

Humanities 214: Medieval and Renaissance Worlds
Spring 2009

Instructor: Dr. Harriette Grissom

Lecture: Mondays, 11:25

Discussion Groups: Wednesdays and Fridays, 11:25-12:35

Core Texts

- (Fiero 2, 3, and 4) Volumes 2, 3, 4 of Gloria Fiero, *The Humanistic Tradition*, 5th ed. Vol 2 was also used in Hum 124. Vol. 4 will be used in Hum. 324, so students should keep it.
- (AR) The Asheville Reader, *The Medieval and Renaissance World*, 2nd. Ed., ed. Ho, McClain, Sawin, and Spellman.
- *Othello*, Folger Shakespeare Library edition
- Sundiata* (Niane ed., 7th or 8th edition) from the campus bookstore.

Tentative Syllabus

Week 1-

Assignment: Review Fiero, Chap. 8; begin Fiero Chap. 9;

Jan. 14: Introduction to the course

Jan 16: The Ancient Roots of the Medieval World

Week 2- (MLK Day, No Monday lecture)

Assignment: AR: Procopius (16-27); Ibn Khaldun (140-7); On electronic reserve: Excerpt from Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah*

Jan. 21: Early Christianity: Rome and the Byzantine World

Jan. 23: Possible discussion: *Making history—who defines history and why?*

Week 3- Monday Jan 26: Community and Authority in the Medieval West (Gillum)

Assignment: Fiero V.2, ch 11; AR: Benedict (2-15); Einhard (28-36); selected analects of Confucius (on hand out); excerpt from the *Book of Kings* (electronic reserves)

Jan. 28: Monasticism and Spiritual Authority

Jan. 30: Kingship and Secular Authority

Possible discussion: *What makes a person qualified a person to rule? What do we look for in leaders today?*

Week 4- Monday Feb. 2: Islam and The Muslim World (Downes)

Assignment: Fiero V.2, ch. 10; "Conflict between Faith and Science in the Middle Ages" (electronic reserves)

Feb. 4: Medieval Europe and Muslim Civilization

Feb. 6: Possible discussion based on reading: *What is the relationship between religion and the state? Does religion create political unity?*

Week 5- Monday Feb. 9: Science, Religion and the Rise of the University (Wilson)

Assignment: Fiero V.2, ch. 12; AR: Aquinas (107-13); Clare of Assisi (66-71); The Medieval Church (72-79); special attention to Augustine's *Confessions*, Fiero, 20 and Hildegard's *Know the Ways*, Fiero, 94-95.

Feb. 11: Possible discussion based on reading: *How do we know what we know?*

Feb. 13: Intro to Dante

Assignment: Read Dante selections in Fiero, pp.106-110;

FOCUS PAPER # 1 DUE

Week 6- Monday Feb. 16: Peace and War for the Glory of God: Cathedrals and Crusades (Dunn)

Assignment: Fiero V.2, ch. 13; assorted Crusades readings (electronic reserve) *Selection*

Feb. 18: Discussion of Dante continued (*Distribute info on special projects*)

Feb. 20: *Generate debate topic*

Cultural Event #1 Due

Week 7- Monday Feb. 23: From Xi'an to Kyoto: the Cultural Heritage of Asia (Ho)

Assignment: Fiero V. 2, ch. 14, pp 152-170; AR: Sei Shonagon (172-183); Assorted poetry by Du Fu and Li Bo (electronic texts or handouts)

Feb. 25: Tang Dynasty Poetry

Special Project Topic Due

Feb. 27: Art, Religion and Power in the Tang and Heian Courts

Week 8- Monday Mar. 2: Medieval India (Maitra)

Assignment: Fiero V.2, ch. 14, pp. 144-151; assorted readings on electronic reserve

Mar. 4: **Midterm exam**

Mar. 6: Independent research on debate or special project

Week 9: SPRING BREAK (Mar.9-13)

Week 10- Monday Mar. 16: Best-selling Authors, Cross-dressing Warriors, and Other Uppity Women of the Middle Ages (Ho)

