IDEAS IN WESTERN CULTURE:
The Medieval and Renaissance World
PART ONE

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Professor Soltes has taught for many years at the Cleveland College of Jewish Studies and directed its Institute for Jewish Life and Culture. He has also taught at Princeton University, the Johns Hopkins University, Case Western University, Cleveland State University, and George Washington University. Professor Soltes has been a guest scholar at six other universities and has taught in Israel, Italy, and the Soviet Union. He has also lectured extensively at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and other museums throughout the United States, and he has served as a guest curator in museums throughout the country. Professor Soltes has varying degrees of working knowledge of twenty-one languages.

Ideas in Western Civilization:
From the End of Antiquity to the Beginnings of Modernity

The medieval period is the bridge between antiquity and modernity. During these centuries the pagan Roman Empire and its barbarian fringes become Christian Europe, and Christianity struggles to define itself and its relationship to other faiths, especially Judaism and Islam. The medieval period is an age of enchantment and chivalric love, as well as an age of faith whose spiritual borders are increasingly assailed by secular concerns. It is an age of religious pilgrims, knights and crusaders, clerics and common people. We see their images in powerful works of art--paintings, sculptures, and soaring cathedrals-- and their voices echo in diverse literature--travel books, epic poems and sagas, theological dialogues, passion plays, and drinking songs. During the Middle Ages the language of divinity begins to evolve into the language of our time.

Toward the close of the medieval period in the late fourteenth century, western Europe looks backward in two directions simultaneously: toward the firmly rooted but increasingly troubled Christianity that had come to dominate Europe, and toward the cultural legacy of pagan antiquity. Late medieval thinkers focus increasingly on humans in the world--on human achievements and foolishness-- rather than on God, and they consider how to relate the human world to the divine. The result is Renaissance humanism, an explosion of cultural accomplishment in visual art, literature, and music that ranges from Giotto to Michelangelo, from Dante to Shakespeare.

This course will examine this extraordinary sweep of cultural history from the aftermath of Emperor Constantine's "conversion" in the fourth century to the burgeoning of Descartes's doubt in the seventeenth century. We will tantalize the student with tidbits from a wide array of literary and visual works, rather than examine a few such works in great detail. We hope to inspire the student to read more deeply and widely and look further than the brief span of twenty lectures allows us.

READINGS

I. Required

Alexander, Michael, tr. *Beowulf* (Penguin, 1973)

Bark, William Carroll. *Origins of the Medieval World* (Stanford University Press, 1958).

Gilson, Etienne. *Heloise and Abelard* (University of Michigan Press, 1960).

Goldin, Frederick, tr. *Song of Roland* (Norton, 1978)

Katzenellenbogen, Adolf. *Sculptural Programs of Chartres Cathedral* (Norton, 1964)

Male, Emile. *The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France in the Thirteenth Century* (HarperCollins, 1973)

Mabinogion (Penguin, 1976)

Power, Eileen. *Medieval People* (Harper Collins, 1992)

Southern, R. W. *The Making of the Middle Ages* (Yale University Press, 1961).

Tuchman, Barbara W. *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous Fourteenth Century* (Knopf, 1978).

Wallace-Hadrill, J.M. *The Barbarian West: Four Hundred to One Thousand* (Blackwell, 1985)

Ziegler, Phillip. *The Black Death* (Harper Collins, 1971).

