

HISTORY 415-01: THE TWELFTH-CENTURY RENAISSANCE

Spring 2012, Palmer 205, TR 11:00-12:15

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Course Overview

In 1927 the great American medievalist Charles Homer Haskins published his classic work, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*. The book was both an assessment of what was a widely-recognized turning point in European history and culture and an appropriation for that period of the recently popularized term “renaissance,” by then conventionally located in the late fourteenth through the late sixteenth centuries. The purpose of this course is fourfold: to look at Haskins’ great book, to consider aspects of the twelfth century that Haskins did not, to reconsider some of those that he did, and to ponder his and others’ use of the term “renaissance” to describe the twelfth century. Thus this seminar will sample the wide range of intellectual, political, institutional, spiritual, and cultural developments that took place in Western Europe between the late eleventh century and the late twelfth century, using primary sources as our guide and supplemented by generous readings from the best recent scholarship. Among the topics we will investigate are the study of the liberal arts in cathedral schools and the first universities; the centralization of political authority in France and England; the spiritual renewal associated with new monastic orders; the music and poetry of the traveling Minstrels that embody the twelfth-century spirit of chivalry and courtly love; and the increasingly fraught relations between Christians and Jews that resulted in part from this intellectual renaissance. The overall attitude towards learning during this period is perhaps best exemplified in the memorable phrase of Bernard of Chartres, who described the scholars of his generation as being “like dwarfs perched on the shoulders of giants: we see more and farther than our predecessors, not because we have keener vision or greater height, but because we are lifted up and borne aloft on their gigantic stature.” It is our goal to approach all the readings with this motto in mind.

Required Books (additional primary and secondary source readings are available in my Academic Fileserver Folder)

- Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*
- *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable (Selections on fileserver)
- William Levitan, *Abelard and Heloise, the Letters and Other Writings*

- Marie de France, The Lays of Marie de France, ed. Edward Gallagher
- John of Salisbury, Policraticus, ed. Cary Nederman
- The Cistercian World: Monastic Writings of the Twelfth Century, ed. Pauline Matarasso

Assignments and Grading

Attendance and regular participation in class are mandatory. More than 1 unexcused absence from class will negatively impact your grade. Reading assignments will include various articles in addition to the books and primary source collections listed above. All additional readings will be available in PDF format in my academic fileserver in the folder for this class, unless otherwise stated. Your grade for the course will be comprised of class participation (20%), a take-home midterm TBA (20%), a book review of 3-4 pages on a recent title having to do with the twelfth century (10%), leading a discussion of a primary source to be decided upon in consultation with me (10%), and a final research paper of about 20 pages (40%).

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Week 1: Introduction to Course

TH Jan 12: No Readings.

Question for discussion: Why the twelfth century?

Unit 1: Haskins and the Historiography of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance

T Jan 17: Alex Novikoff, "The Twelfth Century Renaissance Before Haskins," *Haskins Society Journal*, vol. 16 (2005), 104-116; Gerhart B. Ladner, "Terms and ideas of Renewal," in *Renaissance and Renewal*; Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, chap. 1-4.

TH Jan 19: Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, chap. 5-9; Le Goff, "What did the 12th-Century Renaissance Mean?"

T Jan 24: Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, chaps. 10-12; Marcia L. Colish, "Haskins' Renaissance Seventy Years Later: Beyond Anti-Burkhardtianism," *Haskins Society Journal*, vol. 11 (2003), 1-15.

Unit 2: New Attitudes, New Questions, and a New Awareness in 12th-Century Thought

TH Jan 26: Anselm, in *Scholastic Miscellany*, pp. 69-96; Alex Novikoff, "Anselm, Dialogue, and the Rise of Scholastic Disputation,"

T Jan 31: Art and Architecture in the Twelfth-Century. Readings TBA. Film viewing: Cathedral, by David McCauley

Unit 3: Reformation of Religion

TH Feb 2; *The Cistercian World*, pp. 5-12; Constable, "Renewal and Reform in Religious Life: Concepts and Realities," in *Renaissance and Renewal*;

T Feb 7: Anselm of Laon and his school, in *Scholastic Miscellany*, pp. 261-275; *The Cistercian World*, pp. 13-58, 120-128

TH Feb 9: *The Cistercian World*, pp. 147-202; John Van Engen, "The 'Crisis of Cenobitism' Reconsidered: Benedictine Monasticism in the Years 1050-1150," *Speculum* 61 (1989): 269-304.

Unit 4: Abelard and Heloise

T Feb 14: "The Calamities of Peter Abelard," in *Abelard and Heloise*, ed. Levitan, pp. 1-46;

TH Feb 16: Abelard, Letters 13 & 15 and *Apologia Against Bernard of Clairvaux* (this supplementary material from *Letters of Peter Abelard*, ed. Ziolkowski, in Folder);

T Feb 21: Letters 1-4 (pp. 47-104) and "Questions of Heloise" (pp. 257-259) in *Abelard and Heloise*, ed. Levitan;

TH Feb 23: "Letters of Heloise and Peter the Venerable" (pp. 263-276) and Appendix B: From *The Letters of Two Lovers* (pp. 315-328), in *Abelard and Heloise*, ed. Levitan;

Unit 5: John of Salisbury's Political Thought

T Feb 28: Book Review Paper Due! *Policraticus*, prologue, Books III, IV,

TH Mar 1: *Policraticus*, VI, VII + Excerpts from his *Metalogicon*

Unit 6: Marie de France and Courtly Love

T Mar 6: *The Lays of Marie de France*, Introduction, Guigemar, Les Deus Amantz, and one other Lay + commentaries

TH Mar 8: *The Lays of Marie de France*, Eliduc + music in class

March 9- 18: Spring Break

Part 2 of the Semester: Readings Assigned and Presented (TBA):

The second half of this course will revolve around the reading and discussing of primary sources which I am compiling for a Source Reader on the Twelfth-Century Renaissance (University of Toronto Press). These readings will be assigned and delegated to different members of the class who will lead discussions about them, make suggestions about the juiciest parts, and formulate questions for discussion about these sources. The list of sources to choose from (some 84 in total) is provided on a separate Table of Contents for the Source Reader. I will go over in class what these sources talk about, where you can get a hold of them, and what I expect from your presentation of this material.