

THE LITERATURE AND CULTURE OF BYZANTIUM
COURSE SYLLABUS
SPRING 2017

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GMT 4110
T 7 & 8, R 8

Course Description

Traditionally, the culture and history of the Byzantine Empire has frequently been excluded from the narrative of western medieval civilization and from general humanities courses. This is a serious oversight considering that the Byzantine Empire was not only incredibly long-lasting--from roughly 330 to 1453 CE--but was also the heir to Graeco-Roman civilization and had a significant impact on world culture. This course will survey the literature and culture of Byzantium, with a focus on the vast variety of literary genres from this civilization. These include patristic literature, oratory, historiography, chronicles, hagiography, hymnography, and epic poetry. We will also consider the historical context of the literary texts to acquire a better understanding of Byzantine culture overall. Finally, we will consider crucial questions for understanding this body of literature: how to define and distinguish genres? what is the nature of the Byzantine continuation of the Greek and Roman heritage? and, what makes Byzantine civilization distinct and unique?

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

This course is a Humanities subject area course in the General Education Program. A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit. Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology and theories or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication and critical thinking:

Content: Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory and methodologies used within the subject area. This learning outcome will be assessed with midterm and final exams.

Communication: Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively in forms appropriate to the subject area, individually and/or in groups. This learning outcome will be assessed through class discussion and one of the short papers.

Critical Thinking: Identify and analyze key elements, biases and influences that shape thought within the subject area. Approach issues and problems within the discipline from multiple perspectives. This learning outcome will be assessed through one of the short papers.

Required Texts

1. Deno John Geanakoplos. *Byzantium: Church, Society, and Civilization Seen through Contemporary Eyes*. 1986 paperback edition. University of Chicago Press. ISBN-13: 978-0226284613.
- 2,. Additional readings will also be posted on Canvas.

Course Requirements

Attendance, Reading, Participation

Students are required to attend all class meetings. Students are allowed to incur three unexcused absences; **after that each unexcused absence will result in a letter reduction of your overall final grade (for example, from a B+ to a B)**. Excused absences include documented illness, religious holidays, family emergency, and participation at university sponsored events such as athletic competitions. All absences need to be discussed with the instructor as soon as possible.

Make-up work will be administered only for excused absences.

We will use a significant portion of class time for discussion of the material. **Participation** is expected and will receive a grade based on frequency and quality. **Pop quizzes** will also be administered. These quizzes will be based on the assigned readings.

Two Short Papers

Students will be required to write two papers (2-3 pages) analyzing primary sources from the course. Further description of these paper assignments will be given in class. Late papers will drop a letter grade each day. You will have the option at the end of the semester to write one additional short paper. This paper may be written to replace a low grade on one of your other papers. This optional paper is recommended for those who have received a grade below the B range on at least one of their papers.

Exams

There will be two exams during the semester, including a final exam. The exams will be a combination of identifications and essays. These exams will be designed to test both mastery of significant details (who, what, when, where) of the course content and the students' ability to synthesize details and themes in support of a coherent argument.

Writing Requirement

Section 231G of this course confers 6,000 words towards the Writing Requirement (WR), which ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. While helping students meet the broad learning outcomes of content, communication, and critical thinking, the instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on students' written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization. Course grades have two components. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

Grading

15%	Participation
10%	Quizzes
20%	First Paper
20%	Second Paper
15%	Exam One
20%	Final Exam

Grading Scale

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
E	0-59

Classroom Culture

Students are expected to respectfully participate and engage with the course material, the instructor, and their classmates during class time. This means that students who use electronic devices for non-class related activity are failing to fully participate in the class. The instructor reserves the right to ask students to discontinue any disruptive behavior.

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conductiononor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 302 Tigert Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

Counseling and Wellness

Center Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:
<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

This syllabus and class schedule is subject to slight modification

Week 1

TH Jan 5: Introductions, syllabus. Introductory discussion of Byzantium.

Week 2

T Jan 10: Topic: Byzantine Origins: Christianity and Empire
Reading due: **Eusebius**

TH Jan 12: Topic: Byzantine Cosmography
Reading due: **Basil of Caesarea, Hexameron**

Week 3

T Jan 17: Topic: Byzantine Oratory
Reading due: **John Chrysostom**

TH Jan 19: Topic: Justinian's Byzantium
Reading due: **Procopius**

Week 4

T Jan 24: Topic: The Histories of Procopius
Reading due: **The Secret History, Procopius**

TH Jan 26: Topic: Chronicle as Genre
Reading due: **Malalas**

Week 5

T Jan 31: Topic: Hagiography
Reading due: **Simeon the Stylite**

TH Feb 2: Topic: Hagiography Continued and How to Write a Source Analysis Essay

Week 6

T Feb 7: Topic: Female Saints' Lives
First Essay Due

TH Feb 9: Topic: Female Saints' Lives continued
Reading due: **Mary of Egypt**

Week 7

T Feb 14: Topic: Icons in Byzantine Culture
Reading due: **John of Damascus**

TH Feb 16: Topic: Missions in Byzantine Literature
Reading: **Life of Constantine [Cyril]**

Week 8

T Feb 21: Topic: Early Religious Poetry
Reading due: **Canticles**

TH Feb 23: Topic: Canons
Reading: **canons**

Week 9

T Feb 28: Topic: Female Hymnography
Reading: **Kassiani**

TH Mar 2: **Midterm Exam**

[No class week March 7 and 9: Spring Break]

Week 10

T Mar 14: Topic: Writing Court Ritual
Reading due: **Book of Ceremonies of Constantine VII**
Porphyrogenetos

TH Mar 16: Topic: The Writing of History
Reading: **Michael Psellos**

Week 11

T Mar 21: Topic: History during the Crusades
Reading due: **Anna Comnena**

TH Mar 23: **No Class**

Week 12

T Mar 28: Topic: Anna Comnena continued
Second Analysis Paper due

TH Mar 30: Topic: Acritic Epic
Reading due: **Digenis Akritas**

Week 13

T Apr 4: Topic: Acritic Poetry continued

TH Apr 6: Topic: Greek Novel
Reading due: **Drosilla and Charikles**

Week 14

T Apr 11: Topic: Byzantine Spirituality and Monasticism
Reading due: **Gregory Palamas**

TH Apr 13: Topic: Byzantine Influence
Reading due: **Moscow, Third Rome**

Week 15

T Apr 18: Topic: Legacy and Memory
Reading due: **Doukas**

Optional Paper: Due April, 21 Friday by 5:00 PM in Canvas

Final Exam: **April, 26 Wednesday, 7:30 AM-9:30 AM**