

History 1011: Greeks, Romans, Kings, Crusaders

Instructor

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I have been teaching this course in various incarnations, both online and in the classroom, since 1995. Prior to earning my PhD at Emory University in Atlanta in 1998, I worked as an engineer and manager in the software industry. My areas of specialization include fourteenth-century England, popular rebellions, and the transmission of news and rumors in late-medieval and early-modern European society.

Communication

Email is probably the best way to reach me. I usually check email a couple times a day and will be happy to respond to items in a timely manner. If you have not heard a response within 24-hours, I encourage you to send another email or to call me at the number listed above. Please do not text that number. It is a land-line with voicemail. When communicating with me, please specify which course and section you are in. I sometimes have several hundred students in a semester in multiple courses and sections.

When communicating about grades, you should first contact your Teaching Assistant, who will primarily be in charge of grading your work throughout the semester.

Course website

The course website contains course and module overview videos, grades, syllabus, [course topics, objectives, and assignments](#), study guides, paper assignments, quizzes, discussions, lecture outlines, PowerPoints, and the dropbox for submitting papers and for reviewing comments on those papers.

Course Description

This course sketches the development of western political, social, and cultural traditions and institutions from the dawn of civilization in the Ancient Near East to the emergence of nation-states in the seventeenth century. The bulk of the material will focus on the development of Greek and Roman civilizations in the first half of the course and the transformation of Germanic kingship and the impact of crusading in the second of half of the course. The primary emphasis in the course will be on primary sources related to the course material. Students will read a combination of primary sources and textbook assignments related to these topics and others throughout the course.

Prerequisites & Tutoring

Because this course is an introductory course, it has no prerequisites. However, students who wish to do well will have the abilities to read and to comprehend college-level texts and to write polished, formal essays, free of grammatical errors. Therefore, I highly recommend that you can comprehend a sustained argument and explanation in English that extends for several pages and that you can write at a college level. You may want to complete an English composition class from a fairly demanding instructor before taking this class, which will help you develop your ability to write in clear, concise prose. You may also want to take advantage of available [tutoring services to improve your reading comprehension](#). And virtually every student should take advantage of the writing center either at one of [the walk-in centers on campus](#) or online at [composition.colorado.edu](#). Even professional writers use editors, and these services provides capable writing instruction for free.

Course Objectives: The objectives of this course are directly connected to each of the assignments listed in the [Topics and Assignments](#). They reflect the History Department's [Student Learning Outcomes](#).

1. Students will be able to comprehend, interpret, and explain complex evidence contained in primary sources.
2. Students will be able to identify and analyze the historical context, perspectives, and biases that shaped primary source documents.
3. Students will be able to develop a historical argument in concise and well-structured prose based on the synthesis of information provided in lectures and readings.
4. Students will be able to express and share ideas in class discussions, papers, and other types of assignments.
5. Students will be able to explain long-term influences that have shaped Western cultural development.
6. Students will gain an appreciation and understanding of culturally diverse societies of the past.

In order to help students achieve these objectives, the course employs a concept known as scaffolding. This approach gives students the opportunity to increase their command of the material through a series of lower stakes grading events: video quizzes, clicker questions, and discussions. These events will precede slightly higher stakes events: quizzes on each module. Ultimately, students will have the opportunity to demonstrate higher level skills of synthesizing and explaining the materials in the paper assignments and the final exam. The course uses this scaffolding technique in each of the six course modules and students will achieve the most learning if they undertake each of the lower stakes assignments in the prescribed sequence before engaging in the high-level assignments.

To summarize, the objectives of the course include the development of a series of widely applicable skills related to reading, comprehension, analysis, and expression. The evidence that we will be working on in this course resides in the assigned readings: both the recommended textbook and the more difficult primary source readings. However, you can apply the methodology of analyzing and comprehending texts to a wide variety of professions. For example, I have personally applied them in the software industry for over thirty years.

Finally, by helping you develop comprehension, analysis, and expression, the course also aims to increase your critical thinking skills by raising your awareness of complicated topics related to authorial intent, conditions that influenced various sources, and the appearance of sometimes subtle biases or perspectives in various works. Ultimately these skills will help you not only in your professional life but also in your private life and personal relationships by making you more aware of nuances and the perspectives of various sources of information.

Assigned Texts

All of these assignments require familiarity with the assigned readings, which I have chosen to advance the course objectives. These readings fall into two categories: required and recommended readings. The grading events will focus primarily on the required readings and the course lectures. However, the suggested readings reinforce much of the material covered in lectures, and because no one can expect to capture everything covered in lectures, I highly recommend that students read at least part of the suggested readings if they want to perform above average in the course.

Make sure to **obtain the specified edition** of the assigned texts; these books offer the best insights into the material. If you are taking this course near the University of Colorado Boulder campus, I have placed two copies of each book on reserve at the Norlin Circulation Desk. Otherwise, if you use the ISBN number listed to search for the book online, you can get a sense of how much each book costs. I encourage you to order the books as soon as possible so that you are ready for the quizzes, discussions, and papers, which will ask you to demonstrate knowledge of these readings.

