Catalogue Description
Decline of Rome to the Renaissance. Emphasis will be placed on the cultural development of the West from the Germanic invasions until the advent of Humanism with attention to theology, art, architecture and literature to illustrate the dynamics of these diverse years.

Course Requirements and Learning Objectives
This course provides an introduction to the cultural history of the Mediterranean world and northern Europe from the fall of Rome through the fourteenth century. In particular, we will study the transformation of the antique world and the development of European civilization in the early Middle Ages, the revolutions and innovations of the high Middle Ages, and the political, scholarly, and spiritual developments of the late Middle Ages that paved the way for the Renaissance and Reformation.

No background in the study of this era is required. This course aims to introduce you not only to the cultural history of the Middle Ages but also to the skills and techniques of scholarship. We will work extensively with primary sources in translation. We will also discuss some of the scholarly debates that have been inspired by the major events of this period. You will write about both secondary and primary sources in three short written assignments. In your final paper, you will define and analyze a question or problem about medieval culture based on a primary source of your choice.

Course Materials
• Barbara H. Rosenwein, A Short History of the Middle Ages, forth edition [T]
• Barbara H. Rosenwein, Reading the Middle Ages: Sources from Europe, Byzantium, and the Islamic World, second edition [R]
• Online Course Reader, available on SacCT [OCR]

Requirements and Grading

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Historical puzzle</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Source analysis (3 pages)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article summary (2-4 pages)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation in discussion</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper (3-5 pages)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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1. Discussion Please note that discussion comprises one quarter of your final grade. The discussion grade consists of two parts: participation in class and completing informal worksheets. I will post worksheets one class meeting before they are due. While I will not be collecting these they will be instrumental in helping you participate in our in-class discussions. Always come ready to discuss the source assigned on any given day and always bring the text of the source with you. I keep a weekly record of participation grades, so feel free to ask how you are doing at any time.

2. Formal Written Assignments (more detailed instructions and grading rubrics will be given nearer to each due date)

• Historical puzzle, due Thursday, Sept. 25th (3pm)
On SacCT for week 4 you will find a historical puzzle involving six documents and six questions you must answer. Think hard about the documents and questions: this assignment will take time! Type out your answers to the questions and have them ready at the start of class. After our discussion, I will collect and read them. I am less concerned that you get the answers right than that you present your reasoning and your evidence for the answers you give. In other words, in order to do well, show your work. Please do not use any outside sources to complete this assignment.

• 2-3-page analysis of a primary text, due Thurs. Oct. 9th (3pm)
Read the selections from the *Life of King Alfred* by Asser, found in your OCR. **First**, briefly answer the following: who wrote it? When? How did he gain his information? What were the author’s purpose and audience for this text? **Second**, select any one aspect of Alfred’s activities that Asser describes. Briefly summarize what Asser tells us on your chosen subject and then analyze why you think Asser emphasized this aspect of Alfred. **Finally**, discuss the following: what kind of image of ideal royalty is Asser attempting to paint, and how does your chosen element fit in? Do you think this is a trustworthy view of Asser and his empire for a historian to use? Part of your task is to consider the limitations of the source (and of any single source), but also to consider it as a resource that scholars must use as fully as possible to understand the period. Please do NOT use any outside sources to complete this assignment.

• 2-4-page article summary, due Tues. Nov. 4th (3pm)
Using JSTOR, a database available through the library’s website, find and print out Peter Brown, “Society and the Supernatural: A Medieval Change,” *Daedalus* 104 (1975), 133-51. Write a 2-4-page summary of the article. Your paper should fall into two main parts. **First**, you should summarize the main thesis of the author, as well as the supporting ideas the author uses to develop the thesis. Your paper should be coherent, with one idea flowing logically to the next, just as the author logically develops his argument. In this part of the paper you may quote key passages of the work, but you should do so sparingly—in general, you should put the author’s arguments into your own words (but still cite appropriately). Obviously, given your page limits, you must pick and choose the author’s most important points. In the second part of the paper, you must discuss and evaluate the author’s evidence and argument. What evidence does the author use? Is it adequate? Is his analysis sensible? Is his argument persuasive to you? Your goal here is to decide if the author successfully proved his thesis, and to present your overall opinion of the article. Measured critiques are welcome, but “it was boring” or “it was stupid” are not thoughtful contributions! Please use footnotes for citations, following the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS). For a quick guide on how to create proper CMS style, see the following link:

http://history.hanover.edu/courses/handouts/footnotes.htm

• 3-5-page Final Essay, due Thur. Dec. 11th (3pm)
Your task in this final essay is to craft an argument about one or two primary sources (textual or visual). **The first step is to choose your source(s).** You may choose from any of our assigned readings and image bank on SacCT. You are also welcome to find a text or image that we have not discussed in class. **If you are using a source we have not discussed, please make sure to have your choice approved by me before you begin writing.** Once you have read and/or looked at your sources, the second step is to define a scholarly question that your essay will answer. Make sure it is a question you will answer or a theme you will explore. For example, “Raoul Glaber was afraid of the approaching apocalypse” is not a historical question. “What imagery did Raoul Glaber use to describe the approaching apocalypse, and what did he advise that people do to prepare for it?” is better. You could also construct a comparative question using two sources: “How did the accounts of the coming apocalypse differ in the chronicles of Raoul Glaber and Ademar of Chabannes?” **You must turn in the scholarly question that your essay will answer at the**
beginning of class on Tues. Dec. 4th (I will return these with comments in Thursday’s class). Failing to complete this second step will result in a drop of five points in your final paper grade. When you write the paper, the ideas you present must be supported by evidence quoted from your text(s). I am not interested in seeing quotations from other scholars—I want to see you working as a scholar! Papers should be approximately 3-5 pages in length. Please use footnotes for citations, following the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS).

KEEP IN MIND:
All formal written assignments must be typed and double-spaced, with at least one-inch margins on all sides. All written work will be assessed for style, grammar, syntax, and spelling as well as content. Please proofread your work! Do not rely on your computer’s spellchecker or grammar checker.

Attendance, Late Work, Extensions, Academic Honesty, and Computers

Students are expected to attend all classes. My policy is that assigned work is due in class on the days noted below. I do not grant extensions or make-up exams other than for exceptional and documented circumstances (for instance, an exam conflict, religious holiday, illness, or family emergency).

All work should be handed in on time—I give a day and an hour due date for each assignment. Thereafter, a penalty of one grade per day applies, including weekend days. Thus if a paper is due at the beginning of class (3 pm) on Tuesday, work handed in from after that time until 3 pm Wednesday will have a maximum possible grade of a B+, work handed in from 3:01 pm Wednesday to 3 pm Thursday a maximum possible grade of C+, and so on.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course, and all cases of suspected plagiarism will be reported. See the campus policy on academic dishonesty at www.csus.edu/admbus/umanual/UMA00150.htm.

Please note that plagiarism does not merely involve direct quotation without citation—it can include paraphrasing without citation, taking an author’s ideas (but not their words) as your own, and so on. If you are not sure, ask! I make frequent use of internet search engines and other services to check for plagiarism. Any assignment in which even the slightest instance of plagiarism is detected will receive a grade of zero points. There will be no option to re-write the assignment.

No electronic devices are to be used in class. This includes laptop computers.

Websites for Medieval Primary Sources and Images

• Internet Medieval Sourcebook: www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.html
• Amiens Cathedral Project: www.learn.columbia.edu/Mcahweb/Amiens.html
• Saint John’s Bible Project: www.saintjohnsbible.org

Getting in Touch

Mendocino Hall 2026
Office hours: T/TH 11:45-1:15
Office phone: 916-278-7329
Email: mary.doyno@csus.edu
Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

Week One: Introduction
  Tues 2 Sept.  Introduction and organization of the course
  Thurs. 4 Sept.  The Transformation of the Roman World and the Rise of Christianity
    T: 1-35

• UNIT ONE: THE CULTURES OF LATE ANTIQUITY

Week Two: Cultural Change and Continuity
  Tues. 9 Sept.  Political Change and New Players
    R: 1-4 [Edict of Milan] and 4-9 [The Theodosian Code]
    OCR: Salic Law

  Thurs. 11 Sept.  Late Antique Cultures
    OCR: The Martyrdom of Polycarp

Week Three: The Development of Cultural Polities
  Tues 16 Sept.  Byzantium in the East
    T: 39-50
    OCR: Selections from Procopius, The Secret History

  Thurs 18 Sept.  Clovis and the Early Merovingians
    T: 58-75
    OCR: Remegius of Reims and Avitus of Vienne, Letters to Clovis

