Course Overview and Student Learning Outcomes:

This course is an examination of the contemporary secondary literature on medieval European history. We will be covering a variety of topics from the period of late antiquity to the fifteenth century. Themes for this semester will include kingship, urban development, crusades, heretics and court life. A general background knowledge of the period is assumed. For review you may wish to consult a good textbook, such as Hollister’s. In addition to gaining advanced knowledge of the above-mentioned topics, the course is designed to sharpen your reading and writing skills through analysis of classic and contemporary scholarly works.

Course Requirements and Grading Policy:

Your grade will be based on your written reviews of each of the books we are reading, along with oral presentations of selected articles. Papers should analyze the author’s thesis, sources and evidence, methodology and perspective. They should be roughly 4-6 pages in length. Late papers will not be accepted. Attendance (and participation) are mandatory.

Five written book reviews = 50% of course grade
Comprehensive essay = 30% of course grade
Three oral presentations = 10% of course grade
Attendance and participation = 10% of course grade

Each student will write a comparative review of Brown and Ward-Perkins. Students will then choose to write reviews of four of the remaining six books. Papers should analyze the author’s arguments, evidence and methodology and perspective/bias in addition to providing a brief summary. A general guideline for length is 4-6 pages. The comprehensive essay should be an approximately 8-10 page essay in which you ruminate on all eight of our required books.

Required Books:

Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity*
Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization*
Geary, *Before France and Germany*
Collins, *Charlemagne*
Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages*
Waley, *The Italian City Republics*
Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*
Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe*
Calendar of Meetings and Assignments:

Course Introduction

Discussion of Brown

Discussion of Ward-Perkins; comparative essay due

Discussion of Geary

Article Presentations

Discussion of Colllins

Discussion of Southern

Presentations of articles

no meeting

Discussion of Waley

no meeting

Discussion of Kaeuper

no meeting

Discussion of Freedman

no meeting

Comprehensive essays due