Medieval Italy
Rutgers University
Department of History
510:351
Tuesday/Thursday 2:50-4:10

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Van Dyck 217A

Course Description –
This course will cover the history of the Italian peninsula from the late Roman Empire to the beginnings of the Renaissance. Special attention will be paid to developing an understanding of the unique transformations of Italian society that occurred during these centuries. The geographic determinants, the religious components, and the flowering of art and literature will be examined. The course will also focus on the contributions of several celebrated individuals to medieval Italian history. These will include Dante, Petrarch, Machiavellie, and St. Francis of Assisi.

Required Texts –
David Abulafia, Italy in the Central Middle Ages (Oxford University Press)
Chris Wickham. Early Medieval Italy (University of Michigan Press)
David Abulafia, Frederick II, A Medieval Emperor (Oxford University Press)

All books have been ordered through the Rutgers College Barnes and Noble bookstore and New Jersey Books.

Course requirements, assignments, and grading:

- Midterm examination
- A 5-7 page analytic book review of David Abulafia’s Frederick II, A Medieval Emperor
- Final examination
- Quizzes/and or short writing assignments
- Thoughtful and active participation in class discussion
- Regular attendance at lectures. More than two unexcused absences from class will lower your final grade.
Schedule of Lectures and Key Readings:

January 21: Introduction and Geography “The Many Italies of the Middle Ages”

January 23: The Late Roman World and Roman Legacy
    Wickham, The Roman Legacy

January 28: Christianity and the Late Roman Empire
    St. Ambrose of Milan, letters
    Julian the Apostate, Against the Galilaeans

January 30: Invasions and Ethnic Identities
    Wickham, Romans, Lombards, Franks, and Byzantines

February 4: Benedict of Nursia
    Gregory the Great, The Life and Miracles of St. Benedict
    The Rule of St. Benedict

February 6: The Rise of the Western Papacy
    Abulafia, Papal Italy

February 11: The Langobards
    Wickham, The Kingdom of Italy, 568-875

February 13: The Mixed Ethnic Heritage of Southern Italy
    Abulafia, Law and Monarchy in the South

February 18: Signori, Casati, Grandi
    Abulafia, The Rise of the Signory

February 20: Medieval Italian Exchange: Commercial and Cultural
    Abulafia, Trade and Navigation

February 25: The Birth of the Medieval Communes
    Abulafia, Cities and Communes

February 27: Art and Architecture in Medieval Italy
    Selections from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art
March 4:  *Parenti, amici, e vicini: Family and Neighbors in Medieval Italy*  
Abulafia, *The Family*

March 6: **Midterm Examination**

March 11: City and Countryside  
Wickham, *Cities and the Countryside*

March 13: Guelfs and Ghibbelines  
Bartolus, *On Guelfs and Ghibbelines*

March 18/20: **Spring Break**

March 25: Dante  
Dante: selections from *De Monarchia* and *Inferno*.

March 27: Emperor Frederick II  
Analytic book review due on David Abulafia’s *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor*.

April 1: Field trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Tentative)

April 3: Francis of Assisi  
St. Bonaventure, *The Life of St. Francis*  
Thomas of Celano, *St. Francis of Assisi*

April 8: Knowledge, Power, and Class Warfare  
Abulafia, *Language and Culture*

April 10: Greeks, Muslims, and Jews in Italy  
Abulafia, *The Italian Other*

April 15: no class

April 17: Francesco Petrarca  
Selections from Petrarch’s letters

April 22: film:
April 24: The Society of Renaissance Florence  
    Gene Brucker, selections

April 29: Renaissance Memoirs
    Two Memoirs of Renaissance Florence

May 1: Machiavelli
    Selections from Discourses and The Prince

Final Examination