II. Recommended

St. Augustine, *The Enchiridion on Faith, Hope, and Love*

Chaucer, *Troilus and Cressida*

Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain*

Western Civilization
Time Line

323	Council of Nicaea
410	Sack of Rome by Visigoths under Alaric
411-532	Burgundian kingdom in upper Rhone valley
c.420	End of Roman government in Britain
430	Death of St. Augustine of Hippo
c. 450	Anglo-Saxon invasion of England begins
455	Vandal sack of Rome
476	Deposition of Romulus Augustulus, last Western Roman emperor
481-511	Clovis, king of the Franks, establishes the Merovingian dynasty
524	Death of Boethius
c. 529	St. Benedict writes his monastic Rule
590-604	Reign of Pope Gregory I (the Great)
597	Mission of St. Augustine of Canterbury to England
632	Death of Mohammed (born c.570); beginning of rapid Arab expansion
714-741	Charles Martel reestablishes single control over Frankish kingdom
751	Pepin the Short, son of Charles Martel, is crowned king of the Franks; Merovingian king is deposed
768	Death of Pepin; accession of Charlemagne (died 814)
800	Pope crowns Charlemagne in Rome
840	Death of Einhard, Charlemagne's biographer
843	Treaty of Verdun; division of Carolingian empire into three parts, Lotharingia, France, and Germany
910	Foundation of Cluny
911	End of Carolingian dynasty in Germany
911	Treaty of St.-Claire-sur-Eppes; Normandy granted to Normans under Hrolf
919-1024	Saxon dynasty in Germany
936-973	Otto I, king of Germany
987	End of Carolingian dynasty in France; start of Capetian dynasty
1054	Final schism between Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches
1056-1106	Henry IV, German king and emperor
1059	Lateran synod; establishment of College of Cardinals
1066	Battle of Hastings; Norman conquest of England
1073-1085	Reign of Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand)
1077	Penance of Henry IV at Canossa
1096-1099	First Crusade
1142	Death of Peter Abelard (born 1079)
1147-1149	Second Crusade
1154-1189	Henry II, first Plantagenet (Angevin) king of England
1170	Death of Thomas a Becket
1189-1192	Third Crusade
1202-1204	Fourth Crusade; westerners capture Constantinople
1215	Magna Carta
1221	Death of St. Dominic (born 1170)
1226	Death of St. Francis (born 1182)
1274	Death of St. Thomas Aquinas (born 1225)
1295	Model Parliament established in England
1305-1378	Papal residence in Avignon
1321	Death of Dante Alighieri (born 1265)
1338-1453	Hundred Years' War
1347-1349	Black Death in Europe
1374	Death of Petrarch (born 1304)
1375	Death of Boccaccio (born 1313)
1378-1415	Great Western Schism; rival popes in Avignon and Rome
1400	Death of Chaucer (born 1340)
1414-1417	Council of Constance; restoration of papacy to Rome
1415	Battle of Agincourt
1434	Cosimo de Medici gains control of Florence
1455-1485	Wars of the Roses in England
1453	Capture of Constantinople by Ottoman Turks; final destruction of Byzantine empire
1456	Bible printed by Gutenberg
1461-1485	House of York in England
1485	Battle of Bosworth; beginning of Tudor dynasty in England
1492	Fall of Granada, last Moorish stronghold in Spain; discovery of America by Columbus
1497	Vasco de Gama reaches India
1509-1547	Reign of Henry VIII, king of England
1517	Martin Luther's 95 Theses
1519	Death of Leonardo da Vinci (born 1452)
1520	Death of Raphael (born 1483)
1527	Death of Machiavelli (born 1469)
1527	Sack of Rome by Charles V's army
1535	Death of Thomas More (born 1478)
1536	Death of Erasmus of Rotterdam (born 1466)
1545-1563	Council of Trent
1546	Death of Luther (born 1483)
1562-1598	Religious wars in France
1564	Death of Michelangelo (born 1475)
1576	Death of Titian (born 1477)
1616	Death of Shakespeare (born 1564)

Lecture One: The Barbarians and the Medieval World

The history of the Middle Ages is in many respects the history of Christianity. This history encompasses both the expansion of the Christian Church throughout most of Europe and its challenge to define orthodox belief, establish its authority *vis-a-vis* the civil power, and relate to other faiths with a similar claim to absolute truth.

Although Christianity attains the status of *religio licita* under Constantine in the early fourth century, it continues struggling to distinguish orthodox belief from heresy (e.g., Arianism). A distinctive style of Christian living--monasticism-- emerges in the late third century. In subsequent decades the Church fills the leadership vacuum left by the fall of the Roman Empire, adapting the Empire's administrative structures to new uses and providing continuity with the past as new barbarian imperia take power.

