

# Medieval History through Castles

## Hist 294-04 Fall 2007

Dr. Ellen Arnold  
MWF 2:20-3:20 Main 010

Castles are one of the most recognizable features of medieval civilization, and many different historians, archaeologists, and medievalists have studied them. In this class we will discuss castles themselves and explore why they were important in the Middle Ages. We will also talk about how different historians work with sources, theories, and material objects to reconstruct the past. For example, a historian interested in military history takes a very different approach to castles than someone interested in gender history. Through a combination of readings about castles and about historical methods, we will be able to understand more about the medieval past and to analyze approaches to reconstructing, understanding, and writing about the past. Because this course will address larger issues about historical studies, it can be useful for people interested in many different periods by providing background on how to design and prepare for research projects.

### Contacting Me:

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### Course Materials:

Robert Liddiard, *Castles in Context: Power, Symbolism and Landscape, 1066-1500* (Windgatherer Press, 2005).

Charles Coulson, *Castles in Medieval Society: Fortresses in England, France, and Ireland in the Central Middle Ages* (Oxford University Press, 2003).

Additional readings are available online or will be handed out in class: see readings list for further details.

### Course Expectations:

In order to accomplish the objectives expressed above and to pass the course, you must **complete all assignments** and be prepared for class. In addition, to be successful and to maximize your experience, **attendance is required and participation in class discussions is expected**. The participation portion of the grade includes verbal contributions to class discussions, involvement in class activities, and presentation of research proposal. Remember, it is not just how often you speak, but what you have to say. Asking an intelligent and thought-provoking question can be as much of a contribution as answering one. To make the most of class time, please arrive on time.

### Course Grade:

Component	% of Final Grade	Due Date
Reading Responses	20%	Wednesdays
Participation	15%	Weekly
2-3 page Proposal	5%	October 8
Annotated Bibliography	10%	November 8
Proposal Presentation	5%	November 26, 28, 30
Research Proposal	15%	December 14
Midterm	15%	October 12
Final	15%	December 14

### Grading Policy

A	100-93	C+	79-77
A-	92-90	C	76-73
B+	89-87	C-	73-70
B	86-83	D	69-65
B-	83-80	NC	65 and below

### Attendance and Participation:

Because this course will rely on your participation in class discussion and activities and your evaluation of the readings, you must come to each class prepared. Your attendance and participation in class activities is required, and will compose 15 percent of your final grade. This grade will be based on a combination of your attendance record and in your participation in discussion and any other in-class activities

### Reading Responses:

To succeed in this course, your active participation and engagement with the material on a weekly basis is essential. Every week you must write a response paper that will be due by the start of class on Wednesday. These papers amount to 20% of your final grade. These responses should be one or two paragraphs in length.

Reading responses are due to me (submitted by email as a word attachment) by **noon** each Wednesday. No late responses will be accepted. There will be a total of ten responses. Your best nine responses will be counted towards your final grade. These responses can earn a 3 (above expectations), a 2 (satisfactory), or a 1 (unsatisfactory).

## **2-3 Page Proposal**

The first assignment associated with the development of your research proposal is a short (2-3 page) presentation of your potential research project. This assignment is to help you think about how to explain your area of research interest to others. This exercise will help you narrow down your interests, and to begin to explore possible ways of thinking about the final proposal. You will do peer reviews of the proposals in class; this will serve to both give you more feedback on your proposal and allow you to see the ways that other students are conceptualizing their potential projects.

## **Annotated Bibliography:**

This bibliographic exercise is the second stage of the research proposal; before you can fully explore what options will be open to you as a researcher, you need to have a clear sense of what work has been done already. For this assignment, you need to identify and survey the important works on your topic. Choose eight to ten secondary works such as academic books, articles, or essays. (You may only use one source from class in this bibliography.) This exercise is due November 8.

