



HISTORY 335.01E
THE MEDIEVAL EUROPEAN WORLD
COURSE SYLLABUS: SPRING 2026

Instructor: Dr. Sharon Kowalsky

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COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description:

This course begins in the Late Antique period, or the end of the world of classical Rome, and moves through the emerging "Middle Age" of Europe and the Mediterranean, concluding around the year 1648 CE. Key topics include the origin of the term medieval and how to view this vibrant era, the importance of the classical past in the emerging traditions of the medieval period, the evolving natures of Christianity and Judaism, the rise and spread of Islam, and the social structures and hierarchies that emerged in the post-Roman world. Prerequisites: Non-majors may enroll with consent of department.

Course Materials:

TEXTBOOK

- Spielvogel, *Western Civilization*. You may acquire any edition of this book OR you may use the 2011 version available for FREE on the Internet Archive: <https://archive.org/details/westerncivilizat0000jack>. You will need to create a free account to borrow the book.

REQUIRED

- Bennett, *A Medieval Life* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021) ISBN 978-0812224696, \$23.85.
- Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Harvard University Press, 1983) ISBN 0674766911, \$17.34.

Additional materials will be distributed in class by the professor and/or made available to students through MyLeo Online.

Student Learning Outcomes:

This course will teach students to evaluate and analyze materials and to link cultural representations to the underlying historical realities that helped shape them. By the end of the semester:

1. Students will be able to construct and support arguments based on appropriate primary and secondary sources.
2. Student communication will follow conventions of grammar and syntax appropriate to the audience, purpose and message.

The objectives of this course include: (1) to gain factual knowledge about the period under discussion; (2) to develop the specific skills and points of view needed by historians; (3) to improve skills needed for oral and written expression; (4) to be able to place the present in a historically based context; and (5) to learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

This semester we will learn to analyze and contextualize documents, to communicate ideas and arguments clearly and effectively, and to articulate continuities and changes over time. The activities in this class focus on developing students' critical thinking and communication skills. We will also develop digital literacy through our use of ClioVis, an online timeline mapping program.

Students' ability to meet the objectives and learning outcomes of this course will be evaluated through papers, exams, and projects.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments

Below are the required assignments for the class. Please read these carefully, make notes about due dates in your calendars, and ask for any clarifications you require. More details about these assignments, as well as specific readings, are available on the MyLeo Online course page.

Engagement (200 points)

Attendance is strongly encouraged. You are responsible for all material covered in our class meetings, regardless of your physical presence in the room. Students are expected to come prepared to engage with and discuss the assigned material. This means preparing the assignment before class and bringing the reading material with you to class. It is especially important for small group work that all students are in attendance each class meeting. I expect all students to participate in our class discussions and to contribute their thoughts, ideas, and questions to our collective exploration. I especially encourage you to bring your questions to class. I will create, and expect you to uphold, an intellectual environment in the classroom where we can listen to and consider others' arguments and opinions with an open mind and where we respect viewpoints other than our own. Your engagement grade will be based on your engagement in our class discussions and be guided by the following rubric:

- A = Always prepared, frequently participates, rarely absent
- B = Always prepared, participates only when called on, rarely absent
- C = Usually prepared, rarely speaks, rarely absent
- D = Often unprepared, several absences
- F = Usually unprepared, frequent absences

For more information about the university's attendance policy, please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#). Students who are disruptive, clearly distracted, or non-communicative will be asked to leave and will be marked absent for the day's meeting.

Written Assignments

Written work for this course is set out specifically below. All written work should be submitted to the professor through the MyLeo Online course site by the due dates indicated.

Book Review (300 points)

During the first two-three weeks of class, students will work with the professor to identify an appropriate historical monograph on a subject of interest to them and related to the scope of material covered by the course. The book review will focus on that work. Requirements for the book review are on D2L. Students will present the core elements of the book review to the class. Book reviews should be 5-8 pages, and class presentations no more than 8 minutes (with an additional 2 minutes for Q&A). Presentations will be made in the last three-four weeks of the semester.

ClioVis Project (200 points total)

Over the course of the semester, students will produce a timeline through ClioVis that traces a particular theme of interest to the student over the entire class period (preferably related to their chosen historical monograph for the Book Review). Students will have a minimum of 20 entries. Details for this assignment are on D2L. Entries should draw from the materials provided for class, and should offer clear and specific analysis and highlight connections over time. Progress will be assessed during each unit and feedback given so the final timeline project reflects both creation and revision.

Quizzes (100 points total)

Students will complete periodic in-class quizzes, roughly once per week or as needed. Quizzes cannot be made up but the lowest grade(s) will be dropped. Quizzes will cover material discussed in class or in the readings, and may involve map elements.

