

HIST 2971I:
New Perspectives in Medieval History
SYLLABUS

Prof. Jonathan P. Conant

Sharpe House 120

Brown University

Th. 10:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Fall 2020

Over the past several decades, the field of medieval history has been reshaped radically. New approaches have changed the ways in which medievalists think about old subjects. Our understanding of medieval society itself has expanded as previously marginalized or unexplored subjects have become central to medievalists' concerns. This seminar explores the ways in which medievalist historians have altered how they practice their craft in response to these developments. Readings in classic older works are juxtaposed with newer ones on the way to becoming classics themselves. Students will also hone some of the key skills of the professional historian: reading scholarship for its argumentation; assessing that scholarship critically but constructively; presenting an accessible evaluation of such scholarship in written, oral, and video formats; and collaboratively and collegially assessing each other's written work.

HYBRIDITY AND COVID19: Although this seminar is listed in Courses@Brown as "hybrid," the first session of the class will be delivered wholly online, in keeping with university policy. At that meeting, we will work out together the precise nature of instruction for the rest of the term. I have reserved Sharpe House 120 on Thursdays at 10:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m. for any students who want a space in which to meet in person. However, barring a dramatic improvement of the public health situation in the U.S., as the instructor, *I anticipate teaching the class remotely* throughout the entire semester. For university regulations governing in-person student participation, please see further below, The Fine Print (pp. 5–6), no. 2.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING*:

1. Attendance, preparation of required readings, and informed participation at all seminar meetings (including weekly response papers and/or oral reports on the class readings, as assigned by instructor): 30%
2. Written assignments:
 - Annotated bibliography on topic to be chosen in consultation with Prof. Conant 5%
 - Written book review of most recent monograph on annotated bibliography 5%
 - Video book review of G. Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* 10%
 - Full, complete draft of historiographical essay 15%
 - Brief oral presentation focused on historiographic essay 5%
 - Final draft of historiographic essay (4,500–6,000 words = 15–20 pages) on the same topic as annotated bibliography 30%

***Please note:** The total of in-class hours and out-of-class work for all full credit courses at Brown is approximately 180 hours over the length of a semester. In this class, students seeking to maximize their learning can expect to spend 27.5 hours in class (2.5 hours per week for 11 weeks), 88 hours reading for class (approx. 8 hours per week for 11 weeks); 5.5 hours total on weekly response papers; 4 hours on the annotated bibliography; 6 hours on the written book review; 8 hours on the video book review; 24 hours researching and writing the first draft of the final paper; 1 hour preparing for the oral presentation; and 16 hours researching and writing the second draft of the final paper. Actual times will vary for each student; final grades are not determined by the amount of time a student spends on the course.

GETTING IN TOUCH:

E-mail: Jonathan_Conant@Brown.edu	Office:	Sharpe House 315 (79 Brown St.)
Phone: x3-5121	Office Hours:	Thurs. 1–3 p.m. via Zoom and by appointment

REQUIRED TEXTS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE:

The following texts will be available for purchase at the Brown Bookstore:

- Shahzad Bashir, *Sufi Bodies: Religion and Society in Medieval Islam* (New York, 2013). ISBN: 978-0231144919. Price: \$36 new (^)
- Kyle Harper, *The Fate of Rome: Climate, Disease, and the End of an Empire* (Princeton, 2017). ISBN: 978-0691192062. Price: \$18.95 new (^)
- Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2019). ISBN: 978-1108435093. Price: \$29.99 new
- Ruth Mazo Karras, *Unmarriages: Women, Men, and Sexual Unions in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 2014). ISBN: 978-0812222982. \$28.95 new (^)
- Maureen Miller, *Clothing the Clergy: Virtue and Power in Medieval Europe, c. 800–1200* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2014). ISBN: 978-0801479434. Price: \$40.95 new
- David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1996; repr. 2015). ISBN: 978-0691165769. Price: \$25.95 new (^)
- Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2006). ISBN: 978-0801474163. Price: \$23.95 new
- Marina Rustow, *Heresy and the Politics of Community: The Jews of the Fatimid Caliphate* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2008). ISBN: 978-0801456503. Price: \$46 new (^)
- Paolo Squatriti, *Landscape and Change in Early Medieval Italy: Chestnuts, Economy, and Culture* (Cambridge, 2013). ISBN: 978-1316633205. Price: \$27.99 new (^)

I have requested that hard copies of all these books be held on 3-hour reserve at Rockefeller Library. I have also requested that the library purchase electronically accessible versions of all these required texts. Those marked with a (^) are already available through Brown subscriptions and are accessible to students at <https://library.brown.edu/reserves/> (e-reserves or OCRA). All required readings not available for purchase will be accessible through e-reserves.

