**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 fundamental turning points of medieval European history, with particular focus on the political-social, economic-productive, ecclesiastical, and monastic institutions of the early Middle Ages up to the birth of the communes. In particular, the course aims are to: a) show the method of historical work and its problems; b) develop a critical approach to the discipline explaining the logical link between past and present; c) illustrate how some great events of the Middle Ages are deeply intertwined also with current events; d) look at the events in their long-term evolution.

The training activities include two distinct but related stages which, in terms of historiography, include: 1) an examination of the great themes of medieval history, from the Age of Constantine to the early Renaissance and from evangelisation to the Tridentine reform, including the dynamics connected with political-social, economic-productive, agricultural and food, cultural and religious developments, including the birth and spread of Islam; 2) an in-depth study on the theme of nutrition in the monastic environment and the meaning of the Lombard civilisation in Italy.

At the end of the course, students must be able to: a) understand some of the main events of the medieval millennium by connecting them to the current context; b) be able to tell historical facts by contextualising them in space and time, and using an appropriate language and consistent causal links; c) apply the historical method also to other events of the past, understanding their development and dividing them into specific educational paths; d) critically evaluate the aspects related to the themes of nutrition in the medieval millennium, with particular attention to the premises of the “Mediterranean diet”.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The concept of the Middle Ages: themes, sources, problems, and periodisation. Based on the major historiographical themes that characterised twentieth-century European medievalism, the course presents those aspects of civilisation that, albeit in different forms, concern the topicality of European events; among these, some issues will be further investigated, such as Christianity and basic ecclesiastical institutions; monasticism and the educational commitment of the monks; the legacy of the Roman tradition and the Byzantine Empire; the barbarian invasions, with particular regard to the Lombard people in Italy and in Lombardy; Islam and Mohammed; early medieval society and economy, agrarian transformations and the manorial system in the organisation of rural areas: clearing, cultivation, agricultural work, breeding, food and nutrition; the Holy Roman Empire and the Carolingian system; the feudal system, the development of lordly powers and the fortification; the reform of the Church and the investitures controversy until the rise of the communes. Birth and end of the Middle Ages.

A thematic analysis will focus on the issues related to the monastic diet as a premise to today's “Mediterranean diet”.

***READING LIST***

For the general part, students will have to study the lecture notes and the documents and materials made available on the lecturer's personal page on Blackboard; these materials will be supplemented with the textbook:

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

Additionally, for the thematic insight part, students will have to sudy the following volume:

- *I Longobardi in Lombardia*, edited by G. Archetti, Edizioni Studium, Rome, 2022 (Centro studi longobardi. Biblioteca storica 2).

And the introductory section of the volume:

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

***TEACHING METHOD***

Classroom lectures supplemented with the opportunity to participate in meetings, seminars and conferences organised in close synergy with the topic of the course; the course will also include educational visits to city or local monuments that are particularly significant for the topics covered (e.g. Basilica of Sant'Ambrogio, Sforza Castle, Archaeological Park of Castelseprio, Museum of Santa Giulia and Piamarta Museum of Brescia, etc. ). Students must register with the Blackboard platform to use the teaching materials and supplementary tools made available in the various formats.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The assessment method consists of an oral exam, during which candidates must show that they have learnt concepts relating to historical knowledge and the main turning points of the medieval age; in addition to the general contents, students will have to demonstrate that they can master, in a logical and conscious way, the key issues connected to the in-depth studies addressed in class and included in the programme. The final mark, on a thirty-point grading scale, takes into account the accuracy of the students’ answers, their command of language and the ability to explain statements and analyses, also critically, showing maturity and awareness of the development of historical issues in the long run.

The exam may be divided into two parts during the break between the first and second semester, and students can agree with the lecturer on contents, times and reading list.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

The course has an introductory character, therefore there are no content-related prerequisites or specific previous training required, which can in any case be provided by studying a good high school manual.

Course attendance, although not compulsory, is strongly recommended and the supplementary teaching materials are available on the Blackboard platform. Students are required to register with the platform in order to download the material and receive all the real-time information relating to the course.

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.