

Hum/H 3a  
 Instructor: Warren Brown  
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Fall 2011  
 T/Th 2.30 – 4.00 PM  
 Room TBA

### **The Roman Empire and the Middle Ages: Syllabus**

In this course, I will introduce you to some of the ways that western civilization developed from the first through the fourteenth centuries of the Common Era. I will take you chronologically from imperial Rome to late Roman North Africa, to early medieval England and Scandinavia, to high medieval France, and finally to late medieval Germany and Italy. Together we will read and discuss works of history and of literature that will help you understand how people thought the world worked and how they grappled with change in each of these periods. In lectures, I will provide you with the information you will need to anchor the readings in the economic, social, political, and religious evolution of the Mediterranean world and of Europe.

#### Readings:

- Virgil, *The Aenied: A New Prose Translation*, trans. David West (Penguin Classics, 2003). ISBN: 0140449329
- St. Augustine, *Confessions*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, trans. F. J. Sheed, introduction by Peter Brown, ed. Michael P. Foley (Hackett Publishing, 2007). ISBN: 0-87220-816-8
- Beowulf: A New Verse Translation*, trans. Seamus Heaney (W. W. Norton, 2001). ISBN: 0393320979
- Erec and Enide*, in Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances* (Penguin Classics, 2004). ISBN: 0140445218
- The Divine Comedy of Dante Aligheri: Volume 1: Inferno*, ed. Robert M. Durling (Oxford University Press, 1997). ISBN: 0195087445

Course requirements: The course focuses on the reading, analysis, and discussion of the works listed above. You must, therefore, attend all class meetings and actively take part in discussions. If you miss more than two classes, you will fail the course. Moreover, the course emphasizes the development of writing skills. In the first week, I will ask you to write a short (1-2p.) paper reacting to the first two chapters of a book on writing, namely Joseph Williams' *Style*. In the second week, I will assign a paper, of a minimum of 2000 words, on the first of our readings. I will then ask you to revise it as an exercise. In the sixth week, I will assign a second paper, also of at least 2000 words, likewise dealing with questions about the course readings; this paper too will be revised. I will provide suggestions for paper topics in advance. If you have questions of your own that you would like to pursue, you may of course do so; I ask only that you clear your topics with me. The course will end with a final examination.

Grading: The course will be graded pass/fail for freshmen. 50% of your grade will depend on your written work (the short first paper, the two essays and the essay revisions). Another 25% will depend on your attendance and participation in class discussions. The remaining 25% will come from the final exam. **YOU MUST PASS ALL THREE PARTS**

OF THE COURSE INDIVIDUALLY. A failing grade in any one part at the end of the course will result in a failing grade for the entire course.

Schedule:

WEEK ONE:

Readings: Joseph Williams, *Style*, c. 1-2 (handout); Virgil, *Aeneid*, Books I-VIII

Sep. 27: Course introduction

Sep. 29: The Roman Empire; WILLIAMS C. 1-2 REACTION PAPER DUE

WEEK TWO:

Readings: Williams, *Aeneid*

Oct. 4: Discussion of Williams/*Aeneid*; PAPER I TOPICS HANDED OUT

Oct. 6: Continue discussion of *Aeneid*

WEEK THREE:

Readings: *Aeneid*

Oct. 11: Continue discussion of *Aeneid*

Oct. 13: Early Christianity; PAPER I DUE

WEEK FOUR

Readings: Augustine, *Confessions*

Oct. 18: Discussion of *Confessions*

Oct. 20: NO CLASS

WEEK FIVE

Readings: *Confessions*/*Beowulf*

Oct. 25: Continue discussion of *Confessions*; PAPER I REVISIONS DUE

Oct. 27: The Dawn of Medieval Europe

WEEK SIX

Readings: *Beowulf*

Nov. 1: Discussion of *Beowulf*

Nov. 3: Continue discussion of *Beowulf*; PAPER II TOPICS HANDED OUT

WEEK SEVEN

Readings: *Erec and Enide*

Nov. 8: Writing discussion

Nov. 10: The High Medieval Aristocracy

WEEK EIGHT

Readings: *Erec and Enide*

Nov. 15: Discussion of *Erec and Enide*; PAPER II DUE

Nov. 17: Continue discussion of *Erec and Enide*

WEEK NINE

Readings: Dante, *Inferno*

Nov. 22: The Church, the Empire, and Italy  
Nov. 24: THANKSGIVING

WEEK TEN

Readings: *Inferno*

Nov. 29: Discussion of *Inferno*

Dec. 1: Continue discussion of *Inferno*; Preparation for Final Exam; PAPER II  
REVISIONS DUE