Assignment: Fiero, vol. 3, ch. 15. AR: Hildegard and Marie de France (38-57); Letters of Abelard and Heloise (84-98); Christine de Pisan (117-23); Nogarola (188-199); in Fiero, focus on excerpt from *Summa Theologica* (114-15) and Pope Innocent III "On the Misery of the Human Condition" (96-97);

Mar. 18: Women, the Body and Religion in the Middle Ages

Annotated Bibliography Due for Special Project

Mar. 20: DEBATE

Week 11- Monday Mar. 23: European Humanism and Art (Gillum)

Assignment: Fiero V.3, ch. 16 & 17

Mar. 25: Self-invention in Renaissance Europe **Assignment:** Special attention to the following excerpts in Fiero V.3, ch. 16: Excerpt from Machiavelli; Alberti's "On the Family"; Pico's "Oration on the Dignity of Man"; Castiglione's "Book of the Courtier"; Marinella's "The Nobility and Excellence of Women and the Defects of Men";

(Mar 25th is the last day to withdraw with a "W")

Mar. 27: Undergraduate Symposium—No Classes

Week 12-Monday Mar. 30: Reformations (Ettari)

Assignment: Fiero V. 3, ch. 19; AR: Grumbach (217-20), Calvin (256-66)

Apr. 1: The artist as genius

Assignment: AR, Vasari (221-229) Possible topic for discussion: *How is the artist seen in contemporary society?*

Focus Paper #2 Due

Apr. 3: The Protestant Reformation and the power of the individual; Possible topic for discussion: *Do individual acts of conscience matter?*

Week 13- Monday Apr. 6: Counter-Renaissance and *Othello* (Dunn)

Assignment: *Othello*, paperback.

Apr. 8: The film “O”--excerpts

Apr. 10: Looking more closely at *Othello*: *How important is race in Othello?*

Week 14- Monday Apr. 13: African Cultural Spheres (Traboulsi)

Assignment: Fiero, vol. 3, ch. 18 (African section, 85-103). AR: Al Omari, Pires, Affonso of Kongo (150-62). *Sundiata, an Epic of Old Mali*

Apr. 15: The History of West Africa: Why we know so little

Apr. 17: Discussion of *Sundiata*; excerpts from *Keita: The Heritage of the Griot*

Week 15- Monday Apr. 20: The Americas to the 1600s (Pearson)

Assignment: Fiero, vol. 3, ch. 18, pp. 103-120. AR: Columbus and Poma (350-71), Montaigne “Of Cannibals” (296-306).

Apr. 22: Colonization and “the Other” (focus on Montaigne);

Focus Paper #3 Due

Apr. 24: The Americas prior to Columbus (slide lecture)

Assignment: AR: Hernando Desoto, “Appalachian Travels” (372-380)

Week 16- Monday Apr. 27: Royal Absolutism and the Baroque (Sousa)

Assignment: Fiero vol. 4, ch. 21. AR: James VI and I (286-95), Mornay (278-85), and Elizabeth I (267-77)

Apr. 29: Discussion

Cultural Event #3 Due

May 1: Discussion

Project Summary Due

Take-home final exam distributed

Week 17- : Monday May 5: Where have we been? Where are we? Where are we going? The Ebb and Flow of Empires (Dunn)

Assignment: Fiero vol. 4, ch. 20 & 22.

Take-home exam due during final exam period

***Note: To access HUM 214 electronic reserves, follow these steps:**

1. Go to Ramsey Library home page: <http://bullpup.lib.unca.edu/library/>
2. On the left-hand side of the web page, click “Course Reserves”
3. On the Course Reserves page, click on the “By Course” link
4. In the “Course Name or Number Search” box, type “Hum 214”

5. On the search results page, there will be a link entitled “UNCA Permanent.” Click on this link.
6. On the next page, click the “HUM 214 Electronic Reserves” link.
7. After clicking on the above link, you will see a list of all of the HUM 214 electronic reserves texts.
8. After clicking on the title you choose, you will be asked to enter your name and your student ID number. Then click the “Submit” button and you will then be able to access the text you choose.