SEMINAR SCHEDULE

*** Please come to class prepared to discuss the readings on the day indicated ***

- Week 1**
(Sept. 10) **Introduction**
Reading: Paul Freedman and Gabrielle Spiegel, "Medievalisms Old and New: The Rediscovery of Alterity in North American Medieval Studies," *American Historical Review* 103 (1998): 677–704
- Week 2**
(Sept. 17) **Religious Violence**
Reading: Robert I. Burns, "Social Riots on the Christian-Moslem Frontier (Thirteenth-Century Valencia)," *American Historical Review* 80 (1961): 378–400
R. I. Moore, "Popular Violence and Popular Heresy in Western Europe, ca. 1100–1179," *Studies in Church History* 21 (1984): 43–50
Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*
- Week 3**
(Sept. 24) **The History of Emotions**
Reading: Johann Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans. Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch (Chicago, 1996), pp. 1–60
Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. L. A. Manyon, 2 vols. (Chicago, 1961), 1:72–87
Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*
Paul M. Blowers, "Pity, Empathy, and the Tragic Spectacle of Human Suffering: Exploring the Emotional Culture of Compassion in Late Ancient Christianity," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 18 (2010): 1–27
➤ *Statement of topic due at the beginning of class*
- Week 4**
(Oct. 1) **Jewish Communities and the Medieval Margins**
Reading: William Chester Jordan, "Jews on Top: Women and the Availability of Consumption Loans in Northern France in the Mid-Thirteenth Century," *J. of Jewish Studies* 29 (1978): 39–56
Rustow, *Heresy and the Politics of Community*
Susan Einbinder, "'Your Words Are the Truth': Rabbi Qalonymous and Archbishop Ruthard of Mainz," *Speculum* 93 (2018): 91–100
- Week 5**
(Oct. 8) **The Body**
Reading: Caroline Walker Bynum, "Why All the Fuss about the Body? A Medievalist's Perspective," *Critical Inquiry* 22 (1995): 1–33
Robin Fleming, "Bones for Historians: Putting the Body back into Biography," *Writing Medieval Biography 750–1250*, ed. D. Bates, J. Crick, and S. Hamilton (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 29–48 (Canvas)
Bashir, *Sufi Bodies*
➤ *Annotated bibliography due at the beginning of class*

- Week 6**
(Oct. 15) **Sexuality**
Reading: John Boswell, "[The Church and the Homosexual: An Historical Perspective](#)" (Keynote address at Dignity's 4th Biennial Convention, Sept. 1979), repr. in Kathleen Leopold and Thomas Orians, eds., *Theological Pastoral Resources: A Collection of Articles on Homosexuality from a Pastoral Perspective*, 6th ed. (Washington, DC, 1981, repr. 1985), pp. 16–20
Jeffrey A. Bowman, "Beauty and Passion in Tenth-Century Cordoba," in *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, ed. Mathew Kuefler (Chicago, 2006), pp. 236–53
Karras, *Unmarriages*
- Week 7**
(Oct. 22) **The Environment in History**
Reading: Lynn White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science* N.S. 155, no. 3767 (March 10, 1967): 1203–7
Richard C. Hoffmann, "Economic Development and Aquatic Ecosystems in Medieval Europe," *American Historical Review* 101 (1996): 630–69
Michael McCormick *et al.*, "Climate Change During and After the Roman Empire: Reconstructing the Past from Scientific and Historical Evidence," *J. of Interdisciplinary History* 43 (2012): 169–220
Squatriti, *Landscape and Change in Early Medieval Italy*
➤ *Book review due at the beginning of class*
- Week 8**
(Oct. 29) **Christianity and Materiality**
Reading: Lester K. Little, "Pride Goes before Avarice: Social Change and the Vices in Latin Christendom," *American Historical Review* 76 (1971): 16–59
John H. Arnold and Caroline Goodson, "Resounding Community: The History and Meaning of Medieval Church Bells," *Viator* 43 (2012): 99–130
Miller, *Clothing the Clergy*
- Week 9**
(Nov. 5) **Race**
Reading: Robert Bartlett, "Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31 (2001): 39–56
Jason Moralee, "Maximinus Thrax and the Politics of Race in Late Antiquity," *Greece & Rome* 55 (2008): 55–82
Heng, *Invention of Race*
➤ *Video book review of Heng, Invention of Race due at the beginning of class*
[For the assignment, see <https://www.historians.org/jobs-and-professional-development/career-diversity-for-historians/career-diversity-resources/career-diversity-faculty-resources/historiography-video-book-review-assignment>]
- Week 10**
(Nov. 12) **Disease**
Reading: William H. McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples* (Garden City, NY, 1976), pp. 94–160

Harper, *Fate of Rome*

Monica H. Green, "Taking 'Pandemic' Seriously: Making the Black Death Global," *The Medieval Globe* 1 (2014): 27–61

Kristina Sessa, "The New Environmental Fall of Rome: A Methodological Consideration," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 12 (2019): 211–55

➤ ***Complete drafts of historiographical essays due Mon. Nov. 16 at 9 a.m. Eastern Time***

Week 11 Student Presentations
(Nov. 19)

IMPORTANT DATES:

