



# The Medieval World

## HUM 3023

*He who does best is most worthy* — Geoffroi de Charny, *The Book of Chivalry*

*He most zealously cultivated the liberal arts, held those who taught them in great esteem, and conferred great honors upon them* — Einhard, *The Life of Charlemagne*

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class website: [www.reltech.org/UTSA/HUM3023/](http://www.reltech.org/UTSA/HUM3023/)

### I. Course Description

Contrary to popular belief, the Middle Ages was a time of great creativity, intense passion, and technological advance, particularly from the time of Charlemagne on. Gothic cathedrals towered over burgeoning cities that thronged with students attending the first universities. As crusaders marched to war, troubadours composed love songs for ladies of the court. Villagers celebrated Christian feast days and told stories of King Arthur, Roland, Beowulf, El Cid, and the Nibelungs. This course will touch on the history, daily routines, and intellectual lives of the inhabitants of the medieval world, as well as on their art, literature, and music.

### II. Course Aims and Objectives

#### Aims

Students will learn about medieval history and culture, including developments in the arts, literature, technology, philosophy, and religion.

#### Specific Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to identify and comment on some of the most significant events in medieval history.
- Students will have a general understanding of the role various religions played during the Middle Ages.
- Students will be familiar with some of the classics of medieval literature.
- Students will understand the roles played by members of the three medieval estates.
- Students will be familiar with the concept of the “medieval synthesis” of faith and reason.

### **III. Format and Procedures**

The instructor will meet with the students for fifteen weeks on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with class sessions of seventy-five minutes apiece. The instructor will use a modified lecture approach for most class sessions, but students are expected to have read assigned materials beforehand and to participate in class discussion. Some class sessions will be devoted in part to student presentations. Class announcements, assignments, and supplementary material will be available on Blackboard and/or the class website.

Assignments are due either in class on the due date, or they may be submitted to Blackboard no later than 5:00 p.m. on the due date. Assignments are due on the assigned date regardless of whether the student attends class on that date. Late work will be penalized one letter grade per week (or portion of week), with a minimum penalty of half a letter grade (e.g., for work submitted after the assigned time on the due date).

### **IV. Course Requirements**

#### **1. Class Attendance, Participation, and Assignments**

Students will endeavor to attend every class, turn in every assignment on time, and participate in all class discussions. Students with more than four unexcused absences will be penalized one point on their final grade per additional class missed (as part of their Class Participation grade). Excused absences are illness, death in the family, and officially sponsored UTSA activities. The student will be expected to provide documentation for all excused absences. Students who are absent, whether the absence is excused or unexcused, are expected to complete assignments on time (see previous section). Students who know in advance they will be absent may make arrangements to turn in assignments or take tests early.

Unless otherwise specified, all written assignments should be printed in Times or Times New Roman font, 12 point type, double-spaced, with one-inch margins on all four sides, and follow MLA specifications. Papers with a minimum page count specified will be considered short of the required minimum if they employ excessive margins. For example, a two-page paper must extend to the bottom of the second page, or it will be considered a one-page paper. Charts, illustrations, and other non-textual material may be included in a paper when appropriate—in fact, they may well improve a paper in some instances—but the non-textual material will not be counted toward the total page count, so students should adjust the length of their papers accordingly.

#### **2. Course Readings**

Class texts are:

Cook, William R. and Ronald B. Herzman. *The Medieval World View*. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2012.

Bishop, Morris. *The Middle Ages*. Boston: Mariner-Houghton Mifflin, 2001.

Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival and Titirel*. Trans. Cyril Edwards. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006.

Lacey, Robert, and Danny Danziger. *The Year 1000: What Life Was Like at the Turn of the First Millennium, An Englishman's World*. New York: Back Bay Books, 2000.

Other readings will be assigned.

### 3. Mini-Presentations and Papers on Medieval People

Over the course of the semester, students will submit three brief papers (2-3 pages, double-spaced) on assigned medieval personalities. They will share the content of one or more of these papers with the class in a five-minute presentation.

### 4. Book Reports and Analysis

Students will read *The Year 1000* by Lacey and Danziger and write a book report of between 4 and 6 pages, double-spaced. It will be due the beginning of the fourth week of class. Students should summarize the contents of the book, and in addition, they should identify at least one custom from the year 1000 that has a counterpart in the modern world and one custom that does not. At least one paragraph apiece should be dedicated to these two customs.

Students will also read a medieval book, selected from a bibliography provided by the instructor, and write a summary and analysis of it. This paper will be between 4 and 6 pages, double-spaced, and will be due on the last regularly scheduled class meeting (NOT the final exam period). Students should summarize the book and discuss its meaning in its own time, as well as modern interpretations of it. The report should include a bibliography of at least 5 other books or articles that deal with the medieval work (no more than one encyclopedia article may count toward the total of 5 bibliography entries).

### 5. Group Report and Presentation

Students will form groups of two or three people and produce a written report of 12-15 pages, double-spaced, on a topic related to medieval literature, drama, art, architecture, or music (one paper per group). **This paper should focus on a fairly narrow topic (e.g., medieval icons or medieval portraiture rather than medieval art; Arthurian romances or *chansons de geste* rather than medieval literature; Romanesque architecture in Britain or stave churches in Norway rather than medieval architecture).** The group will present its findings to the class during the final exam period. If a group chooses to focus on some aspect of medieval drama or music, it may use all or part of its presentation time acting out a medieval drama or performing a medieval musical piece (actual performance, not a recording or YouTube). A minimum of 10 bibliography entries must be included (no more than three encyclopedia articles may count toward the total of 10 bibliography entries).

### 6. Exams

Students will have two regular exams, at the end of the 5th and 10th weeks of class. In lieu of a final exam, students will turn in a group report and use the final exam period for their group

presentations (see #5 above).

## **V. Grading**

The student's grade will be determined as follows:

- a. Mini-Presentations and Papers: 15%
- b. Book Reports and Analysis: 20%
- c. Group Report and Presentation: 20%
- d. Exam 1: 15%
- e. Exam 2: 15%
- f. Class Participation: 15%

Letter grades will be assigned according to the following table:

A+: 97-100	B+: 87-89	C+: 77-79	D+: 67-69	F: below 60
A: 93-96	B: 83-86	C: 73-76	D: 63-66	
A-: 90-92	B-: 80-82	C-: 70-72	D-: 60-62	

## **VI. Subject to Change**

Assignments, grades, schedules, and other items detailed in this syllabus are subject to change at the instructor's discretion. The instructor will give students reasonable notice of any changes that are made.

## **VII. Supplemental Information**

UTSA offers many services to help students succeed in their classes. Some of the offices that provide these services are Counseling Services, Student Disability Services, and the Tomás Rivera Center, which offers Supplemental Instruction and Tutoring. Information on these services, as well as the Student Code of Conduct and Scholastic Dishonesty policies, can be found on the following web page: <http://provost.utsa.edu/syllabus.asp>. Please read the information on this page, which may be considered an appendix to this syllabus.