The medieval period is a time both of faith and of reason in the service of faith. St. Anselm offers an ontological argument for the existence of God, and St. Augustine seeks to answer the problem of evil (how can an all-good God allow wickedness?) by examining man's capacity for free choice. In his *Consolation of Philosophy*, Boethius urges men to raise their sights from their present troubles to the mercy of God. Saint Benedict provides a practical guide to the life of perfection, and Pope Gregory the Great strengthens the Church internally.

The visual arts of the early Middle Ages reflect the adaptation of earlier Greek and Jewish styles, as shown in the basilical elements of Santa Maria Maggiore, the sculptural image of the Good Shepherd, and the funerary art of Fayum.

Readings:

Bark (entire)
Wallace-Hadrill, ch. I-III

I. **Introduction: What are the Middle Ages?**
    A. Problem of periodization: when does the medieval period begin and end?
    B. Medieval history is shaped by the triumphs and traumas of Christianity
        1. What defines Christianity, and what constitutes heresy?
        2. Who has ultimate authority, pope or king?
        3. How should Christianity relate to alternative faiths, especially Judaism and Islam?

II. **Problems and solutions at the dawn of the Middle Ages**
    A. The rise of Christianity: what constitutes proper belief, and what is the proper relationship between religious and civil authority?
        1. Resolution of the legal status of Christianity
            a. Diocletian persecutes Christianity in the late 3rd century, viewing it as *superstitio* (i.e., subversive)
            b. Constantine declares Christianity *religio licita* in 313, viewing it as a means of preserving his Empire's unity
        2. What constitutes proper Christian belief?
            a. The Arian challenge to trinitarianism
            b. Council of Nicaea (323) condemns Arianism
        3. Christian practice
            a. Development of monasticism in late 3rd century: communal (e.g., Anthony Abbott) and individuated (e.g., Simon Stylobitis) monasticism
        4. Church fills civil leadership vacuum in late 4th-5th centuries
            a. Church preserves and adapts political and administrative structures of the Empire and the pagan literary tradition
            b. An unresolved problem: does the religious or civil ruler have ultimate authority?
    B. Barbarian invasions and fall of Roman Empire in the early 5th century
        1. Sack of Rome in 410
        2. Emperor Theodosius II erects fortifications around Constantinople
        3. Western Empire "falls" shortly thereafter, although Church administration, road network, and Latin language persist; successive barbarian rulers view themselves as successors of the Roman emperor
    C. Economic and social development
        1. The feudal system of land tenure evolves from *latifundia*
        2. Hierarchical pattern of social relationships: lords and vassals

II. **The Middle Ages as a time of faith and questioning**
    A. St. Anselm's ontological argument for the existence of God
    B. St. Augustine's *Enchiridion* and *City of God*
        1. Transformation of *eros* into *caritas* through awareness of God's love
        2. St. Augustine's solution to the problem of evil
    C. Boethius, *On the Consolation of Philosophy* (524): Christian practice as a way to elevate oneself above present misery
    D. Rule of St. Benedict (529) provides a structure for monastic life and practical injunctions for holiness
    E. Contributions of Pope Gregory the Great to the development of Christianity, the welfare of the poor, and the defense of Rome

III. Early medieval visual art: appropriation and transformation of earlier styles
  A. Church of Santa Maria Maggiore articulates the basilical style
  B. Image of the Good Shepherd evokes the ancient Greek image of the calf-bearer, the Israelite image of David, and the image of Orpheus
  C. Shroud and coffin paintings from Fayum (2nd and 3rd centuries) reflect the Hellenistic tradition of individualized portraiture

Short Essay

1. When do the Middle Ages begin and when do they end?
2. What is the "problem of evil"? How does Saint Augustine resolve this problem in the *Enchiridion*?
3. According to St. Augustine, what is the source of the notion and practice of *caritas*?
4. Why is Pope Gregory I known as "the Great"?

