# Culture and Institutions of Medieval Europe

## Prof. Gabriele Archetti

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to provide students with knowledge of the main historical events in medieval Europe, in particular with reference to political-social, economic-productive, ecclesiastical and monastic institutions from the High Middle Ages up until the establishment of municipalities. In particular, the aims of the course are: a) presenting the working method and its problems; ; b) develop a critical approach to the discipline by explaining the logical link between past and present; c) illustrating how certain important events from the Middle Ages are still closely bound to the present; d) looking at events in their long-term evolution.

The training activities include two distinct but related phases which, in the light of historiography, include: 1) an examination of the great themes of medieval history, from the Constantinian age to the early Renaissance and from evangelization to the Tridentine reform, including the dynamics connected with political-social, economic-productive, agricultural and food, cultural and religious developments including the rise and spread of Islam; 2) an in-depth study of the Lombard civilization and medieval nutrition as the basis of the “Mediterranean diet”. At the end of the course, students will be able to: a) understand some of the main events from the Middle ages and connect them to the present context; b) discuss historical events and place them in space and time, using appropriate language and making consistent connections to underlying causes; c) also apply the historical method to other events from the past, understand their development and interpret them via the proper educational methods; d) critically evaluate the aspects related to the migratory movements of peoples in the medieval millennium, with particular reference to the Lombard civilization in Italy; e) examine monastic dietetics and its contents in relation to the “Mediterranean diet”.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The concept of the Middle Ages: topics, sources, problems and periodisation. Using key historiographic themes which animated twentieth-century Medieval studies in Europe, the course presents those aspects of civilisation, which despite being different still impact on European affairs today; some of which will be investigated, namely Christianity and basic ecclesiastical institutions; monasticism and monks’ commitment to education; legacy of Roman traditions and the Byzantine Empire; the barbarian invasions, with particular regard to the Lombard people in Italy; Islam and Muhammad; early medieval society and economy, agricultural transformations and the court system in the organisation of rural areas: clearing, crops, agricultural work, breeding, food and nutrition; the Holy Roman Empire and the Carolingian order; the feudal system, the development of lordly powers and the castellation; the reform of the Church and the investiture controversy up to the rise of the communes. Birth and end of the Middle Ages.

A thematic analysis will focus on issues related to the medieval diet, to the monastic diet as a foretaste of the “Mediterranean diet”.

***READING LIST***

For the general part, students will prepare their lecture notes, supplemented with documents and further study materials made available on the Blackboard platform on the teacher's personal page. These materials will be supplemented by the manual:

- A. Cortonesi, *Il medioevo. Profilo di un millennio*, Carocci, Roma, 2014 (Manuali universitari, 64), pp. 13-140, 167-176, 197-226.

Furthermore, for the thematic in-depth analysis, the following volume should be studied:

- *I Longobardi in Lombardia*, a cura di G. Archetti, Edizioni Studium, Roma, 2022 (Centro studi longobardi. Biblioteca storica 2).

And the introductory section of the volume:

- *Le cronache medievali di Giacomo Malvezzi*, edit by G. Archetti, Edizioni Studium, Roma 2016 (Quaderni di Brixia sacra, 7), pp. 9-64.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures; the course may also include meetings, seminars and conventions organised in synergy with course topics; there may also be field trips to city monuments and places of interest in reference to course topics. (e.g Brescia Duomo Vecchio, Queriniana Library, Santa Giulia Museum and Piamarta Museum in Brescia etc.). Students must register on the Blackboard platform in order to use the teaching materials and supplementary tools made available by the teacher in different formats.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

There will be an oral examination. Students are expected to demonstrate their understanding of historical concepts and main events of the Middle Ages; along with historical content, students should demonstrate to master in a logical and conscious manner the thematic focuses related to the monographic studies addressed in class and indicated in the programme. The final mark is out of thirty and takes into account accuracy of students’ answers in terms of content, their mastery of language and ability to argue statements and analyses effectively, also critically, whilst displaying maturity and awareness of the development of the long period of historical issues.

Students may sit the examination in two parts, during the interval between the first and second semester, by agreeing with the lecturer on content, timing and bibliography, and by registering for the mid-term test via Blackboard.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no prerequisites for attending the course related to content or to previous specific training areas. However, students are advised to use a good secondary school textbook.

Course attendance, although not mandatory, is strongly recommended. Students are required to register on the Blackboard platform to download the additional teaching materials and receive all the information relating to the course in real time.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.