Final Exam (200 points)

Students will complete a final exam during the final exam period assigned for the course. Check the course schedule for exact times. The exam will be comprehensive and will require students to construct essays based on the material covered during the course.

Grading

Grades for the semester will be determined according to the following breakdown:

Book Review	30%
Quizzes	10%
ClioVis Project	20%
Final Exam	20%
Engagement	20%

Each assignment will be evaluated for its specific requirements according to a specific rubric. This general rubric forms the basis for the evaluation of written work:

- A = Mastery of reading and class material; factual accuracy; thoughtful, historical argumentation demonstrating ability to synthesize and/or some originality of thought; technically clean; proper and error-free citation format
- B = Good to excellent command of most reading and class material; accuracy; good level of historical argumentation; reasonable thesis statement; proper citation format with minimal errors
- C = Good command of class material; accuracy; ability to articulate a historical point of view, even if it is not compelling or is poorly reasoned; proper citation format with some errors
- D = Poor command of required assignments; errors; ahistorical or narrow reasoning; incorrect citation format

The grading scale used for this course is as follows:

90-100 = A

80-89	=	B
70-79	=	C
60-69	=	D
59 or less	=	F

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS, ACCESS, AND NAVIGATION

The following information has been provided to assist you in preparing to use technology successfully in this course:

Word Processing:

You will need access to a word processor and printer to prepare written exams and research projects. You should be able to insert footnotes in your papers. All assignments should be submitted in MS Word format.

MyLeo Online:

This course is web-enhanced through D2L Brightspace (MyLeo Online), the Learning Management System used by East Texas A&M University. You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu. To get started with the course, log on to MyLeo Online and click on this course. MyLeo Online will be used to send you announcements and reminders, to post grades, and to provide access to course materials (except required readings) such as handouts and assignments. In addition, MyLeo Online will be the primary means for me to communicate with you outside the classroom. Be sure that you can access the email account the university has on record for you. You should get into the habit of checking the MyLeo Online site for this course on a daily basis.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, an ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778 or click on the **Live Chat** or click on the words "click here" to submit an issue via email.

Turnitin:

Students must submit all written work to Turnitin. Work is submitted through the dropbox in MyLeoOnline. All student work must be turned in through MyLeo Online and will automatically be submitted to Turnitin. Please let me know if you have any problems.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor:

Students are encouraged to contact the professor for any and all reasons whatsoever. The more you let me know what is going on with you, the better I can help you out when necessary. Beyond the classroom, the best way to get in touch with the professor is through email. I am also available during my office hours, or at other times by appointment. Please come to talk to me about any concerns you

might have and about any problems or issues that arise during the semester. I can be very understanding but only if I know what is going on with you.

Questions or concerns should be addressed to the professor via email, and I will communicate with you via your university-registered email account, usually through MyLeo Online. If you prefer to use a different account, you will need to change your preferences with the university. All emails sent to the professor will be answered as quickly as possible, and you will receive a response within 24-48 hours, excluding weekends. No emails will be answered after 10:00pm.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

The syllabus is a guide and a contract. It sets out the requirements and policies of the course and should be your reference for the semester. As instructor, I promise to adhere to the information as set out in this document. Circumstances and events may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

Classroom Behavior

All students are expected to observe basic tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment, whether in person or online (The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#), Policies and Procedures, Conduct). During class time, I expect your undivided attention. This means turning off cell phones, pagers, iPods, and other devices, and putting away newspapers and other forms of distraction, for the duration of the class period (exceptions will be allowed for emergencies with advance permission of the professor and to access course materials). Please come to class on time and plan to stay for the entire period. Coming late and/or disrupting the learning environment shows disrespect for me, your colleagues, and the educational endeavor in which you are engaged. If you must leave early, please let me know at the beginning of class. I can be very understanding of problems that might arise over the course of the semester, but only if I know what is going on with you. I encourage you to come to my office hours, to get to know me, and to keep me informed of any issues you might have that would affect your performance in this class.

For more information about the University's attendance policy please visit the [Attendance Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

Late Papers

All written assignments are due on the date listed in the Course Schedule below. Late assignments may be accepted only with the advance approval of the professor and will be assessed a penalty of one full letter grade (10 points) per week. If you have a problem with a due date because of a specific emergency, please notify the professor in advance or plan to turn the assignment in early. *I can be very understanding and flexible with you, but only if you come to talk to me in advance.* To pass this class, all written assignments must be completed. **Any missing written assignments or projects (excluding quizzes) at the end of the course will result in an automatic overall course grade of D or F.**

Academic Integrity

In all courses, we expect that all work that you do and turn in is your own. For this course, the use of Generative AI (excluding Grammarly, Spellcheck, and other grammar correction or citation tools) is **strictly prohibited**. The goal of assignments is not for students to produce brilliantly crafted discussions but rather to practice the skills that will enable them to be successful in any chosen career. Using Generative AI undermines the ability of students to practice the skills being taught in the class.