Lecture Two: The Struggle to Define Christendom

During the early Middle Ages the Christian Church struggled to define both its own orthodox belief and its relations with other claimants to absolute truth, first Judaism and then Islam. As Islam expanded rapidly through the known world in the 7th and 8th centuries, it came into repeated contact with Christianity, in ways both positive and negative. The cosmologist Isidore of Seville sought to understand the structure of the universe and man's place in it, while under the Frankish emperor Charlemagne Europe achieved social peace, political order, and a cultural efflorescence known as the "Carolingian Renaissance."

Many of Charlemagne's achievements, however, did not long outlive the emperor, and certain vital questions--such as the relationship between imperial and papal authority--remained unanswered.

Readings:

Power, ch. I
Wallace-Hadrill, ch. IV-VI

I. The triumph and traumas of faith
  A. True versus false belief
    1. By the late 4th century Christianity is the sole *religio licita*
    2. Wrong belief--heresy--is regarded as *superstitio* and takes on subversive connotations
  B. Sibling rivalry between Christianity and Judaism
    1. By the late 4th century Christianity wins the struggle with Judaism for *religio licita* status
    2. Judaism's proximity and similarity to Christianity evokes hostility and a desire to convert the Jews to true belief, by force if necessary
  C. Continuing division and conflict within Christianity
    1. Christological heresies such as Arianism, condemned at the Council of Nicaea
    2. Challenges to the primacy of papal authority: who has the authority to act as God's vicar?
  D. The rise of Islam in the 7th century--a new claimant to absolute truth
    1. The visions of the prophet Mohammed
    2. Islam as a political as well as religious movement
    3. Contact and conflict between Islam and Christianity beginning in the early 8th century: the two faiths meet in Spain, Sicily, and the Holy Land

II. **The struggle to understand the world**
   A. The *Geography* of Isidore of Seville
      1. Isidore posits a geocentric universe in which the heavens (*coelum*) surround the earth
      2. Examination of the structure of the universe and its most fundamental elements--fire and water

III. **The struggle to shape the world**
   A. Succession of barbarian dynasties: Goths, Vandals, Lombards, and Merovingian Franks
   B. Struggle between the Merovingian and Carolingian Franks
      1. Triumph of the Carolingians in the middle 8th century, with the pope's support
   C. The reign of Charlemagne
      1. The military disaster at Roncevaux (778)
      2. The Great Middle Period (778-791): Charlemagne improves as a military leader
      3. Charlemagne evolves a sense of Christian mission; issues the *Admonitio Generalis* (789) urging peace among all Christians
      4. "The Carolingian Renaissance": Charlemagne promotes education; social peace in a unified empire; Alcuin produces magnificent illuminated Bibles
      5. Charlemagne formulates oaths of fealty and vassalage, promotes the notion of homage
      6. Charlemagne's crowning by Pope Leo III (800) fails to resolve the question of whether the religious or secular authority is preeminent
   D. The *Annals of Xanten* and the miserable ninth century: Muslim invasions from the south, Norse assaults from the north; plague and famine
   E. Division and collapse after Charlemagne
      1. Division of the Carolingian empire into three separate kingdoms following Charlemagne's death
      2. The Saxons, a.k.a. the Ottonians, emerge as dominant in the West, and the bulwark against incursions by new *barbari* such as the Magyars
   F. Late 11th century: struggle for supremacy between the Ottonian *imperium* and the papacy
      1. The initially cordial relationship between Emperor Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII rapidly degenerates as each accuses the other of abuses of power
      2. In response to the pope's threat of excommunication, Henry convenes his bishops in the Council of Worms (1077), at which they renounce submission to the pope's authority

Short Essay

1. Describe the interaction between Christianity and Islam during the 7th and 8th centuries. How did the Christian Church respond to this new claimant to absolute truth?
2. What is meant by the "Carolingian Renaissance"? What political and social conditions made this Renaissance possible?
3. Did the crowning of Charlemagne by the pope in 800 resolve the question of papal versus imperial primacy? Why or why not?

