History 3970 Section 2: Medieval Travel and Travelers

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00 – 3:15
Lowder Hall 111

Instructor

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<tr>
<th>Dr. Kate Craig</th>
<th>Office: 320G Thach Hall</th>
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<td><a href="mailto:kmcraig@auburn.edu">kmcraig@auburn.edu</a></td>
<td>Office Hours: Mon. and Wed. 10:00-12:00 and by appointment</td>
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Course Description

Medieval travel was a dangerous enterprise; aside from the challenges posed by forests, storms, and robbers, travelers had to negotiate a complex landscape of different peoples, strange customs, and unfamiliar languages. Yet in spite of the difficulties, medieval women and men did travel, and the descriptions they left of their experiences are important historical sources.

We will be reading and discussing a variety of medieval travel narratives, written by individuals from different regions and religions, to arrive at a better understanding of the connected worlds of the medieval period (roughly 500-1500 CE) and the mindsets and experiences of these travelers. The focus is on travelers from the three Abrahamic religious traditions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and their encounters with one another and with other groups (notably, the Mongols).

The guiding idea behind this approach is that travel narratives reflect not only the “reality” of the places a person visits, but also his or her own perspective and preconceptions. Thus, these texts and their reception can tell us how medieval people thought about themselves and about others, how different medieval societies interacted with one another, and what implications these encounters had (or did not have) for later developments in European and world history.

Required Readings

The only books you are required to acquire are the following two primary sources in translation:


All other readings will be available on CANVAS. You must bring a copy of the readings to class, whether by computer or printed. I personally use printed copies, so that I can better read and annotate, but you are free to use whatever technology helps you best to keep track of your thoughts so that you can actively participate in the discussions.
Assignments

The following three assignments (broken down into different components) will make up your grade:

1) 20% Attendance / Participation

2) First Research Project (Total 30%)
   - 15% First Individual Paper (5 pages)
   - 15% First Group Story Map

3) Second Research Project (Total 50%)
   - 30% Second Individual Paper (10 pages)
     - 5% Annotated Bibliography
     - 5% First Draft
     - 5% Peer Review
     - 15% Final Draft
   - 20% Second Group Story Map and Final Presentation (same material)

Attendance and Classroom Behavior

Attendance is required in this course. You have two “freebie” unexcused absences; after these two absences are used up, I will deduct 10 points per absence from your Attendance and Participation grade. **If you have more than five unexcused absences, you will fail the class.**

This does not include excused absences, when documentation is submitted to me within a week of returning to class. Valid reasons for excused absences are listed in the Student Policy E-Handbook: [https://sites.auburn.edu/admin/universitypolicies/Policies/PolicyonClassAttendance.pdf](https://sites.auburn.edu/admin/universitypolicies/Policies/PolicyonClassAttendance.pdf)

The Student Policy E-Handbook also clarifies acceptable classroom behavior: [https://sites.auburn.edu/admin/universitypolicies/Policies/PolicyonClassroomBehavior.pdf](https://sites.auburn.edu/admin/universitypolicies/Policies/PolicyonClassroomBehavior.pdf)

If you are texting, Facebooking, browsing, chatting, sleeping, arriving late, leaving early or doing anything else disruptive or tangential to the class, I will count you as absent for that day.

I have these policies for one reason: a major goal of this class is to create an active, open, and inclusive discussion group. Knowing your fellow classmates and collaborating with them will be a crucial component of this class, and our success in achieving an energetic but respectful environment will depend on you.

Participation

Every day we will be discussing either medieval travel narratives (primary sources) or short excerpts of works written by historians (secondary sources). Your participation grade is based on your engagement in the in-class discussions of these readings. I ask that for every class session, you come prepared with a passage of the reading and a question you would like to discuss (the question does not necessarily have to be related to the passage you chose). I would like to hear everyone speak at least once every class session, and written preparation will give you something to say.

At the beginning of each class, I will go around the room and ask everyone to share what passage or question you would like to discuss (I will also have some of my own!)
Projects: Papers and Story Maps

For each of the two projects, you will be part of a group working on a single medieval travel narrative (using the full text, not just the excerpts we are reading collectively in class).

