for each unique text by midnight after the last class on that text.
   b. The only requirements are:
      i. The posting must refer to at least one passage from the assigned reading.
      ii. The posting must communicate a viable potential idea for an essay.
      iii. Format: the post must conform to the template we have set up.

4) Three Critical Essay – Oral Exam assignments
   a. The first essay is a ‘traditional’ COL colloquium essay.
      i. You pick the topic, but this essay must be built around a close reading of a single passage, and then use that reading to ask a question resonant with one of the three “COL disciplines” (Philosophy, Literature, History).
      ii. Format: 5-6 pp. (double-spaced, 12 pt Times, 1” margins, etc, etc.)
   b. The second essay will be “mock comps”-style, imitating the Junior Comps procedure in which you receive a prompt and then have 15 hours (9am – midnight) to write an essay (max 1800 words), and prepare for a 20-minute in-person exam a week later.
   c. For the third essay you will choose which of these assignment types you would like to do again – ideally you will choose the one you found the most challenging.
   d. Paper submission strictures: We will only accept papers uploaded to Moodle in the format: “243-yourlastname-1” for the first, then “-2” and “-3” for the next two. Lateness will be noted in your end-of-the-semester evaluation. Missing papers will result in failing of the course (unless an incomplete has been granted by both Profs.).
**Important STATEMENTS**

**Evaluations:**  
Thorough written evaluations about your written work (timeliness, content, and form) and about your in-class presence and participation are offered in place of letter grades.

**Class attendance:**  
Your presence in class is essential to your success and that of the colloquium. In addition to coming to class prepared, please come to class in a timely manner and avoid absences unless there is a family or health emergency, a specific religious holiday that you honor, or you are a student-athlete and you have informed the instructors at semester’s beginning of a planned athletic event away from campus.

**Plagiarism, Paraphrasing, and Recycling papers:**  
At Wesleyan, we all (students & scholars) abide by the Honor Code. Plagiarism is a violation of the Honor Code. Aside from the obvious “presentation of another person’s words, ideas, images, data, or research as one’s own,” plagiarism also includes “paraphrasing or using any content or terms coined by others without proper acknowledgment,” as well as submitting “the same work for academic credit more than once without permission.” Acknowledge your sources, including papers you have previously written.  
<wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/studenthandbook/standardsregulations/studentconduct.html>

**Accommodations:**  
We are committed to making our classroom accessible, as expressed in, but not limited to:

- **accomodations of technology in the classroom.** We will allow devices that, in students’ opinions, are important aids to their learning. We ask that you first discuss with us the device you would like to use, and how. Devices not discussed are not permitted.
- **accomodations for students with disabilities.** If you haven’t yet, please help make our course accessible by contacting Crystal Rose Hill (chill01@wesleyan.edu) for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. Disability Resources is located in North College, room 021, or call 860-685-5581. See active link on moodle.
- **accomodations for athletics schedules.** At Wesleyan student athletes must make both their professors and coaches aware of conflicts from the beginning of the semester. This must be done both verbally, and in writing. Updates (i.e., playoffs) must be given ASAP.
- **accomodations for students committed to observing religious holy days (holidays).** Questions about the holidays should be directed to the University Chaplains; students who have questions about attendance, assignments, or participation should consult with their Class Dean, & speak with your Profs. about any anticipated conflicts immediately.
- **accomodations for diversity of belief, identity, background, & body** are the responsibility of us all. We pledge to do what we can to model and maintain an atmosphere where ideas and paradigms are debated and challenged, while we all maintain respect for difference.
- **an open and ongoing invitation to discuss with us how to improve these statements, and a classroom atmosphere that is challenging and communal: that pursues the task at hand with rigor and energy, while projecting and protecting true belonging & welcome.