Lecture Three: Medieval Literature and Poetic Tradition

We begin this lecture by recounting the denouement of the papal-imperial struggle for primacy at Canossa, where the papacy wins a signal triumph. We then move to the origins of French literature in the *Chanson de Roland*, a poem of knightly heroism, betrayal, revenge, and conquest that evokes and foreshadows the aggressive Christian-Muslim competition of the high Middle Ages. The epic poem *Beowulf*--which illustrates the struggle of good against evil and the hero's pursuit of immortal glory or *loff*--marks the origins of English literature. As recounted by the chronicler Geoffrey of Monmouth, the story of King Arthur mixes history with mythic elements that bear a distinctly Christian cast .

Readings:

Song of Roland
Beowulf

I. **The crisis of 1077 (cont.)**
   A. Pope Gregory VII claims the power to excommunicate Henry IV and his bishops and to command Henry's subjects to refuse obedience to him. How will Henry respond to his excommunication?
   B. Key issue: who has ultimate power? Both emperor and pope claim supremacy, based on divine grant of authority.
   C. An intimidated Henry capitulates to Gregory at Canossa, performing penance in order to be absolved from excommunication. The emperor acknowledges the pope's superior power.

II. **The *Chanson de Roland* and the beginnings of French literature.**
   A. Origins of the poem in the late 8th and early 9th century; troubador transmission until the late 11th century, when it is committed to text.
   B. *Chanson* is based on Charlemagne's military reverse at Roncevaux and reflects a key concern of the medieval period: the struggle between Christianity and Islam.
   C. The story of Roland
      1. Charlemagne assigns his nephew Roland to guard his army's rear.
      2. Roland's father-in-law Ganelon and the Muslim king Marcile plot Roland's destruction.
      3. The Muslims ambush Roland's forces at Roncevaux; Roland holds off four assaults, then on the fifth he sounds the *oliphant* to summon help from Charlemagne at the head of the column. Ganelon deceives Charlemagne into thinking that Roland does not need his help.
      4. Charlemagne mourns the death of Roland, wreaks vengeance on Ganelon, conquers far and wide for Christendom.
   D. *Chanson* foreshadows the Christian *reconquista* of Spain and the crusades in the Holy Land.
      1. Irony: Charlemagne becomes a symbol of Christian militancy against Islam, though he respected Islam and made peace with the preeminent Moslem ruler, Haroun al-Rashid (807).
      2. Christian antipathy to Islam peaks in the 11th century as the *Chanson* takes its definitive form.

III. ***Beowulf* and the beginnings of English literature**
   A. Heroic epic tale of good against evil; origins in 8th century; committed to text (in Anglo-Saxon language) in 11th century.
   B. The story of Beowulf
      1. The monster Grendel attacks the mead-hall, killing 30 Danes; ravages the country for the next twelve years.
      2. Beowulf vanquishes first Grendel and then Grendel's mother in a fierce underwater battle.
      3. Later as king, Beowulf sets out to slay the dragon that has ravaged his kingdom. He and his loyal retainer Wiglaf slay the dragon, but Beowulf is mortally wounded and dies.
   C. Themes in *Beowulf*: human and inhuman evil; Beowulf as a hero both godlike and mortal, who achieves immortal glory (*loff*) despite the apparent triumph of chaos and unreason.

IV. **Geoffrey of Monmouth's history of the English monarchy--11th century**
   A. Foundation of England by the Trojans in 12th century B.C.: Brutus (great-grandson of Aeneas) leads his followers to Albion, lends his name to *Britain*.
   B. Meeting of history and myth in the tale of King Arthur
      1. Arthur as an image of Jesus: his birth is heralded by a star; he is borne to Avalon after his mortal wounding, from whence he shall return.

