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## HIST 412-01, Medieval England, Spring 2007

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**History 412: Medieval England**  
TR 12:30-1:45 • Kennedy Hall 104 • Spring 2007

Prof. Anna Dronzek  
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Phone: 843-3882  
E-mail: dronzeka@rhodes.edu (this is probably the quickest way to reach me)  
Office Hours: MW 3-4, T 2-3, and by appointment

Please feel free to talk to me about any questions or concerns you may have – I am happy to meet with you!

**Course Description & Goals**

This seminar examines the history of England in the Middle Ages, from approximately from the age of the Anglo-Saxons to the advent of the Tudors (900-1500). We will survey the most significant events and developments during this period and focus particularly on political/constitutional and social history, addressing the following questions: How do the role of kingship change over the course of the Middle Ages? From where does the distinctive tradition of the English Common Law derive? How do administrative institutions develop? And finally, how (if at all) do these developments affect the way that ordinary people lived? This course is also designed to introduce you to the practice of historical research in medieval English history.

I have organized the course to achieve the following goals: 1) to provide an overview of the most important historical events and developments in England between roughly 1000-1500, by reading and discussing a range of primary and secondary sources; 2) to give you experience defining, planning, and undertaking a research project in medieval English history. I encourage you to think about your own goals for the semester and I would be happy to discuss them with you!

**Course Books**

The following books are required and are available for purchase at the Rhodes Bookstore:

- R. Howard Bloch, *A Needle in the Right Hand of God: The Norman Conquest of 1066 and the Making and Meaning of the Bayeux Tapestry* (Random House, 2006)  
ISBN 1400065496
- William Fitz Stephen, *Norman London* (Italica Press, 1990) ISBN 0934977194
- Barbara Hanawalt, *The Ties That Bound: Peasant Families in Medieval England* (Oxford University Press, 1989) ISBN 0195045645
- A. E. Dick Howard, ed., *Magna Carta: Text and Commentary* (Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, 1997) ISBN 0813901219
- Colin Platt, *King Death: The Black Death and Its Aftermath in Late-Medieval England* (University of Toronto Press, 1996) ISBN 0802079008

Nigel Saul, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of England* (Oxford University Press, 2001) ISBN 0192893246

Additional required readings may be found in my faculty folder and are marked on the schedule below.

### **Course Requirements**

#### *Participation – 40%*

Research has demonstrated that students learn material more effectively and retain it more thoroughly through active participation than by listening passively to lectures, and therefore I place a great deal of importance on class participation. To succeed in this portion of the course, complete all reading and writing assignments prior to class, and come to class prepared to answer questions, to raise comments and/or questions of your own, to otherwise participate in class activities, and to listen to others present their perspectives. Attendance alone will not earn you an A in participation; you are expected to contribute actively. Participation will be graded on a combination of factors, namely attendance, frequency of participation, and most importantly, quality of participation. Also see “Discussion” under Policies, below.

#### *Research Paper – 40%*

*Bibliography – 5%*

*Rough Draft – 10%*

*Final Draft – 25%*

This course requires a research paper of 20-25 (6000-7500 words) based on either original research in primary sources, or historiographical analysis of modern scholarship. You will complete this paper in three stages and the due dates for those stages are marked on the schedule below; I will provide further details in a separate handout.

#### *Leading Discussion – 10%*

You will each be responsible (with a partner) for leading discussion once during the semester. The days on which students will be responsible for leading discussion are marked on the syllabus below; I will provide further details in a separate handout.

Please note that to be eligible to pass this class, you must complete all assignments.

### **Course Policies**

#### **General**

Readings on the syllabus are listed on the day for which they are due. Therefore, on Tuesday, Jan. 16 you should come to class having read the first chapter in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Medieval England*. Please also bring the assigned readings to class with you each day, as we will often refer specifically to passages in the readings.

***Attendance***

Because this class is a seminar, your participation is crucial to its success, and it is impossible to participate if you are not present. Missing more than three classes will adversely affect your course grade at my discretion. In the event of an emergency or other unavoidable absence, you remain responsible for any material covered in your absence; please contact me to let me know you will not be in class and to find out how you can make up the work that you missed.