It is the policy of the University, the History Department, and myself that no form of plagiarism, cheating, collusion, or any other form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. As set out by Dr. Baker, these are defined as:

- **Plagiarism:** The adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, statements, images, or works of another person as one's own without proper attribution (quotation and citation). This includes using AI tools to develop or provide the foundation for written work, as well as self-plagiarism, which occurs when an author submits material or research from a previous academic exercise to satisfy the requirements of another exercise and uses it without proper citation of its reuse. Plagiarism can be intentional or unintentional.
- **Cheating:** Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. This includes unapproved collaboration, which occurs when a student works with others on an academic exercise without the express permission of the professor. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours.
- **Fabrication:** Unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- **Collusion:** The selling of academic products with the intention that they be submitted to satisfy an academic requirement.

Going online and taking information without proper citations, using Generative AI tools to develop responses, copying parts of other student's work, creating information for the purposes of making your paper seem more official, or anything involving taking someone else's thoughts or ideas without proper attribution is academic misconduct. If you have a question about an assignment, please come see me to clarify. Students are responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, including cases in which Generative AI was used in any way, and also including cases where AI software plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

Students are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all their academic work. Any student found guilty of any form of academic dishonesty will automatically fail the assignment in question, will likely fail the entire course, and will be subject to disciplinary action by the University (See East Texas A&M University Code of Student Conduct 5.b[1,2,3]). Further information on the History Department plagiarism policy can be found on the History Department web page. If you are even unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please ask.

Writing Center

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the resources of the Writing Center for assistance with drafting their papers. The Writing Center is a resource for you. They will not write your paper; they will help you improve your writing skills. If you use the Writing Center, please plan ahead. They can only help you if you see them in advance and have time to incorporate their suggestions into the final paper. More information can be found at <https://www.tamuc.edu/writing-center/>.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and East Texas A&M Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer. Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1. Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Nondiscrimination Statement

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Waters Library 162
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835; Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu
[Student Disability Resources & Services](#)

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

This schedule will guide you through the semester and indicates when your assignments are due. It should be referred to often. I will do my best to adhere to this schedule, but I reserve the right to make adjustments to it during the course of the semester as such circumstances arise. Please check the course page in MyLeo Online as the latest updates will be posted there, as well as links to the required readings for each week. Weekly topics are general and subject to change. The course is organized by thematic units that progress roughly chronologically.

Unit 1: Early Medieval Europe, 600-1050

Spielvogel, Chapters 8-9

Book Review Book should be selected during Unit 1

ClioVis timeline entries: complete 3-6 by the end of this Unit

W1: Introductions, Class Policies, and Getting Acquainted

January 13

January 15

W2: Charlemagne, Song of Roland

January 20:

January 22:

W3: Vikings and Central Europe

January 27:

January 29:

Unit 2: The Crusades and the High Middle Ages, 1050-1215

Spielvogel, Chapter 10

ClioVis timeline entries: complete about 8-10 by the end of this Unit

W4: The Bayeux Tapestry and Religious Reform

February 3:

February 5:

W5: The Crusades

February 10:

February 12:

W6: Abelard, Eloise, and the Magna Carta

February 17:

February 19:

Unit 3: The Black Death and the Renaissance, 1215-1490

Spielvogel, Chapters 11-12

ClioVis timeline entries: complete about 12-15 by the end of this Unit

W7: A Medieval Life

February 24:

February 26:

W8: Boccaccio, The Decameron and the Plague

March 3:

March 5:

March 10-12: SPRING BREAK

W9: Hundred Years War/Joan of Arc

March 17:

March 19:

W10: Humanism/Petrarch

March 24:

March 26:

Unit 4: The Reformation and the Thirty Years' War, 1490-1650

Spielvogel, Chapters 13-14 and the first section of Chapter 15

Book Review presentations will occur during this Unit

ClioVis timeline entries: complete at least 20 by the end of this unit

W11: European Overseas Expansion

March 31:

April 2:

W12: Machiavelli, The Prince

April 7:

April 9:

W13: Martin Luther and John Calvin

April 14:

April 16:

W14: The Return of Martin Guerre

April 21:

April 23:

W15: Thirty Years War

April 28:

April 30:

W16

Final Exam: TBD