HIST 437, Winter 2014

Medieval Spain

The Reconquista

Course Description

The history of Medieval Spain is one of a complex interaction between Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula spanning nearly eight centuries, during which time the various kingdoms of Christian Iberia formed and pressed southward sporadically in what we now refer to as the Reconquista. Indeed, it is quite impossible to understand Medieval Spain without understanding the Reconquista, and one of the primary goals of this class will be to discuss the complex historical issues surrounding this “reconquest”. Over the course of the term we will consider the phenomenon known as the convivencia, the effect of the reconquest on the formation of a “frontier society”, and the complex political relationships between Christian and Muslim political power on the peninsula during the period from 711 to 1492.

This will not be a pure lecture survey of Medieval Spanish history. Rather, this course will require engaging the reading actively in weekly discussions, which each student will be required to lead at some point. Rather than examinations, you will write synthetic essays demonstrating your understanding and consideration of the material. Thus, attendance and reading will be critical to your success in the course.

Required Reading

The following titles are available at the Duckstore; most are also widely available via other book retailers.


Additional readings indicate by an asterisk (*) are available online via Blackboard or as noted.
Assignments and Grading:

Your course grade will consist of four elements.

1) **One Primary Source Analysis (4 – 5 pgs)** based on the readings and discussions from the first half of the term, worth 30% of your final grade.

2) **One Final Essay (6 – 7 pgs)**, worth 40% of your final grade.

3) **Attendance and participation** in any reading discussions, worth 30% of your final grade.

More details regarding topics and procedures for the papers will follow as the course progresses.

*A Word about Plagiarism:* Regrettably, I must make a statement regarding the offense of plagiarism. Any violation of the University of Oregon’s academic policy on plagiarism will result in my taking all necessary administrative action to report the conduct. I take the offense of plagiarism seriously, on an academic and personal level. Serious consequences up to and including failure of the course may result from the offense.

**Policy Regarding Late Assignments or Make-up Examinations**

All assignments are due by the end of class on the scheduled date unless I have granted an extension. Late assignments will *not receive an evaluation*. There will be *no exceptions* to this policy.

You must make all requests for extensions in advance. In the case of exams, you must notify me no later than one week prior. Naturally, I will consider emergencies on a case-by-case basis, but be advised that only *verifiable* emergencies will be acceptable.

**Special Needs Note:** If you are a student registered with the Accessible Ed Center as eligible for extra time on exams or for other specific needs associated with the class, please let me know immediately. Remember that it is your responsibility to make any arrangements necessary with the Accessible Education Center for exams or other accommodations.

**Student Conduct:**

**General:** Please refrain from reading materials unrelated to our course during class. Please keep your voice down in the event you need to clarify a note with a neighbor, etc, and please keep any side conversations to a minimum. Never hesitate to ask a question if you need to do so.

**Electronics:** Please put cell phones into silent mode before class begins; no texting or viewing messages during class. Please confine your use of laptops or other devices to note taking, as activities unrelated to the course are distracting to me as well as to others and thus unacceptable (even if you sit in the back row). I reserve the right to prohibit the use of *all* electronics in class at any time.

**Discussion:** I would like to have relatively informal discussions, but please exercise appropriate courtesy in listening and speaking with your colleagues.
Schedule of Meetings

Week One

Monday, January 6
Introduction to the Course

Wednesday, January 8
The Spain the Muslims Conquered
Read: Reilly, 1-39.

Week Two

Monday, January 13
Al Andalus
Read: Reilly, 51-79

Wednesday, January 15
The Taifa Kingdoms
Read: Constable, #24, The Political Dilemma of a Granadan Ruler

Week Three

Monday, January 20
Martin Luther King Day, No Class

Wednesday, January 22
The Origin of Reconquest
Read: Constable, #13 The Kings of Asturias; Reilly, 90 – 121.

Week Four

Monday, January 27
The Cost of Defeat
Read: Constable, #22, The Conquest of Toledo

Wednesday, January 29
The Lure of the Frontier
Read: The Poem of the Cid

Week Five

Monday, February 3
“A Society Organized for War”
Read: James Powers, Ch. 4 (all) and Ch. 5, 6, 7, or 8 (groups)

Wednesday, February 5
Women and the Reconquest
Read: Heath Dillard, Daughters of the Reconquest Ch. 6 & 7 (all) and Ch. 3, 4, 5, or 8 (groups)
Week Six:

Monday, February 10
“Convivencia”
Read: Las Siete Partidas*, Excerpts and Group Assignments

Wednesday, February 12
The Disputation
Read: Constable, #57 Barcelona Disputation of 1263, #68 On Preaching and Conversion, #33, Two Arguments in Support of Christian Faith

Week Seven

Monday, February 17
Reconquest as Crusade?
Read: Joseph O’Callaghan, Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain*

Wednesday, February 19
The Siege of Lisbon
Read: Constable, #31 The Siege of Lisbon

Week Eight

Monday, February 24
Maritime Expansion in Aragon

Wednesday, February 26
The Aggrandizement of Castile-Leon
Read: Reilly, 144-153

Week Nine

Monday, March 3
The Invasion of Abu Al-Hasan
Read: TBA

Wednesday, March 5
The War of the Two Pedros
Read: TBA

Week Ten

Monday, March 10
The Conquest of Granada
Wednesday, March 12
The Legacy of the Reconquest

Read: John Edwards, *A Conquistador Society? The Spain Columbus Left*

Final Papers due in my email inbox by Monday, March 17, at 5:00 PM.

*Early papers very welcome.* 😊