## **Research Proposal**

The research proposal should be **10 pages** in length, with an additional (not included in page count) bibliography. Good quality and clear writing is expected on your formal written assignment. It is worth 15% of your final grade. This is due on the last day of class and will not be accepted late.

## **Exams:**

There will be two exams, a midterm and a final. Both will cover material covered up to that point. The second exam will require you to address questions relating to the entire scope of the class. The exams will ask you to think about medieval castles and also about the methodological approaches to studying the Middle Ages.

## **Late Work and Absences:**

You can miss three class sessions before your grade will be adversely affected. Absences due to university-sponsored events, hospitalization, death in the family, or other emergencies must be documented. I will allow late work only in such cases. No late reading responses will be accepted. If you have a planned excused absence, assignments and responses are still due on time—plan your time accordingly! You must bring your final project with you at the final exam, no late papers will be accepted.

The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus to better facilitate students' learning.

**INTRODUCTION: What is History? What were Castles?**

W 5 Sept Introduction

F 7 Sept Castle 1—Housesteads

**ARCHAEOLOGY and MATERIAL CULTURE**

M 9 Sept “The Castle Story”

Liddiard, ch. 1 “From Functionalism to Symbolism” and Conclusion, “Rethinking the Castle Story.”

Coulson, Introduction and I. 1, “A Fresh Look at Early Castles”

W 11 Sept Hillforts and the Goals of Archaeology (reading responses due)

Newman, Conor “Reflections on the Making of a 'Royal Site' in Early Ireland”  
*World Archaeology*, Vol. 30, No. 1, (Jun., 1998), 127-141.

F 13 Sept Using Archaeology

McNeill, T. E. “Excavations at Duninny Castle, Co. Antrim.” *Medieval Archaeology* 48 (2004), 167-200.

**SOCIAL HISTORY**

M 17 Sept What is Social History?

Tilly, Louise. “Social History and Its Critics (in Problems in Social History: A Symposium).” *Theory and Society* 9, no. 5 (September 1980), 668-70.

Couvares, Francis G. “Telling a Story in Context; Or, What's Wrong with Social History?” *Theory and Society* 9, no. 5 (September 1980), 674-76.

Tilly, Charles. “Two Callings of Social History.” *Theory and Society* 9, no. 5 (September 1980), 679-81.

W 19 Sept Castles as Centers of Social Power (reading responses due)

Liddiard, ch. 2, “Castles, Conquest and Authority” and 3, “Architecture and Power”

Coulson, I. 3, “Some Social Relations of ‘Castles and Fortresses’”

F 21 Sept      Castle 2: The Tower of London

## **POLITICAL HISTORY**

M 24 Sept      Castles and Politics

Bachrach, Bernard S. "The Angevin Strategy of Castle Building in the Reign of Fulk Nerra, 987-1040." *The American Historical Review* 88, no. 3 (June 1983), 533-60.

W 26 Sept      Castles and Politics (reading responses due)

Coulson, II. 5, "Peacekeeping at Home and Abroad."

## **HISTORY OF WAR**

F 28 Sept      Introduction to Military History

France, John, "Recent Writing on Medieval Warfare: From the Fall of Rome to c. 1300." *The Journal of Military History* 65, No. 2 (April, 2001), 441-73.

Bachrach, Bernard S. "Medieval Siege Warfare: A Reconnaissance" *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 58, No. 1. (Jan., 1994), 119-133.

M 1 Oct          Castles in Military History

Liddiard, ch. 4, "The Castle at War"

Coulson, II. 1, "Noble Military 'Liberties', Ethos and Ethics"

W 3 Oct          Crusader Castles (reading responses due)

Ellenblum, Ronnie, "The Distribution of Frankish Castles during the Twelfth Century" in *Crusader Castles and Modern Histories*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 146-164.

Ehrlich, M. "Crusaders' Castles – the Fourth Generation: Reflections on Frankish Castle-building Policy during the 13<sup>th</sup> Century." *Journal of Medieval History* (May 2003), 85-93.