Aristophanes, *Lysistrata and Other Plays* – Penguin Classics, abbreviated as Arist below, ISBN 9780140448146

Tacitus, *Agricola and Germany*, Oxford World Classics ISBN 9780199539260

Beowulf, ed. trans. Seamus Heaney, Norton critical edition ISBN 9780393975802

Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, trans. and ed. Wayne Rebhorn, Norton Critical Edition, ISBN 978-0393935622

In addition, the course also contains a series of shorter primary source readings, mostly in Module 1 and Module 5.

Finally, the following textbook will provide the necessary historical context for understanding the primary sources above; a few copies of it are also on reserve at Norlin Circulation: Lynn Hunt et al., *The Making of the West*, Vol. 1: A Concise History, 4th Edition. ISBN 9780312672737

Although the textbook is not emphasized on the quizzes (most of the questions will come from the assigned primary sources and their introductions), if you want to excel in the class, the

textbook will be indispensable. I have purposefully chosen the fourth edition because it is cheaper, accurate, and readily available both online and in the bookstore.

Overview Videos

This course has seven overview videos that you are responsible for. The first overview video covers the course [Topics and Assignments](#). The remaining six videos provide overviews for each of the six distinct modules of the course. Embedded in these videos will be a few questions that will be graded. The purpose of the questions is to ensure that you are understanding the main topics and concepts in the course. Please note that you can re-take these course overview videos as many times as you like, and it is your final grade that counts. The sequence for each of the six modules in the class is as follows: take the overview video, then participate in the discussion, take the quiz, and complete the paper (if required). Modules one and five do not have papers.

Online readings

In various sections, such as the Ancient Near East and the High and Late Middle Ages, I have included links to online readings. These readings are primary sources; this designation means that they are sources from the period under consideration. They are different from secondary sources, such as textbooks, because they come from the distant past. These short online readings reflect the thoughts of the people whom we are studying. However, it is often unclear exactly how to interpret these sources. At the top of these online readings I have asked you a series of questions about the sources in order to stimulate your thinking about the sources and also to help you prepare for the discussions, quizzes, and papers that you will complete in the course. You do not have to hand in answers to these questions. However, you may find it useful to write down answers in your notes covering these sources in order to prepare yourself more completely for the discussions and quizzes on the material.

Technical Skills & Resources

Students should be proficient in their ability to use a web browser on a reliable computer with a reliable internet connection. Because you are choosing to take a course that has a substantial amount of work online (Quizzes, overview videos, online readings, paper submissions), you are responsible for having a reliable computer for taking the course. Computer malfunctions are not an acceptable excuse for repeated failures to complete assignments. In addition, students should download and install the most recent version of the Firefox web browser, which is most compatible with Canvas. The Office of Information Technology publishes [a list of supported browsers](#). Please make sure that you do not try to use an unsupported browser to complete the assignments in this class. Finally, all students should be proficient with word processing software so that they can edit papers thoroughly. Please read the paper assignments carefully in order to submit the papers in a format supported by Canvas. Failure to do so could lead to a substantial deduction from your paper grade.

See the [Technical Requirements & Support](#) page for additional information.

How to approach the Assignments

Online Video Overviews

I have provided online videos for each of the six modules of the course in addition to one for the course overview; these videos provide a quick, 5-to-10-minute overview of material for each of the six modules of the course. They cover essential topics for each module in the course in order to supplement the lectures. These videos have quizzes embedded in them. You can take those quizzes as many times as you like. **I will count your last video quiz score.**

Recitations

Students will gather once a week in their recitation section to discuss the material and collaborate with one another. Attendance and participation in the recitations constitute a significant portion of the overall course grade and are entirely up to the discretion of the recitation section instructor.

Clickers

I will routinely use clickers to take attendance and to check on student learning in lectures throughout the semester. Student participation in the clicker questions will count for approximately 70% of clicker scores. The other 30% of the score will come from correct ability to demonstrate knowledge of the material from the lectures and the readings.

I advise students to avoid cell phone or other distractions, which may interfere with their ability to follow material in the lectures. To receive full credit on clickers I encourage student to read the assigned materials and to come to class ready to engage in active learning.

I will update the clicker scores every three weeks throughout the semester beginning with week five. Clicker data generated in the first two weeks of the semester allows students to ensure that their clickers are working and functional. Subsequently, I will upload clicker data for weeks 3-5, 6-8, 9-11, and 12-14. I will structure the clicker scores so that every student can miss 2 weeks of class during the course of the semester and still receive 100% of the total clicker score for the semester.