During the first stage of each project, you will work on an individual paper that focuses on creating an original argument about a single section or theme within the narrative, that has only minimal overlap with the other members of your group. The papers will be written in a formal academic style (we will talk further about what this means) including citations to primary and secondary works (Chicago style) and a bibliography.

Even though this is an individual paper, it is a collaborative class. While you should not write each others’ papers or copy any material (that is plagiarism), I would like you to think of your group as a workshop or a lab, where you can collectively experiment with arguments and evidence, share references, and comment on each others’ work.

For the first paper, you will only need to use one primary source and 1-2 secondary sources. For the second, more extensive research paper, you will construct an annotated bibliography of 4-5 scholarly sources, go through a first draft and peer review stage, and present a polished final paper.

During the second stage of each project, you and your group will work together to create a Story Map for this traveler (http://storymaps.arcgis.com/en/). Unlike the formal academic style of your individual paper, the Story Map should be written for a public audience and include (naturally) maps and images to help your reader understand the historical context of this traveler, and the individual research carried out by each of the groups’ members, in an accessible way.

That means that you and your group cannot just copy-paste your written work from your formal papers; you will have to think about what historical story you collectively want to tell, how to present multiple threads of research in a coherent way, and above all, how to make your Story Map interesting and at the same time historically argumentative.

In place of a final, we will be holding a mini-conference in which each group will give a presentation of their collective and individual work on their second project (a live version of the Story Map that is due the same day).

The goals of these tandem assignments are:

(1) To give you practice in formal academic research (with the papers), but also practice in presenting your work in different ways to different audiences (with the Story Maps). That is, you are writing your individual papers for an academic audience (example: me) but you are assembling your Story Map for a public, non-specialist audience (example: your parents).

(2) To give you practice in meshing individual ideas and arguments within a group collaboration that results in both a digital (with the Story Maps) and oral (with the final mini-conference) final product. These are skills that will serve you well, in whatever major and career you decide to pursue.
Communicating with Me

I am here to answer your questions. You are always welcome to come to my office hours for any reason. You can also email your questions to me, but check the syllabus first. I will usually answer emails within 24-48 hours. Do not count on getting a prompt reply to an email sent the night before an exam. In addition, I will not discuss grades over email; if you wish to discuss your grades, you must come to office hours or make an appointment with me.

Grade Policies and Breakdown

All grades and attendance records will be maintained in CANVAS. It is your responsibility to contact me in a timely fashion if you believe there has been a mistake. I do not award extra credit, and I will not round up grades.

The grading scale is:

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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-89.9</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79.9</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69.9</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt;59.9</td>
<td>F</td>
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You will receive an Early Alert Grade by February 25th. The Early Alert Grade represents your current performance on class work graded at that point in the semester. If your Early Alert Grade is a "D", "F", or "FA" you will receive an email from the Retention Coordinator. Early Alert Grades can be viewed by logging into AU Access and opening the tiger i tab. Select "Student Records" and open the "Midterm Grades" window from the drop down box.

Students Who Need Accommodations

If you need accommodations (including but not limited to: recording lectures with a tape recorder, sitting in the first row of class, etc.) you should submit your approved accommodations through AU Access and then set up a meeting with me to discuss what you need. Contact the Office of Accessibility, 1228 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT) to make an appointment to establish documentation for your accommodations.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism refers to the submission of any work that is not your own. This includes copy-pasting from the internet, reusing others’ work, and even quoting a textbook without citing. If you are discovered cheating, you will be reported to the Academic Honesty Committee, which can result in some very serious penalties. More seriously, if you plagiarize, you are taking advantage of the other Auburn students in the class who did their own work.

Since this is a class which encourages collaborative work, I want to especially encourage you to talk to me if there are any questions about citing, the boundaries between your work and the work of others, or if any of your group’s practices are causing you discomfort.

The Student Policy E-Handbook contains important information on academic honesty at Auburn in the Academic Honesty Code: https://sites.auburn.edu/admin/universitypolicies/Policies/AcademicHonestyCode.pdf
How to Get Help

Come to office hours! I am available not only on Mondays and Wednesdays during the scheduled times, but also by appointment if you have any time conflicts. This is a smaller class, and I would love to be able to get to know and help each of you over the course of the semester.