F 5 Oct          Crusader Castles part 2

Genequand, Denis. "From 'Desert Castle' to Medieval Town: Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi (Syria)." *Antiquity* 79, no. 304 (June 2005), 350-61.

Rosser, John, "Crusader Castles of Cyprus." *Archaeology* 39, no.4 (Jul/Aug 86), 33-47.

M 8 Oct      \*2-3 page project proposal due\* peer review in class

W 10 Oct      Castle 3: Crac des Chevaliers

F 12 Oct      Midterm

## **ECONOMIC HISTORY**

M 15 Oct      The Economics of Castle-Owning

W 17 Oct      Castles as Property (reading responses due)

Coulson, II. 3, "Private Property but Public Utility" and III. 1, "Castle-Lords, Castle-Lordships, and Noble Civilization"

## **HISTORY OF TECHNOLOGY**

F 19 Oct      Castle 4: Caernafon

M 22 Oct      Castle Technology

White, Lynn Jr. "The Study of Medieval Technology, 1924-1974: Personal Reflections" *Technology and Culture*, Vol. 16, No. 4. (Oct., 1975), 519-530.

Chevedden, Paul E. "The Invention of the Counterweight Trebuchet: A Study in Cultural Diffusion." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 54 (2000), 71-116.

W 24 Oct      Film—Medieval Siege (reading responses due)

F 26 Oct      No Class, Fall Break,

## **ENVIRONMENTAL and LANDSCAPE HISTORY**

M 29 Oct      Landscape History

Muir, Richard. "Landscape History and Landscape Heritage" in *Approaches to Landscape* (London: Macmillan Press, 1999).

W 31 Oct      Castles in Context—Landscapes (reading responses due)

Liddiard, ch. 5 "Lordly Landscapes"

Creighton, O. H. "Castle as Icon: Landscapes of Status and Symbolism." In *Castles and Landscapes* (London: Continuum, 2002), 65-88.

F 2 Nov Environmental History

Donald Worster. "Doing Environmental History." In *The Ends of the Earth*, ed. Donald Worster, appendix. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

**GENDER HISTORY and WOMEN'S HISTORY**

M 5 Nov Men and Women in the Middle Ages

Fenster, Thelma. "Preface: Why Men?" in *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ix – xiii. London: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

W 7 Nov Gender History (reading responses due)

Karras, Ruth, "Mail Bonding: Knights, Ladies, and the Proving of Manhood," in *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe*, 20-66. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003.

F 9 Nov Women in Castles (Annotated Bibliography Due)

Coulson, V. 1 "Female Castellans: Prevision, not Prejudice" and V. 2, "Ladies of Fortresses and Castle Children."

**CULTURAL HISTORY**

M 12 Nov Defining Cultural History

Hunt, Lynn. "Introduction: History, Culture, and Text" in *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 1-24.

Burke, Peter. "Problems of Cultural History." In *What is Cultural History?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), 20-29.

W 14 Nov The Culture of Castles (reading responses due)

Liddiard, Ch. 6, Experiencing Castles: Iconography and Status

F 16 Nov Castle 5—Penafiel Castle

**RESEARCH RELEASE: 19-21 November—work on your proposals!**

Nov 26, 28, 30 Presentations of Research Proposals

M 3 Dec Castle Stories: Medieval Literature

W 5 Dec Castles in Medieval Art (reading responses due)

Woods-Marsden, Joanna. "Images of Castles in the Renaissance: Symbols of "Signoria"/Symbols of Tyranny" *Art Journal*, 48.2 (Summer, 1989), 130-137.

## **THE IDEA OF CASTLE**

F 7 Dec      Medievalism and the Romance of Castles

M 10 Dec      Castle 6—Neuschwanstein

W 12 Dec      Modern Castles: Hogwarts or Buckingham Palace?

**F 14 Dec      Final Exam; Paper Proposals Due**