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HIST 405-02, Christians, Muslims, and Jews in Medieval Spain, Spring 2009

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Christians, Muslims, and Jews in Medieval Spain

Rhodes College: Spring 2009
History 405.02/ Thursday 2:00 – 4:30 PM
Professor: Dr. Alex Novikoff (novikoffa@rhodes.edu)
Office Hours: MW 1-2 PM & Th 1-2 PM (318 Clough)

Syllabus

Course Outline: This course investigates the roughly 750 years of coexistence between Christians, Muslims, and Jews on the Iberian peninsula, from the Muslim arrival in 711 to the end of the Christian reconquest in 1492. Readings from primary sources in translation from all three communities will consider the artistic and intellectual achievements of the era as well as the intricate political history of Spain's many different kingdoms. Special attention will be given to the complex nature of interfaith relations, the sustained communication and commercial exchanges between the various groups and their periodical breakdown into violence. This course's status as a 400-level senior seminar means that at least as much emphasis will be placed on the analysis and interpretation of documents as on the gaining of factual information (although clearly the latter is a prerequisite for the former). Preparedness for discussion is therefore essential. It is hoped that by the end of the class you will have a good understanding of the major historical developments that shaped and gave rise to the country now known as Spain and that you will be familiar with some of the historiographic debates that have surrounded, and continue to surround, the study of medieval Spain.

Course Requirements: There are 5 required books for the class, all available at the College Bookstore. In addition to these books, there will be a few articles from academic journals, book chapters, and some additional primary sources that will be assigned, all available electronically in the "public" folder of my academic fileserver. We will also view two films that are historically set in medieval Spain (one in English, the other in Arabic with subtitles) and you will be asked to write a historical critique of one of the two films. Your grade for the class will be based on the following: a take-home midterm exam (20%), a 15-20 page research paper on a topic of your choosing (40%), a written historical critique of one of the two films (10%), and class discussion and participation (30%), which includes a brief presentation to the class on your research topic.

- Olivia R. Constable ed., *Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources* (Penn Press)
- Richard Fletcher, *Moorish Spain* (University of California Press)
- Richard Fletcher, *The Quest for El Cid* (Oxford)
- Bernard F. Reilly, *The Medieval Spains* (Cambridge University Press)
- Jonathan Ray, *The Sephardic Frontier in Medieval Spain* (Cornell Univ. Press)

Week 1 (Jan. 15): Introduction to the Study of Medieval Spain

No readings; Video on the Goths.

Week 2 (Jan. 22): History and Historiography of Medieval Spain

Readings: A. Novikoff, "Between Tolerance and Intolerance in Medieval Spain: An Historiographic Enigma"; Fletcher, *Moorish Spain*, chap. 1; Ray, *Sephardic Frontier*, introduction.

Week 3 (Jan. 29): Visigothic Kingdom and the Muslim Arrival

Readings: Reilly, *Medieval Spains*, chap. 1-2; Constable, *Medieval Iberia*, #s 1, 4, 6-8.

Week 4 (Feb. 5): Early Medieval Spain: The Caliphate of Cordoba

Readings: Fletcher, *Moorish Spain*, chap. 4; Constable, *Medieval Iberia*, #s 9, 11, 13.

Week 5 (Feb. 12): From Golden Age to Fragmentation in Al-Andalus

Readings: Reilly, *Medieval Spains*, chap. 3; Fletcher, *Moorish Spain*, chap. 5; Ray, *Sephardic Frontier*, intro & chap. 1; Constable, *Medieval Iberia*, #s 15, 17, 19.

Week 6 (Feb. 19): Christian Expansion and Reconquest

Readings: Reilly, *Medieval Spains*, chap. 4; Constable, *Medieval Iberia*, #s 20-23, 27-29.

Week 7 (Feb. 26): The World of El Cid

Readings: Excerpts from the *Poem of the Cid* and other contemporary accounts (TBA); Fletcher, *The Quest for El Cid*; Film Viewing: *El Cid*, dir. Anthony Mann (1969)

Week 8 (Mar. 5): Philosophy, Science, and Orthodoxy in Muslim Spain

Readings: Averroes, *The Decisive Treatise*; Fletcher, *Moorish Spain*, chap. 6; Constable, *Medieval Iberia*, #s 33-36.

Week 9 (Mar. 12): Religion and Philosophy in Muslim Spain

Film Viewing: *Destiny*, dir. Youssef Chahine (1997)

Spring Break

Week 10 (Mar. 26): The Christian Reconquest Advances

Readings: R. Fletcher, "Reconquest and Crusade in Spain, 1050-1150"; J. O'Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain*, chap. 3; Constable, *Medieval Iberia*, #s 30-31, 38-40.

Week 11 (Apr. 2): Jews in Medieval Spain: Under Islamic Rule

Readings: Ray, *The Sephardic Frontier*, chaps. 1-3; Constable, *Medieval Iberia*, #s 13-14, 18, 32, 36; Fletcher, *Moorish Spain*, chap. 7.

Week 12 (Apr. 9): Jews in Medieval Spain: Under Christian Rule

Readings: Nachmanides, *Barcelona Disputation of 1263*; Ray, *The Sephardic Frontier*, chaps. 4-5; Constable, *Medieval Iberia*, #s 24, 47, 59.

Week 13 (Apr. 16): Inquisition, Expulsion and the Christianization of Spain

Readings: Reilly, *Medieval Spains*, chaps. 6-7; Constable, *Medieval Iberia*, #s 59-65; Fletcher, *Moorish Spain*, chaps. 8-9; Video on the Spanish Inquisition (time permitting)

Week 14 (Apr. 23): Papers Due; Class Presentations

No Readings

Week 15 (Apr. 30): Christians, Muslims, and Jews in Medieval Spain Reconsidered

Roundtable discussion