The Miller Writing Center ([http://wp.auburn.edu/writing/writing-center/](http://wp.auburn.edu/writing/writing-center/)) is also located on the second floor of the library. The Center offers free, one-on-one consultation for all writers at Auburn University.

Course Schedule

Please note that this schedule may change slightly over the course of the semester. You are responsible for checking your official Auburn email and CANVAS for announcements and changes.

Week One: Introductions

Jan. 15
- Introduction to the course and each other
- Introduction to Zotero
- Why study history through the lens of travel and travel writing?

Week Two: Thinking about Travel Writing

Jan. 19
- The Medieval World: A Crash Course
  

→ January 20th is the last day to drop classes without a fee

Jan. 21
- Anonymous Pilgrim of Bordeaux, *Itinerary* [333]

Week Three: Christian Pilgrimage Traditions

Jan. 26
- Egeria, *Diary of a Pilgrimage* [late 4th/ early 5th c.] (*)

Jan. 28
- Willibald, *Hodoeporicon* [8th c.] (*)

Week Four: Mecca, Cairo, and Jerusalem (1)

Feb. 2
- Nasir-i Khusraw, *Book of Travels* [1046] (*)

→ February 3rd is the last day to drop classes with no grade assigned

Feb. 4
- Peter the Hermit’s Pilgrimage, Crusade Accounts [ca. 1099] (*)
Week Five: Mecca, Cairo, and Jerusalem (2)

Feb. 9  Geniza Documents on Crusade [ca. 1099] (*), Usamah ibn Munqidh [1185]
First Individual Paper Due

Week Six: Jewish Worlds (1)

Feb. 16  Story Maps Technical Day
Feb. 18  Abraham ben Yiju (**)

Week Seven: Jewish Worlds (2)

Feb. 23  Benjamin of Tudela [ca. 1173] (**)
Feb. 25  How have modern authors adapted and reinterpreted medieval travel accounts?
First Group Story Map Due

→ Early Alert Grades available Feb. 25th

Week Eight: The Mongols and the Missionary

Mar. 1  William of Rubruck (1) [1253 – 55] (**)
Mar. 3  William of Rubruck (2)
→ Mar. 3rd is the last day to drop a course with a “W” grade.

Week Nine: The Mongols and the Merchant

Mar. 8  Marco Polo (1) [1271 – 95] (**)
Mar. 10  Marco Polo (2)
Second Individual Paper: Annotated Bibliography Due

→ Mar. 14-18 Spring Break
Week Ten: Imaginary Travel

Mar. 22  John Mandeville [ca. 1360] (1)
Mar. 24  John Mandeville (2)

Week Eleven: Maps and Waystations

Mar. 29  The Art and Archaeology of Medieval Travel
Second Individual Paper: First Draft Due (redistributed to peers for review)
Mar. 31  **Dr. Craig gone for conference**

Week Twelve:

Apr. 5   Ibn Battuta (1) [1325- 53] (**)
Apr. 7   Ibn Battuta (2)
Second Individual Paper: Peer Reviews Due Back

Week Thirteen:

Apr. 12  Margery Kempe [c. 1373- 1440] (**)
Apr. 14  Late Medieval Pilgrimage Documents

Week Fourteen: Receptions of Travel Accounts, Medieval and Modern

Apr. 19  “In the Footsteps of Marco Polo”
How have modern authors adapted and reinterpreted medieval travel accounts?
In what ways would the medieval “readership” of these accounts have been
different? Are all attempts to represent medieval travel with modern technology
teleological? If so, what are we doing with Story Maps?

Apr. 21  “Travels with a Tangerine”
Final Draft of Second Paper Due

Week Fifteen: Medieval Travel and (vs.? the “Age of Exploration”

Apr. 26  JRS Phillips, Chapter 12: Fresh start or new phase?, in: The Medieval Expansion of
Apr. 28  Felipe Fernández-Armesto, Chapter 9: The Mental Horizon, in: Before Columbus:
Exploration and Colonisation from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic 1229-1492

Final Exam:  Mini-Conference (Tuesday, May 3rd 4:00 – 6:30)
Final Story Map Due May 5th 5:00