Quizzes

The course has six quizzes (one for each module), and your four highest quiz grades count toward the final grade. In other words, Canvas will automatically drop your two lowest quiz scores. Therefore, we do not provide make-up quizzes except in highly unusual circumstance, which will require a written note from a doctor or from a university authority. If you miss a quiz, you receive zero points. Each of your four highest quiz scores will count for up to 100 points (1/30th of the overall grade). The quizzes will consist of 20 multiple-choice questions pulled randomly from a bank of questions. On the day that the quiz starts, students will have a 24-hour window to complete the quiz. Please note that once you begin the quiz, you will only

have 20 minutes to answer twenty questions. Canvas automatically submits the quizzes after twenty minutes or at the end of the quiz period. All quizzes will begin at 6PM on a Thursday and go until the following day, Friday at midnight. You should plan on starting the quiz no later than 11:40 PM in order to receive the full twenty minutes to complete the quiz.

Important: Please note that Canvas will not allow you to work on the quiz after its deadline, which is always at Midnight on a Friday. Please take care to start the quiz before 11:40 PM in order to have the full 20 minutes to complete the quiz.

Papers

Students must submit two papers electronically in the course dropbox within 48 hours of the opening of the dropbox for the paper assignment. There is no need to hand in a paper copy. The papers must be no more than 750 words (approximately 2.5 pages double-spaced). Papers submitted after that 48-hour period will receive a letter grade deduction. After 72 hours the dropbox will close. No papers will be accepted after that point, and students will receive a zero on the assignment. Though short, the papers are an important and influential portion of this course because they indicate your ability to analyze and to synthesize course content and to express your thoughts in a coherent and professional manner. You should pay special attention to them.

Precise writing is a vital skill for your professional success, and I take it very seriously. There is no shame in having someone correct your writing to help you improve your clarity. Professional writers often take advantage of editors, and you should too. The composition center is a free resource that is available to help you with the process of clarifying your thoughts. Take advantage of it even if you think that you write well. Chances are that you can write even more clearly and professionally. We all can improve. That is the essence of learning.

Your presentation of your thoughts in a professional and clear format is absolutely essential to obtaining better than average (C) grades on these papers. In addition, all papers should demonstrate a solid command of the assigned readings related to the topic. In addition, the discussion topics often address concepts that are related to the papers. By actively engaging in the discussions, you are more likely to demonstrate a solid command of the material in the papers. Failure to know the assigned readings will necessarily detract from your grade in the papers and could even cause you to fail a paper assignment.

The most effective ways to demonstrate knowledge of the assigned readings are to cite them and quote them. You should keep your quotes short. Look for the most relevant phrases in the assigned readings and incorporate those phrases into your own prose as you analyze the material. Typically, these quotes should be about 3-7 words in length although longer quotes can sometimes be necessary. You can also paraphrase and cite the assigned readings. Typically, each of the body paragraphs in your essay should have one or two citations to the relevant assigned pages. In any case, it is vital that you cite any and all sources that you use. Failure to do so constitutes an Honor Code violation and will result in an Honor Code accusation and failure in the course. Please avoid that scenario. Stick to the assigned readings, and cite your sources.

Please follow the detailed instructions for each paper assignment as those instructions appear on the course website. Pay special attention to the [grading rubric](#) that I use to assign grades for all papers. I open the dropbox for each paper 2 days (48 hours) before the due date, which is listed on the paper assignment. To ensure that you receive full credit for your paper, please submit it within that 48-hour window. I will accept papers submitted after the deadline for up to 24 hours with a letter grade (or 10% of the total points available for the paper) deduction. After that 24-hour grace period, the dropbox will close and you will not receive credit for the paper. While this policy may seem harsh, keep in mind that the paper assignments are available for you to review and start work on from the very first day of class.

If you attend to items in the grading rubric and feedback from the first paper assignment, you will improve your grades on papers in this course. Please submit your papers either as a text file, a word document, or as a PDF file. Other formats, such as Pages, RTF, etc... are not fully supported in Canvas, and I will not accept papers in those formats. Your grade will suffer as a result of failing to follow this advice.

Finally, I encourage you to refer to the [History Department website](#) for guidance on how to write a formal paper, on how to cite your sources in academic papers, and on how to write in an analytical versus a descriptive style of writing. We are writing analytical essays in this course. These guidelines, along with a solid command of the assigned readings, can help you obtain a better-than-average (B) and perhaps even an excellent (A) grade on your paper.

Final Exam

The Final Exam will include an essay and several short-answer and identification questions. The terms on the exam will be a subset of terms contained in the study guides for the individual quizzes. Therefore, the more time that you devote to preparing for the quizzes, the less stressful the final exam will be. The final is cumulative but emphasizes the second half of the course. To prepare students for the final exam, I will provide a study guide approximately two weeks before the exam.

Grading

Grades will be assigned according to the number of points you accumulate during the semester.

Overview Videos (7 simple quizzes)	100 points
Recitation Participation	400 points
Clicker Participation	400 points
Quizzes (highest 4 scores of 6 total)	400 points
Paper 1	400 points
Paper 2	700 points
Final Exam	600 points
Total possible points	3000 points

We will assign grades for each assignment out of the total number of points for that assignment. Canvas will then calculate your course grade to date based on the completed assignment grades.

University Policies

The [University Policies](#) are an integral part of this syllabus. I have placed them in a separate Canvas page for easy access and reference. You are responsible for being familiar with these policies.