

**Western University, Department of History, Fall 2016**  
**HIS2149A: Medieval Lives**

Instructor: Professor Eona Karakacili

Lecture Time: Wednesdays 10:30-12:30

Office: LH 2264

Location of Lectures: TBA

Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:30 to 1:30 or by appointment Email: [eona@uwo.ca](mailto:eona@uwo.ca)

## **Course Description**

Welcome to the middle ages! This course offers non-history majors an introduction to medieval western Europe through an examination of certain aspects in the lives of some of its inhabitants with a particular focus on their daily lives. The historical reality of such lives is juxtaposed against contemporary popular notions about the middle ages. To what degree do such modern popular ideas accord with the far more interesting historical reality? What can such lives tell us about their respective societies? Lives examined include a “serf” farmer, a knight, a monk, a Templar (soldier monk), a married English woman, a pilgrim, Robin Hood (a medieval fictional creation), a leper, and a medieval saint.

## **Learning objectives**

- correct some common popular misconceptions about the middle ages and its inhabitants
- introduce students new to historical research to the idea of history as a research discipline, that is, history is not a straightforward narrative as presented in encyclopaedia articles, but it is a debated construct
- students unfamiliar with history will become acquainted with the character of historical research by studying secondary sources (articles and selections from books, whose arguments are based on historical documents) and primary sources (historical documents); historians working with primary sources must take care not to allow biases to skew their interpretation of them; in this regard, the analyses of modern films about the middle ages will serve to underscore the degree to which our perception of the past can be influenced by contemporary ideas and concerns

## **Course Work and Grading**

- almost each week, excluding weeks with in-class test days, you will read secondary and/or primary sources or view a film
- worth 100% of the final grade, three separate in-class tests on lectures, assigned readings and films (each test is worth one-third of the final mark); test dates are October 12, November 9, December 7; please note that the in-class tests each cover the preceding three weeks of lectures and course work and are not cumulative in coverage, so the test on November 9, for example, will test you on the lectures and course work for October 19, 26 and November 2.

## Course Readings and Films

Students do not need to purchase a textbook. All assigned readings (secondary and primary sources) can be found online as e-readings on the sites of Weldon Libraries or Owl. There are also three films that are required course work (*A Knight's Tale*, *The Name of the Rose* and the 2010 version of *Robin Hood*). These popular films can be streamed online or purchased in DVD format from a variety of venues. They can also be borrowed from the London Public Library. Questions will be posted online to help guide your interpretation and note taking from the assigned readings and films.

## Lecture Topics & Weekly Course Work

### **September 14: Introduction to Course and A Short Overview of the Middle Ages (lecture)**

Course Work: none

### **September 21: Not Impoverished or Oppressed!: The Real Life of an English Male "Serf" Farmer**

Course Work: September 21 readings online

### **September 28: Moving Beyond the Submissive Wench Stereotype: A Married English Woman (With a Focus Upon Women & Consent in Marriage)**

Course Work: September 28 readings online

### **October 5: The Life of A Knight in Historical Context**

Course Work: Watch the movie, *A Knight's Tale* (2001) and see the questions posted online (October 5) to help guide your note taking.

### **October 12: In-class test** (on lectures and course work for September 21, 28, October 5)

### **October 19: A Monk & Monastic Educational Contributions to Western Progress**

Course Work: Watch the film, *The Name of the Rose* (1996) and see the questions posted online (October 19) to help guide your note taking.

### **October 26: Rethinking Medieval and Modern Conspiracy Theories: A Templar**

Course Work: October 26 readings online

### **November 2: A Pilgrim's Definition of Progress**

Course Work: November 2 readings online

### **November 9: In-class test** (on lectures and course work for October 9, 26 and November 2)

**November 16: A Saint's Life**

Course Work: November 16 readings online

**November 23: Robin Hood (s)**

Course Work: Watch the 2010 version of *Robin Hood* film (directed by Ridley Scott) and see the questions posted online to help guide your note taking.

**November 30: A Leper's Lot**

Course Work: November 30 readings online

**December 7: In-class Test** (on lectures and course work for November 16, 23, 30)

**I look forward to getting to know you individually. Please feel welcome to visit me in my office to discuss medieval lives or just to chat!**

**Professor "K"**