About the Course

Overview: This course examines the ideas, values, and world views of the Medieval and Renaissance periods, beginning with the fall of Rome and ending with the rise of European political absolutism. The Middle Ages are often relegated to the basement of the Western historical narrative, characterized in popular literature and film as either a fairy tale or a benighted time of superstition, backwardness, wretched living conditions, and intellectual stagnation—the “shadow” of Modernity. In this course we will see that this is far from true. The unique combination of influences that shaped the Middle Ages also sparked the European Renaissance and led to the rise of the West as a defining global force. Many of the conceptual questions and political challenges that perplexed medieval thinkers are still with us. In our explorations we will also consider the artistic, economic and intellectual connections among Europe, Africa, and Asia, beginning with the pivotal interactions between Christianity and Islam.

Course Objectives:

- Understand some of the key ideas, events, accomplishments, and historical figures of the Western Middle Ages and Renaissance
- Gain an awareness of the cultures of Africa and Asia at this time and of their economic and intellectual significance for Europe
- Recognize and evaluate differing worldviews and values, both past and present
- Develop critical abilities in reading, writing, thinking, and discussion
- Become acquainted with divergent ethical values and refine your ability to make reasoned judgments about ethical problems and issues
- Refine your ability to discuss controversial and sensitive intellectual topics thoughtfully and with respect for divergent views
- Develop the ability to see connections between different disciplines and methods of analysis

Course Requirements:

* **Attendance** at lectures and class discussions is crucial. The material of the lectures will be central to our class discussions, and much of the learning of the course will come through our work as group.

* **Read the assigned material** and be prepared to discuss it.

* **Class participation:** Each student will generate one or two questions in response to each week’s lecture and/or reading, *due as you leave the Monday lecture*. We will decide as a class which of these questions we want to pursue and consider approaches to answering them. Occasionally we may have an *in-class writing assignment* as a prelude

to a discussion. ***It is critical to bring your texts to class*** since we will be referring to them regularly.

* ***Written assignments:*** Students will submit three four-page focus papers during the semester. Possible topics and approaches will be generated as we go along, depending on the direction our class takes.

* ***Special project:*** You will have several options for fulfilling this requirement, including participating in a debate on a controversial topic related to this time period. The special project will give you a chance to learn more about some aspect of the course that hasn't been covered very well and share what you've learned with your classmates.

* ***Mid-term and Final Exams:*** These exams are designed to help students consolidate and internalize some of the information and ideas of the course.

* ***Attend three cultural events*** during the semester and submit a one-page description of your experience.

Grades will be based on the following:

- Each essay, **13** points each (**39** points total)
- Special project, **13** points
- Mid-term, **13** points
- Final, **13** points
- Questions for class discussions, other in-class assignments: **7** points
- Papers on cultural events, **5** points each (**15** points total)
- Good contributions to class discussions, excellent attendance, and evidence of conscientious effort can improve your grade significantly, as much as one letter grade
- ***Poor attendance (missing more than five classes/lectures), a negative attitude or inattention in class, tardiness, failure to submit assignments on time can all jeopardize your grade***
- ***Late papers will be graded down. I reserve the right not to accept any paper more than one week late.***
- ***Please do not submit papers electronically.***

Policies:

- ***No make-up exams except in the event of a documentable emergency or by prior arrangement.***
- ***Plagiarism is a serious offense. See the UNCA policy on plagiarism. If you plagiarize in this class, you will fail automatically.***
- ***If you have a recognized disability, please see me at the beginning of the course to arrange accommodations.***

Instructor's responsibilities: In addition to preparing to lead each class and returning your work in a timely manner, I hope to assist you in any way possible to help you get the most from this class. If you need help with understanding the material, writing, classroom dynamics, time management or any other aspect of the course, please make an appointment or stop to speak to me either before or after class. If you would like to make an appointment at another time or if you need to speak me about class matters, e-mail harriettegrissom@bellsouth.net or call 404-642-5491 (cell) or 828-251-1202. I will also check my UNCA e-mail address.