Week Four: The Rise of Islam
  Tues 23 Sept.  The Tenets and Spread of Islam
    T: 50-57
    OCR: Qur’an surah 19; “A Christian Account of the Life of Mohammad”;
    “On the Inconsistencies of the Four Gospels”

  Thurs 25 Sept.  Encounters between the Abrahamic Faiths
    T: 87-96
    Historical Puzzle on Islam in Spain Due in Class (3pm)

• UNIT TWO: EUROPEAN CULTURE IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

Week Five: Merovingian Culture
  Tues 30 Sept.  The Foundation of European Monasticism
    OCR: The Rule of Saint Benedict

  Thurs 2 Oct.  Making Medieval Manuscripts
    OCR: Ray Clemens and Timothy Graham, Introduction to Manuscript Studies
    Come to class with a pencil and any color of pen(s) you wish, a ruler, a pair of
    scissors, and a short text that you wish to copy.

Week Six: Anglo-Saxon Culture
Tues 7 Oct. Lecture: Kings, Scholars, and Monks in the British Isles
R: 94-105 [Bede, The Ecclesiastical History of the English People]

Thurs 9 Oct. The Anglo-Saxon Church
OCR: Asser, Life of Alfred
Primary Source Analysis on the Life of Alfred Due in Class (3pm)

Week Seven: Carolingian Culture
Tues 14 Oct. The Rise of the Carolingians; Carolingian Kingship
T: 96-113
R: 135-147 [Einhard, Life of Charlemagne]

Thurs 16 Oct. The Carolingian World
R: 148-150 [The Admonitio Generalis] and 150-158 [Dhouda, Handbook for her Son]

Week Eight: Feudal Culture
Tues 21 Oct. “Feudal Culture” and the Church in Transition
T: 127-135
R: 186-188 [The Miracles of St. Benedict]
OCR: Miracles of Saint Foy

Thurs 23 Oct—NO CLASS

• UNIT THREE: TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE HIGH MIDDLE AGES

Week Nine: Revolutions of the Eleventh Century
Tues 28 Oct. Economic, Political, and Religious Change in the Eleventh Century
T: 160-170
R: 258-262 [Letters of Gregory VII and Henry IV]

Thurs 30 Oct. The First Crusade
T: 170-173
R: 267-277 [Documents of the First Crusade]

Week Ten: Intellectual and Artistic Life in the High Middle Ages
Article summary on Brown is due at the start of class

Thurs 6 Nov. Cathedral Schools and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance
T: 178-195
OCR: Peter Abelard, History of My Calamities and prologue to the Sic et Non

Week Eleven: Romanesque and Gothic Architecture
Tues 11 Nov. NO CLASS

Thurs 13 Nov. Romanesque and Gothic Architecture
T: 220-228
R: 296-300 [Bernard of Clairvaux, Apologia]
Week Twelve: The Thirteenth-Century
Tues 18 Nov. The Pontificate of Innocent III (1198-1216)
T: 228-239
R: 363-368 [Decrees of Lateran IV]

Thurs 20 Nov. Universities
T: 218-220
OCR: Thomas Aquinas’s Proof of the Existence of God
OCR: University Regulations

Week Thirteen: Thirteenth-Century Religious Movements and Culture
Tues 25 Nov. Heresy, Mendicants, and Mystics I
T: 244-252; 258-264
R: 368-369 [Peter Waldo in The Chronicle of Laon]
R: 370-372 [The Life of Mary of Oignies]

Thurs 27 Nov. NO CLASS

Week Fourteen: Francis and Love
Tues Dec 2. Heretics, Mendicants, and Mystics II
R: The Canticle to Brother Sun
OCR: St Francis’ Rule
OCR: Clare of Assisi’s Testament

Final Essay Question Due in Class (3pm)

• UNIT FOUR: INNOVATION AND DISASTER IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

Thurs Dec 4. Courtly Culture; Dante and Love
T: 214-218
R: 432-435 [Dante, Inferno, Canto V, and Paradiso, Canto XXII]
OCR: The Romance of Tristan and Iseult

Week Fifteen: Disasters and Endings
Tues 9 Dec. Plague, Schism, and War
R: 443-451 [Plague Documents]
OCR: Boccaccio on the Black Death

Thurs 11 Dec. Ending the Middle Ages
Final paper is Due in Class (3pm)