

HIS 207: Digital Medieval History

Spring 2022

TR 11:35-12:50

Cham 3106

Davidson College

Instructor

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Office Hours: M/W 2:30 – 4:00 PM, after class meetings, & by appointment

Course Description

This course in historical methodology invites students to learn the historian's craft using both traditional and digital methods. Our common topic will be the rapidly changing world of twelfth-century Europe: an age that saw towns flourish, universities rise, crusading take off, and minds and hearts stir in scholarship, governance, theology and love. We will investigate this "Renaissance of the Twelfth Century" on its own terms by immersing ourselves in the primary sources of the age, especially in the epic poem, *Song of Roland*, and in the romances of Chrétien de Troyes and Marie de France. We will also analyze what historians have said about this period since the early 20th century, with a particular focus on Richard Southern's classic 1953 work, *The Making of the Middle Ages*. In a series of digital workshops, we will use the Mathematica programming environment to study the structure of *chansons de gestes* through network analysis, uncover the emotional arcs of the earliest European romances through sentiment analysis, and detect patterns of thought latent in these texts through various other practices of digital text mining and distant reading. Working in teams, students will then contribute their own original piece of historical research to a public-facing website devoted to understanding the twelfth-century transition "from epic to romance," as identified by Southern. No prior experience in historical or coding work is required—just an honest and open eagerness to learn.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course students will be able to

- Identify major figures and developments of European history ca. 1000 – 1200 A.D.
- Use medieval reference works to get quick and comprehensive answers to questions
- Interpret the testimony of medieval primary sources through close reading
- Apply digital methods such as text mining, network analysis, sentiment analysis to better understand primary and secondary sources
- Interpret the results of computational analysis of sources with an eye to blindspots and pitfalls
- Assemble, annotate and synthesize a comprehensive bibliography of secondary sources related to a research question
- Understand why, and how, historians disagree about complex historical subjects
- Formulate a clear and cogent historical argument grounded in the evidence of primary and secondary sources, as well as the fruits of computational research methods

Course Requirements

Week 1 Synthesis (5%). In the first week of the course, you will work with a partner to understand and synthesize the first chapter of Southern's *Making of the Middle Ages*. **Due Feb. 1.**

Contributions to our intellectual community (15%). These may take various forms, including:

- Engaging actively and courteously in discussions and workshops.
- Preparing the occasional short but meaningful presentation, as agreed upon in class.
- Completing and sharing in-class assignments.
- Attending office hours with feedback, questions, and ideas about course material.
- Contributing thoughts, readings, and ideas to our ongoing class Google Doc.
- Attending at least one History Forum event (a schedule will be circulated) and sharing a 250-word response about it on Moodle.

Paper #1: Historiographical Essay (15%). Working alone, you will write a 1000-word report synthesizing the argument of Richard Southern's *The Making of the Middle Ages* and situating it in the historiographical debate over the 'Renaissance of the Twelfth Century.' **Due Mar. 2.**

Paper #2: Primary Source Analysis (15%). Together with a partner, you will conduct a 1000-word critique of a major primary source, to be determined in consultation with me. **Due Mar. 29.**

Paper #3: Bibliographical Essay (15%). Working again with your partner, you will assemble, annotate, and synthesize the arguments of 6-9 bibliographic items related to a research question inspired by your Paper #2. **Due Apr. 14.**

2 Computational Projects (10%). You will follow and complete two Mathematica notebooks (5% each) in which you learn and apply computational methods of text and network analysis to medieval written sources. Substantial class time will be devoted to this. You will work in pairs. **Due Apr. 12 & Apr. 26.**

Final Website (25%). Together with your partner, you will prepare and publish one page on our common class website. This page will build on your previous papers and projects to develop an original piece of digital historical analysis. **Due May 9 (seniors) or May 13 (all others).**

Course Readings

The following books are available at the college bookstore:

1. Richard Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953). ISBN-10: 9780300002300 / ISBN-13: 978-0300002300
2. *The Song of Roland*, trans. Glyn S. Burgess (London: Penguin Books, 1990). ISBN-10 : 0140445323 / ISBN-13 : 978-0140445329
3. Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*, trans. William W. Kibler, Rev. ed. (London: Penguin Books, 2004). ISBN-10: 0140445218 / ISBN-13: 978-0140445213
4. Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 8th ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2015) ISBN-10: 1457690888 / ISBN-13: 978-1457690884

All other readings on the syllabus will be made available on Moodle. See ‘Course Bibliography’ below for full citations.

