

# **HISTORY 105-03: CHIVALRY, CATHEDRALS, AND UNIVERSITIES: THE TWELFTH-CENTURY RENAISSANCE**

**Spring 2013, Palmer 207, MW 4:00-5:15**

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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)**

- Thomas Noble and John V. Engen, European Transformations: the Long Twelfth Century (Notre Dame, 2012)

- Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century, ed. Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable (Selections on fileserver)
- William Levitan, ed., Abelard and Heloise, the Letters and Other Writings (Hackett, 2007)
- Meg Bogin, The Women Troubadours (Norton, 1980)
- Jean-Claude Schmitt, The Conversion of Herman the Jew: Autobiography, History, and Fiction in the Twelfth Century, trans. Alex J. Novikoff (Penn Press, 2010).
- John Benton, ed., Self and Society in Medieval France (Toronto, 1989)

### 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 files server 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 topic paper of about 7-8 pages each (20%) and an in-class final (20%).

## Schedule of Readings and Assignments

### Week 1: Introduction to Course

W Jan 9: No Readings. The Classical and Medieval Background.  
Question for discussion: Why the twelfth century?

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

M Jan 14: 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.

W Jan 16: *European Transformations*, intro (Nobel) + chap. 1 (Van Engen); Jacques Le Goff, "What did the 12<sup>th</sup>-Century Renaissance Mean?" Marcia L. Colish, "Haskins' Renaissance Seventy Years Later: Beyond Anti-Burkhardtianism," *Haskins Society Journal*, vol. 11 (2003), 1-15

M Jan 21: MLK day. No classes.

## **Unit 2: Artistic and Visual Approaches to the Twelfth Century**

W Jan 23: Bogin, *The Women Troubadours*, 8-76. *European Transformations*, chap 3 (Barthélemy)

M Jan 28: Bogin, *The Women Troubadours*, (Tibors, Countess de Dia, Castelloza, Alais, Anonymous III); *European Transformation*, chap. 14 (Newman).

W Jan 30: Film viewing: *Building the Great Cathedrals* (NOVA, 2010).

## **Unit 3: Autobiography and Spirituality**

M Feb 4: Benton, ed. *Self and Society*, Book 1-2. Constable, "Renewal and Reform in Religious Life: Concepts and Realities," in *Renaissance and Renewal*.

W Feb 6: Benton, ed., *Self and Society*, Book 3. *European Transformations*, chap. 16 (Bedos-Rezak)

M Feb 11: Schmitt, *The Conversion of Herman the Jew*, chaps. 1-2 & pp. 199-240.

W Feb 13: Schmitt, *The Conversion of Herman the Jew*, chaps. 3-5.

## **Unit 4: Abelard and Heloise**

M Feb 18: "The Calamities of Peter Abelard," in *Abelard and Heloise*, ed. Levitan, pp. 1-46.

W Feb 20: Abelard, Letters 13 & 15 and *Apologia Against Bernard of Clairvaux* (this supplementary material from *Letters of Peter Abelard*, ed. Ziolkowski, in Folder).

M Feb 25: Letters 1-4 (pp. 47-104) and "Questions of Heloise" (pp. 257-259) in *Abelard and Heloise*, ed. Levitan; "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;

W Feb 27: Paper 1 Due!

## **Unit 5: Urban and Rural Developments & Interfaith Relations**

M Mar 4: *European Transformations*, chaps. 9 (Nicholas) & 10 (Freedman).

W Mar 6: *European Transformations*, chaps. 11 (Constable) & 12 (Abulafia)

**March 9- 17: 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.