***Discussion***

This course is organized as a seminar. While I will lecture on occasion, discussion is by far the more important component. During discussions, much of the responsibility for what goes on in the classroom lies in your hands and therefore the quality of your experience depends on your own preparation. I see the classroom as an intellectual community, and it is the responsibility of everyone to contribute their perspectives to that community. **No one ever reads historical material in quite the same way, and each of you has important insights to offer to the group as a whole (including me); please share those insights to help further everyone's learning.** You are not required to understand everything in the reading, but you must be willing to raise questions about what you find confusing, as I will not know what you do not understand unless you tell me. **Identifying what confuses you about a reading is extremely important, as it is often the points of greatest confusion that tell us the most about how people in the past differed from people today.** I encourage you to disagree with each other and with me, but expect you to do so in a way that shows respect for others. If you have any concerns about how the discussion is going in this class – either about your own or others' contributions – please feel free to raise them with me!

One form of respect is according your classmates (including me) the courtesy of your undivided attention; please do not read or work on materials not related to this course during class time. Please also turn off all cell phones during class time unless I have approved their continued activation in advance.

***Late Assignments and Incompletes***

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date for which they are assigned (or at another time as designated) and late assignments will not be accepted. Incompletes will not be granted in this course unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances, and they must be arranged with me before finals week. In cases of emergency (personal/familial illness, injury, other trauma) please consult with me **sooner** rather than later so that we can plan how best to handle the situation!

***Academic Dishonesty***

Each of you is bound by the Honor Code as elaborated in the Student Handbook, and no violation will be tolerated. **Note that carelessness or error is not an acceptable excuse for academic dishonesty.** Please review the Student Handbook if you are unclear about the details of the Honor Code, particularly the definitions in Article I, Section 3, including the definition of "plagiarism." On every assignment, you should reaffirm the Honor Code by writing the entire honor pledge and signing your name. No work will be accepted without

an Honor Code pledge. Studying together and reading one another's papers is always a good idea, but make sure that your work is your own.

### **Accessibility**

It is College policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Course materials are available in alternative formats to persons with disabilities upon request. Please contact the instructor or the Disability Services office, 843-3994, to discuss accommodation needs.

### **Grading Guide**

**"A"** work shows that you have done all the assigned readings, attended class, and participated in discussion. You know and understand the material covered by the course and can use it appropriately to support your own particular, clearly written argument or interpretation. You must also be able to follow instructions and do the assignment asked of you, not another one with which you are more comfortable.

**"B"** work differs from "A" work in that it might not always use the material to support an independent argument or interpretation; or might not present its argument as clearly in writing; or might not exactly address the assignment.

**"C"** work shows that you know the material covered in the course, but does not use the material to sustain a clear argument or interpretation, either through lack of evidence, factual inaccuracies or misunderstandings, problems in writing clearly, or not answering the assignment.

**"D"** work shows only that you have a minimal knowledge of the course material.

**"F"** demonstrates no knowledge of the course material at all. *If you receive an F on an assignment, please come see me so we can talk about how to improve on future work.*

### **Schedule of Classes and Assignments**

(readings marked with an \* will be found online in my faculty folder in the Academic Departments and Programs server)

Thursday	1/ 11	First Day of Class – Introduction
Tuesday	1/16	<i>Oxford Illustrated History</i> , Ch. 1 "Medieval England: Identity, Politics, and Society" (1-24)
<b>[Wednesday</b>	<b>1/17</b>	<b>Drop Add Ends]</b>
Thursday	1/18	<i>Oxford Illustrated History</i> , Ch. 2 "Anglo-Saxon England, c. 500-1066" (25-60); selections from <i>Beowulf</i> <sup>*</sup>
Tuesday	1/23	<i>A Needle in the Right Hand of God</i> , Chs. 1-2 (3-46)
Thursday	1/25	<i>A Needle in the Right Hand of God</i> , Chs. 3-4 (47-94)