Sept. 24:	Statement of topic due
Oct. 8:	Annotated bibliography due
Oct. 22:	Written book review due
Nov. 5:	Video book review of Heng, <i>Invention of Race</i> due
Nov. 16:	Complete draft of historiographical essay due by 9 a.m. Eastern Time
Nov. 19:	Oral presentations focused on the historiographical essay
Dec. 8:	Final paper due by 5 p.m. Eastern Time

**** Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due at the beginning of class ****

The Fine Print:

By taking this class, you are agreeing to the following terms:

- 1. Attendance and participation:** Informed participation accounts for 30% of a student's final grade in this class. After the Quiet Period, students are welcome to meet in person in Sharpe 120 for weekly discussions, subject to all applicable university health and safety guidelines (see below, no. 2, and for the most recent updates, please visit <https://healthy.brown.edu>). However, students are emphatically **not required** to be physically present on campus to participate in class discussions. I understand that this semester students will be joining the class from different time zones across the country and the world, and with differential access to the internet. If possible, I ask that you plan to dedicate at least a portion of the designated class time to synchronous discussion, whether over Zoom or in person. If your circumstances are such that this would pose a hardship for you, on either a regular or an occasional basis, please let me know as far in advance as possible and we can arrange an alternative form of participation that will allow you both to contribute to and to gain from the class discussion (see "Getting in Touch," above). If you will need to miss the discussion in any given week, please e-mail me as soon as possible—ideally **ahead of** the scheduled class meeting time—to let me know. Students may miss up to one discussion without affecting their participation grade; missing further discussions may result in a penalty of 10% of the student's participation grade per discussion missed.
- 2. Hybrid Course Meetings During AY20–21:** For students meeting in-person, please remember that you signed an attestation that you will follow required public health practices. These practices include wearing a face mask at all times in university facilities, maintaining social distancing from others, and refraining from eating or drinking during class. If you do not have a mask, I will ask you to leave so that you can retrieve one before rejoining class. Disregard of these practices is a Student Code of

Conduct violation that could result in removal from campus. Please note that instructors are required to abide by the same guidelines, and I look forward to working with you together this term to keep our community safe and healthy.

3. **Accessibility and Accommodations:** Brown University is committed to full inclusion of all students. Please inform me early in the term if you may require accommodations or modification of any of course procedures. You may speak with me after class, during office hours, or by appointment. If you need accommodations around online learning or in classroom accommodations, please be sure to reach out to Student Accessibility Services (SAS) for their assistance (seas@brown.edu, 401-863-9588). Graduate students in need of short-term academic advice or support can contact one of the deans in the Graduate School by emailing graduate_school@brown.edu. Undergraduates can contact an academic dean in the College by emailing college@brown.edu.
4. **Class Recording and Distribution of Course Materials:** In our initial meeting, we may decide to record our discussions for the rest of the semester, because some students may be in different time zones, have poor internet connections, or have health issues. If so, this will mean that we will record all classes to make them available to all students that are enrolled but cannot be present. If you have questions or concerns about this protocol, please contact me so that we can talk through those to also ensure your full participation in this course. Please note that all course materials are copyrighted. Students are prohibited from reproducing, making copies, publicly displaying, selling, or otherwise distributing the recordings or transcripts of the materials. The only exception is that students with disabilities may have the right to record for their private use if that method is determined to be a reasonable accommodation by Student Accessibility Services (please see above, no. 3). Disregard of the University's copyright policy and federal copyright law is a Student Code of Conduct violation (please see below, no. 7).
5. **Use of Technology to Support Your Learning in This Course:** This course will use the following technological platforms: Canvas and Zoom. I am committed to ensuring access to online course resources by students. If you have any concerns or questions about access or the privacy of any of these platforms, please reach out to me. The IT Service Center (<https://it.brown.edu/get-help>) provides many IT Services including remote assistance, phones, tickets, and chat. Please also see the [Online and Hybrid Learning Student Guide](#).
6. **Books, Supplies, and Materials (for Undergraduates):** If your Brown undergraduate financial aid package includes the Book/Course Material Support Pilot Program (BCMS), concerns or questions about the cost of books and course materials for this or any other Brown course can be addressed to bcms@brown.edu. For all other concerns related to non-tuition course-related expenses, whether or not your Brown undergraduate financial aid package includes BCMS, please visit the Academic Emergency Fund in E-GAP (within the umbrella of "E-Gap Funds" in [UFunds](#)) to determine options for financing these costs, while ensuring your privacy.
7. **Academic integrity:** All students enrolled in this class are expected to abide by Brown University's Academic and Student Conduct Codes.
8. **Submission of late work:** Late work will be penalized one grade fraction per day late (thus an A paper submitted one day late will receive an A-; two days late, a B+; three days late, a B; and so on). Work submitted two weeks or more after the deadline will receive an automatic No Credit.
9. **Changes to this syllabus:** This syllabus is provisional; the instructor reserves the right to make changes to it as necessary throughout the course of the semester.