Inclusive Learning

The College requires that we include the following statement on our syllabi: “Davidson College values the diversity of its community and is an equal access institution that admits otherwise qualified applicants without regard to disability. The college seeks to accommodate requests for accommodations related to disability that are determined to be reasonable and do not compromise the integrity of a program or curriculum. To make such a request or to begin a conversation about a possible request, please contact Beth Bleil, Director of Academic Access and Disability Resources, in the Center for Teaching and Learning by visiting her office in the E.H. Little Library, by emailing her at bebleil@davidson.edu, or by calling 704-894-2129. It is best to submit accommodation requests within the drop/add period; however, requests can be made at any time in the semester. Please keep in mind that accommodations are not retroactive.”

Academic Integrity and Honor Code

Anything you hand in for this course is work pledged according to the Davidson Honor Code. If you have any questions, doubts, or concerns about what this means, please speak with me. I urge you to consult the “Using Sources & Avoiding Plagiarism” guide at our library’s website: <https://davidson.libguides.com/citation/plagiarism>.

Attendance

Attendance in class meetings is required. Repeated absences may significantly hurt your ability to contribute to our intellectual community. Missing more than 8 class meetings may be grounds for failing the course.

Grading

Each assignment will be evaluated according to the following letter-grade standards:

A: Work that is extraordinary (A) or excellent (A-). Such work demonstrates full command of the subject material, substantial intellectual initiative on the part of the student, and close attention to detail.

B: Work that is very good (B+), good (B), or somewhat good (B-). Such work shows solid understanding of the subject material and good intellectual initiative. Work at this level has room for improvement.

C: Work that is satisfactory. While it demonstrates some understanding of material, C-level work has substantial room for improvement in content, initiative and/or execution.

D: Work that is unsatisfactory. The student has made an attempt, but the work does not show understanding of the material or intellectual initiative.

E: Work that fails to meet the requirements of the assignment.

Assignment letter grades will be converted to numbers as follows (below left). Those numbers will then contribute to your raw numerical grade according to the following breakdown (below right):

<u>Assignment Grades</u>			<u>Raw Numerical Grades: Breakdown</u>	
			<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
A	→	95		
A-	→	91	Week 1 Synthesis	5 %
B+	→	88	Contributions to Intellectual Community	15 %
B	→	85	Paper 1	15 %
B-	→	81	Paper 2	15 %
C+	→	78	Paper 3	15 %
C	→	75	Computational Project 1	5 %
C-	→	71	Computational Project 2	5 %
D	→	65	Final Website	25 %

Your raw numerical grade will then be translated back to a raw letter grade according to the following table:

<u>Raw Letter Grades</u>					
93 and above	→	A	77-79	→	C+
90-92	→	A-	70-72	→	C-
87-89	→	B+	67-69	→	D+
83-86	→	B	63-66	→	D
80-82	→	B-	60-62	→	D-
73-76	→	C	59 and below	→	F

In determining the final course grade, I reserve the right, to be exercised rarely, to adjust your raw letter grade by a plus or minus depending on your trajectory in the course.

Late Work

Due dates are listed in the Course Schedule below. Any work handed in past the due date will be penalized by 1/3 of a grade for each day that it is late.

Course Schedule

Unless otherwise specified, all readings and assignments are due in class on the day they are listed. Due dates and special instructions are listed in red; full bibliographic entries are found in the "Course Bibliography" below. I may adjust readings and topics based on the flow of the course; check Moodle for announcements, changes and the most recent syllabus.

Unit 1: Renaissance of the Twelfth Century

Week 1	Reading & Writing: Safe Travels!	See instructions on Moodle
T Feb 1	Introduction to Medieval Europe	Week 1 Synthesis due

R Feb 3	Lords and Kings	<i>Atlas</i> , 44-45, 50-51, 64-65; Southern, c. 2; Primary Sources packet
T Feb 8	Popes and Monks	<i>Atlas</i> , 54-61; Southern, c. 3; Primary Sources packet
R Feb 10	Schools and Scholars	<i>Atlas</i> , 66-67; Southern, c. 4; Primary Sources packet
T Feb 15	Epic and Romance	Southern, c. 5 Primary Sources packet
R Feb 17	Renaissance of the Twelfth Century?	Haskins, c. 1 + TOC; Vaughn
T Feb 22	‘Revolt of the Medievalists’ Workshop: Secondary Source Critique	Colish; Jaeger; Rampolla, c. 2b-2
R Feb 24	1977 and beyond Workshop: Citations	Introductions & TOCs from Benson & Constable, Noble & Van Engen, and Novikoff; Rampolla, c. 7
T Mar 1	Beyond Haskins: Medieval Persecution	<i>Atlas</i> , 70-71; Moore, c. 1; Freedman & Spiegel; <i>optional</i> : Carr, c. 2
R Mar 3	Workshop: Basic Coding: Introduction to Mathematica	Paper #1 due Install Mathematica

