

Humanities 214 Lecture

"Community and Authority in the Medieval World"

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1. Some questions for Hum. 214:

- What is the proper relation of faith and reason (revealed and natural knowledge)?
- What is the proper relation of individual to community?
- What is the proper role of authority, tradition, and hierarchy in human affairs?

2. Overview

- Three Mediterranean civilizations: Islamic, Byzantine, Western (Catholic)
- The historic role of Byzantium (330-1453)
- Three periods of Western Medieval culture
 - Early Medieval ca. 450-1000 (poor, rural, violent)
 - High Medieval ca. 100-1300 (towns, trade, crusades, cathedrals, univs.)
 - Late Medieval ca. 1300-1450 (wars, plague, famine)

3. Three social worlds

- The countryside (manors and monasteries)
- The court, producing new refined ("feminized") cultural values
- The town, after 1050—trade, banking

4. Three Estates of Medieval society: Clergy, Nobility, Commons

- Crowning of Charlemagne as Emperor, 800 (who's the boss?)
- The Church
 - Papacy and "Petrine theory," keys to the Kingdom, a monarchy.
 - The visible church's authority and role in salvation ("secular clergy")
 - Monasticism ("regular clergy"), Monte Cassino
- The Nobility, function and values, "honor"
- The Commons (Images from the Book of Hours of the Duc de Berry by the Limbourg Brothers). Serfs and peasants; townspeople and guilds.

4. Characteristics of medieval culture (try to apply these as you go through the course)

- Faith-based and theocentric (the T-map and "orientation")
- Communal: identity is membership, function within society ("corporate theory" or like a body)
- Hierarchical—everything is arranged like a ladder
- Semiotic (symbolic) and teleological world-view