**Political and religious institutions in medieval Europe**

Prof. Maria Pia Alberzoni

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

The aim of the course is to provide an essential comprehensive framework of the institutions of the High Middle Ages, both state and religious; then, focusing on a specific research area, in this case the practice of politics in city-states in Italy, its aim is to facilitate students’ ability to read and to critically interpret government practices in city-states, their image as passed on by historiography and the most recent critical literature on this subject.

To this purpose, texts which help to understand the functioning of the various institutions will be read and commented during lectures: there will also be a comparative analysis of these institutions and other contemporary government systems, with a more traditional concept of power. Furthermore, the topic of the political language used by those responsible for governing city-states, with particular reference to the *ars dictaminis* and to the art of public speaking, which truly seems a performative expression, will be addressed.

At the end of the course, students will have acquired basic skills in applying the historical-critical methods in the interpretation of medieval and modern texts (regarding the latest historiography on these topics); this will enable them to have the critical capacity to understand and to assess reality and to place with greater awareness the contents of the disciplines which study the Middle Ages, and more broadly, history. Moreover, students will be capable of approaching a written documentary or narrative source (presented in the original language and, if necessary, translated into Italian) and to contextualise it, thereby highlighting crucial issues of the period and of the history of mentalities. In addition, students’ proficiency in the lexicon of historical disciplines will contribute to enrich and increase their awareness when tackling quite complex thinking and presentations. Students’ learning skills will be stimulated by their direct access to sources and student-lecturer and student-student interactions will be facilitated also through seminars. To this purpose, seminars will be organised, (in-person, or online) with the participation of highly qualified scholars.

***COURSE CONTENT***

Political language and government practices in city-states (12th-13th centuries)

***READING LIST***

The reading list for the various topics will be provided during lectures.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures in the classroom; seminars focusing in-depth on course topics. Recorded lessons will in any case be available on the Blackboard platform.

**Nota Bene: the course will be held during the second semester.**

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will be assessed in an oral exam, on the topics tackled during lessons, designed to assess students’ ability to express themselves and the skills which they have acquired during lessons and by studying. Moreover, students will have to prepare a written paper on a topic of their choice among those covered with during lessons: thereby, students will be able to verify their ability in undertaking bibliographic research and, at the same time, will be able to improve their writing skills. The oral exam will start from the discussion of the written paper produced by the students.

In order to pass the exam, candidates must demonstrate to have a good knowledge of the main lecture topics. The final mark will be calculated out of thirty (minimum pass mark 18/30; highest mark 30/30). If students’ oral exam is complete, thorough and appropriately presented, they will pass with distinction.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no prerequisites in order for students to attend the course. A good knowledge of Latin will facilitate the reading of the sources. Those students who have not taken any exam in Medieval History during their undergraduate degree course will have the opportunity to follow a specially designed supplementary programme (personally agreed on with the Lecturer), which, also with the aid of seminars, will enable those students to acquire basic knowledge of medieval History, which in turn will be also useful in order to study more in-depth the History of medieval institutions.

In the event that the health emergency should continue, both teaching activities and any forms of learning monitoring, both in progress and final, will be provided also remotely through our University's Blackboard platform, the Microsoft Teams platform and any other tools envisaged and notified at the beginning of the course, so as to ensure the full achievement of the formative objectives set out in degree curricula and, at the same time, the safety of our students.

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.