Unit 2: Research

T Mar 8	Epic	<i>Song of Roland</i> , part 1
R Mar 10	Workshop: Primary Source Critique 1	<i>Song of Roland</i> , part 2; Rampolla, cc. 2a & 2b-1
Mar 14-18	<i>Spring Break</i>	
T Mar 22	Romance & Arthurian Literature	Chrétien de Troyes, part 1
R Mar 24	Workshop: Primary Source Critique 2	Chrétien de Troyes, part 2 Rampolla, 5a
T Mar 29	Writing Day (optional)	Work on Paper #2

R Mar 31	Workshop: Asking Research Questions	Paper #2 due
T Apr 5	Workshop: Finding Bibliography Digital Text Analysis 1	Find, read, & annotate research article #1
R Apr 7	Digital Text Analysis 2	Fischer (selections) Find, read, & annotate research article #2
T Apr 12	Digital Text Analysis 3	Archer & Jockers (selection); Find, read, & annotate research article #3 DTA due (end of class)
R Apr 14	No class: Convocation	Paper #3 due
T Apr 19	Network Analysis 1	Graham et al. c. 6
R Apr 21	Network Analysis 2	Kenna & MacCarron; & Gramsch et al.
T Apr 26	Network Analysis 3	NA due (end of class) Rampolla, c. 4d
R Apr 28	Websites Set up	Work on research Rampolla, c. 6
T May 3	In-class research	Work on research & website
R May 5	Conclusions & Evaluations	Work on research & website

Final Websites due End of Day by May 9 (for seniors) and May 13 (for all others)

Course Bibliography

The following course readings are available either in the bookstore, on Moodle or as e-resources through the Davidson library. This list will surely grow over the course of the semester.

Archer, Jodie, and Matthew Lee Jockers. *The Bestseller Code: Anatomy of the Blockbuster Novel*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016.

Benson, Robert and Giles Constable, eds. *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982.

Carr, E.H. *What is History?* New York: Random House, 1961.

Chrétien de Troyes. *Arthurian Romances*. Translated by William W. Kibler and Carleton W. Carroll. London: Penguin Books, 1991.

Colish, Marcia. "Haskins's Renaissance Seventy Years Later: Beyond Anti-Burckhardtianism." *The Haskins Society Journal* 11 (2003): 1-16.

Fischer, David Hackett. *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought*. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

Freedman, Paul and Gabrielle Spiegel. "Medievalisms Old and New: The Rediscovery of Alterity in North American Medieval Studies." *American Historical Review* 103 (1998): 677-704.

Graham, Shawn, Ian Milligan, and Scott Weingart. *Exploring Big Historical Data: The Historian's Macroscopic*. London: Imperial College Press, 2016.

Gramsch, Robert, Máirín MacCarron, Pádraig MacCarron, and Joseph Yose. "Medieval Historical, Hagiographical and Biographical Networks." In *Maths Meets Myths: Quantitative Approaches to Ancient Narratives*, edited by Pádraig MacCarron, Máirín MacCarron, and Ralph Kenna, 45-69. Cham: Springer, 2017.

Jaeger, Charles Stephen. "Pessimism in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance." *Speculum* 78 (2003): 1151-1183.

Jotischky, Andrew and Caroline Hull. *The Penguin Historical Atlas of the Medieval World*. London: Penguin Books, 2005. [referred to on the syllabus as *Atlas*]

Kazhdan, A. P. "In Search of Indirect Information." In *People and Power in Byzantium: An Introduction to Modern Byzantine Studies*, edited by A.P. Kazhdan and Giles Constable, 162-178. Washington, D.C: Dumbarton Oaks, 1982.

Kenna, Ralph and Pádraig MacCarron. "A Networks Approach to Mythological Epics." In *Maths Meets Myths: Quantitative Approaches to Ancient Narratives*, edited by Pádraig MacCarron, Máirín MacCarron, and Ralph Kenna, 21-43. Cham: Springer, 2017.

- Moore, R.I. *The Birth of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1987.
- Noble, Thomas F.X. and John H. Van Engen, eds. *European Transformations: The Long Twelfth Century*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012.
- Novikoff, Alex J., ed. *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance: A Reader*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017.
- Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*. 8th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2015.
- Southern, Richard. *The Making of the Middle Ages*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953.
- Tahkokallio, Jaakko. "The Classicization of the Latin Curriculum and 'The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century': A Quantitative Study of the Codicological Evidence." *Viator* 46:2 (2015): 129-154.
- Vaughn, Sally. "Charles Homer Haskins." In *Medieval Scholarship: Biographical Studies on the Formation of a Discipline*, edited by Helen Damico and Joseph B. Zavadil, 169-184. New York: Garland Publishing, 1995.