**NB: By the end of this week, you must have made an**

**appointment to meet with me one-on-one to discuss your choice of topic for the research paper**

Tuesday	1/30	<i>A Needle in the Right Hand of God</i> , Chs. 5-6 (95-162)
<b>[Wednesday</b>	<b>1/31</b>	<b>Extended Drop Period Ends; Pass Fail Period Ends]</b>
Thursday	2/1	<i>A Needle in the Right Hand of God</i> , Chs. 7-8 (163-204) <b>Student Discussion Leaders</b>
Tuesday	2/6	<i>Oxford Illustrated History</i> , Ch. 3 “Conquered England, 1066-1215” (61-101); selections from the Domesday Book*
Thursday	2/8	<i>Magna Carta</i> , entire (including commentary as well as text)
Tuesday	2/13	<i>Oxford Illustrated History</i> , Ch. 4 “Late Medieval England, 1215-1485” (102-36); selections from Froissart on the Hundred Years War* <b>Student Discussion Leaders</b>
Thursday	2/15	<i>Oxford Illustrated History</i> , Ch. 5 “The Economy and Society” (137-73)
Tuesday	2/20	<b>No class meeting – one-on-one meetings with me to discuss your bibliography/progress on your research paper</b>
Thursday	2/22	<b>No class meeting – one-on-one meetings with me to discuss your bibliography/progress on your research paper</b>
Tuesday	2/27	<i>Norman London</i> , entire (including introduction and essay by Stenton as well as text) <b>Student Discussion Leaders</b>
Thursday	3/1	<i>The Ties That Bound</i> , Introduction, Part I (Chs. 1-3) “The Material Environment” (3-64) <b>Student Discussion Leaders</b>
<b>[Monday</b>	<b>3/5</b>	<b>Midterm Grades Submitted]</b>
Tuesday	3/6	<i>The Ties That Bound</i> , Part II (Chs. 4-6) “Blood Ties and Family Wealth” (65-104)
Thursday	3/8	<i>The Ties That Bound</i> , Part III (Chs. 7-10) “Household Economy” (105-68)
Tuesday	3/13	NO CLASS – Spring Break

Thursday	3/15	NO CLASS – Spring Break
Tuesday	3/20	<i>The Ties That Bound</i> , Part 4 (Chs. 11-13) “Stages of Life: Childhood, Growing Up and Getting Married, The Partnership Marriage” (169-219)
Thursday	3/22	<i>The Ties That Bound</i> , Part 4 (Chs. 14-15) “Stages of Life: Widowhood, Old Age and Death,” Part 5 (Chs. 16-17) “Surrogate Family” (220-67) <b>Student Discussion Leaders</b>
<b>[Friday</b>	<b>3/23</b>	<b>Withdraw Period Ends]</b>
Tuesday	3/27	<i>King Death</i> , Chs. 1-4 (1-62) <b>Rough Draft of Research Paper Due</b>
Thursday	3/29	<b>No Class Meeting – meet one-on-one with me to discuss your rough drafts</b>
Tuesday	4/3	<b>No Class Meeting – meet one-on-one with me to discuss your rough drafts</b>
Thursday	4/5	NO CLASS – Easter Break
Tuesday	4/10	<i>King Death</i> , Chs. 5-7 (63-120)
Thursday	4/12	<i>King Death</i> , Chs. 8-10 (121-92) <b>Student Discussion Leaders</b>
Tuesday	4/17	<i>Oxford Illustrated History</i> , Ch. 6 “Piety, Religion, and the Church” (174-206); selections from visitation records*; Lollard texts.* <b>Student Discussion Leaders</b>
Thursday	4/19	<i>Oxford Illustrated History</i> , Ch. 7 “The Visual Arts” (207-44)
Tuesday	4/24	<i>Oxford Illustrated History</i> , Ch. 8 “Language and Literature” (245-76); selections from Marie de France and Chaucer*
Thursday	4/26	Last class meeting – Conclusion
Friday	4/27	Awards Convocation Undergraduate Research & Creative Activity Symposium (URCAS)
FINALS WEEK		FINAL DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE (DATE TBD)