Short Essay

1. Discuss the use of Christian imagery and references in the tales of Beowulf and King Arthur. To what extent are these stories "Christian"?
2. What were the main points of contention at Canossa? Why did the pope win?
3. How does the *Chanson de Roland* prefigure the later Christian-Muslim conflict of the high Middle Ages? How realistic is the poem's portrayal of Charlemagne as a champion of Christianity?

Lecture Four: The Fringes of Western Europe

Thus far we have examined intellectual, political, and artistic developments that arose in the heart of Western Europe to shape the medieval period. Some of the West's most significant cultural influences emerged, however, from the Scandinavian fringes of Europe. Beginning in the 9th century, Norse language, architectural style, legal concepts, and literature spread throughout much of Europe, mixing with existing Romanesque elements--and in England with Anglo-Saxon elements--to form a distinctive amalgam.

This admixture of cultural forms is especially evident in Norse literature--the Eddas, Sagas, and Skaldic poetry. This literature reflects its creators' search for an ordered, stable existence within a world of chaos and flux. The Welsh *Mabinogion*--a series of dreamlike tales in which time and space follow their own order and uncertainty and abnormality reign--share the Norse concern for observing the rules of conduct that bring order to uncertain surroundings.

Readings:

Mabinogion

I. **The Normans in the 9th and 10th centuries**
   A. Norman penetration of Europe
      1. Treaty of Saint-Claire-sur-Eppes (911): the Norseman Rollo, nominal vassal of Charles III (the Simple), is given command of Normandy; the Norse champion Christianity and adopt feudalism.
      2. Norse expansion into southern Italy (1042-1068)
      3. Establishment in late 11th century of a Norse kingdom in Sicily, lasting until 1266
      4. Battle of Hastings (1066): Norse expansion into England
   B. Norman architectural style
      1. Palisaded and mound-enclosed castles
      2. Massive, rounded, monumental Romanesque style
   C. Norman language: the Romance elements in Norman language in turn combine with Anglo-Saxon to produce early English
   D. Norman legal system
      1. Normans inherit idea of homage from Charlemagne, carry it to England, and articulate it as a legal principle.
      2. Oath of fealty (from the Latin *fidelitas*), implies a more equal status than does homage.

II. **Norse literature**
   A. Written in "Old Norse," an isolated Scandic dialect close to contemporary Icelandic.
   B. The Eddas

   1. The Younger or Prose Edda
      a. Also known as "Snorri's Edda" after its author Snorri Sturlison (1178-1241), chronicler of the Norse kings.
      b. Prose Edda--mythology, poetic speech, enumeration of meter
      c. Dialogue between the Swedish king Gulthe and the gods at Asgaard; the gods' answers provide the basis for Norse mythology.
   2. The Older or Poetic Edda
      a. mythological poems--e.g., Sibyl's prophecy sets forth the Norse version of creation of the universe.
      b. didactic poems--e.g., story of how Odin acquired his wisdom.
      c. heroic poems--e.g., the life, accomplishments, and fate of Sigurd (Seigfried).
   C. The Sagas
   1. Subjects are common folk, blood feuds (e.g., the saga of Njal)
   2. Many are associated with Iceland
   D. Skaldic poetry (early 9th-14th centuries)
      1. Composed by *skalds*: itinerant court poets
      2. Common features: stanzas marked by lines the initial sounds of which rhyme; alliteration and assonance.
      3. Dominant meter: *drottkvatt* or "court measure"--series of 6 syllables per half-line; three stresses per line.
      4. *Kennings*: descriptive appellations using nouns and adjectives.
         a. Egil Skallgrimsson's poem *Sonatorrek* uses *kennings* in recounting a father's lament over the loss of his sons; the father outliving his sons represents a disruption of the natural order, which evokes *pathos*.
      5. Like *Beowulf,* Skaldic poetry emphasizes preservation of order amidst chaos and unpredictability; heroism consists in working out one's existence and achieving *loff* amidst chaos and mortality.

