Liberal Arts 200B. Culture and Expression: Middle Ages and Renaissance

Candace Gregory-Abbott

T 5:30 – 8:??
Office: TAH 3059
Tel# 278-3824
Email: cgregory@csus.edu
Tel# 278-3824
Office Hrs: MW 11-12
Tues 4-5 pm

Homepage: www.csus.edu/indiv/g/gregoryc

Course Content and Objectives

Liberal Arts 200B is an interdisciplinary seminar on cultural movements, figures, and art forms of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Focus is on the West with some global comparison. Emphasis is on theoretical perspectives, methods, and research techniques germane to the liberal arts.

Learning Objectives:
1. Be conversant as to the dates and basic cultural aspects of all of the European Middle Ages and Renaissance.
2. Illustrate general knowledge of the cultural movements, important figures, and significant art forms of each era, along with sophisticated knowledge of such pertaining to the era(s) of each student’s special interests.
3. Be familiar enough with the corpus of primary texts and works of art to know whence comes the general academic understanding of the cultural history of these eras.
4. Be conversant in the relevant major scholars and their theoretical perspectives.
5. Be practiced in the techniques of graduate-level research in the liberal arts, particularly with regard to subjects in the medieval period and Renaissance.

Required Texts
Lawrence Cunningham and John Reich, Culture and Values: A Survey of the Humanities, Volumes 1
Judith Herrin, The Formation of Christendom
Beowulf (trans. Seamus Heaney)
Song of Roland
Chretien de Troyes, Arthurian Romances
Castiglione, Book of the Courtier
Shakespeare, Hamlet
Erasmus, Praise of Folly
Marlowe, Doctor Faustus.

Course Format
The course will consist of mainly of seminar discussions of readings and of the visual arts, together with some presentation of research by students.
### Course Requirements and Student Evaluation

In addition to the completion of all reading assignments by the dates assigned, formal requirements and their correlative grade percentages consist of the following:

1. **Regular attendance and fruitful contribution to class discussions; inadequacy in these areas will potentially affect course grades. 30%.**

   Part of participation includes being prepared each class night to start the discussion. For each night’s reading, select one passage / quote (no more than a page, but longer than a single sentence) to present to the class. I will call on students randomly over the semester to begin discussion by presenting their quote. You may be called on more than once over the course of the semester. Thus, it is important that you be prepared every night to present your quote.

2. **Several short response papers to assigned readings, designed to enhance the quality of both readings and discussions. 40%.** You will select four books and write a five-page paper on each of them.

3. **A longer paper focusing on a topic of each student’s choice. 15-20 pages each. 30%.**

### Semester Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>30 January</td>
<td>Byzantium</td>
<td>Cunningham / Reich, Chapter 7 Boethius, <em>Consolation of Philosophy</em>, excerpts Begin reading <em>Formation of Christiandom</em></td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>6 February</td>
<td>Anglo Saxons</td>
<td><em>Beowulf</em></td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>13 February</td>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>Cunningham / Reich, Chapter 8 <em>Qur’an</em>, excerpts Discussion of <em>Formation of Christiandom</em></td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>20 February</td>
<td>Carolingians</td>
<td>Cunningham / Reich, Chapter 9 <em>Song of Roland</em></td>
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**Paper Topics Due.**

**6 March** Class Cancelled
Week 7  13 March
East meets west. The Crusades. Crusader architecture and music.

Week 8  20 March  High Middle Ages
The High Middle Ages. Gothic architecture. Scholasticism.
Readings: Cunningham / Reich, Chapter 10
Peter Abelard, *Sic et Non*, excerpts.
Moses Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, excerpts

27 March  Spring Break

Week 9  3 April  Fourteenth Century
Black Death and the Hundred Years War. The early Renaissance. The art of Giotto.
Readings: Cunningham / Reich, Chapter 11
Francois Villon, poems
Christine de Pisan, poems

Week 10  10 April  Early Renaissance
Literary achievements of the early Renaissance: Francesco Petrarch and Geoffrey Chaucer.
Readings: Cunningham / Reich, Chapter 12
Francesco Petrarch, excerpts
Geoffrey Chaucer, excerpts

Week 11  17 April
Renaissance humanism.
Reading: Erasmus, *Praise of Folly*

Week 12  24 April  High Renaissance
Readings: Cunningham / Reich, Chapter 13
Castiglione, *Book of the Courtier*

1 May  No Class

Week 13  8 May  Renaissance in the North
The Northern Renaissance. Art of Albrecht Durer. Jan van Eyck, Hieronymus Bosch, and the writings of Martin Bucer and Thomas More.
Readings: Cunningham / Reich, Chapter 14, to page 355
Thomas More, *Utopia*, excerpts
Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*

Week 14  13 May  Shakespeare and Elizabethan England.
Readings: Cunningham / Reich, Chapter 14, from page 356 onward.
William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*