III. **Welsh literature: the *Mabinogion* (1325)**
   A. Series of 11 Welsh tales; sources include mythology and history of Celtic Britain.
   B. Focus on religion and dreamlike conditions--time out of time and space out of space.
   C. Tale of Pwyll, lord of Duved--a classic tale of heroic adventure. A dreamlike story in which time and space follow their own order.
      1. Pwyll enters the wilderness to hunt and is separated from his companions--he enters an unknown realm where extraordinary things can happen.
      2. Pwyll violates the rules of courtesy by setting his hounds on a stag flushed by Arwan; he makes amends by performing a favor for Arwan.

3. Pwyll and Arwan exchange features and realms; Pwyll must follow precise rules in vanquishing Arwan's enemy Habgan; he resists the temptations of Arwan's wife.
4. Pwyll pursues but cannot overtake the woman of his dreams.
D. Tale of Owen, countess of the fountain
  1. Owen is associated with the court of King Arthur--the circle of Arthurian literature includes the *Mabinogion.*

Short Essay

1. Describe the Norman contributions to Western European architecture, language, and legal concepts. In what ways did Norse influences combine with existing concepts to create something new?
2. What themes do Skaldic poetry and Welsh literature share with *Beowulf* and the *Chanson de Roland*? Cite specific examples from Norse and Welsh literature in your answer.

Lecture Five: Church and State

The high Middle Ages were a time of ferment in secular and religious institutions and in man's understanding of the world around him. In England, the nobility gradually wrested powers from the king, laying the foundations of constitutional rule. Elsewhere in Europe new forms of monastic life arose that both reaffirmed the Rule of Saint Benedict and redefined the political and economic role of monastic institutions.

Christian pilgrims travelled to renowned shrines in search of spiritual transformation, leaving a visible record of their journeys in the ornate facades of pilgrimage churches. Intrepid explorers such as Benjamin of Tudela and Marco Polo expanded the frontiers of the known world and left behind a rich travel literature.

Readings:

Southern, ch. I-III

I. **Unsolved problems in 11th and 12th centuries**
  A. Struggle for power between kings and noblemen
    1. Henry I of England, c. 1100--rules by divine right and the barons' consent; he and nobles jointly bring order to the realm.
    2. Louis VI of France--Abbott Suger writes that king adjudicates disputes among nobles, he and all others occupy their respective places in a social hierarchy, jointly promoting the good of all.
    3. 13th century--English king becomes *primus inter pares*, following the imperial Roman pattern.
      a. Runnymede (1215)--English nobles compel King John to accept the *Magna Carta* ceding royal powers to nobility.
      b. Late 13th century--establishment of English jury system, to which even the king is subject.
      c. 1295--Edward I convenes a parliament to grant funds for war with France.
    4. Late 12th century: struggle between royal and religious authority--Henry II and Thomas a Beckett.
  B. Monastic development after St. Benedict
    1. Intrusion of worldliness--primogeniture pushes those lacking a true vocation into the monastic life.
    2. Cluniac Reformation (910)--William of Aquitaine founds monastery at Cluny; reintroduction of the Rule of St. Benedict to restore monastic discipline; cooperative relationship with Rome.
    3. Franciscan reformation (1223)--departure from territorial monasticism; attempt to restore primitive Christianity; emphasis on poverty and simplicity; rejection of worldly power.

C. Repression of heresy
   1. Franciscans and Dominicans establish the Inquisition
D. Question of the Jews
   1. The Jews are neither inside nor outside--a problem intermediate between those of heresy and of the infidel .
   2. Joinville's account of the failed disputation at Cluny: Jews and Christians lack common ground for discussion.
   3. The Jews invariably lose--must recant or face expulsion--whether they win or lose the argument.

II. Pilgrimages--literal journeys of faith

A. Shrine of Thomas a Beckett at Canterbury cathedral--a place that transforms the pilgrim.
B. Santiago de Compostela
   1. Spain's oldest Romanesque cathedral--at Jaca, along the pilgrim's route to Santiago.
   2. Baroque cathedral facades as functions of continued interest in the pilgrimage.
C. Pilgrimage churches in Rome--e.g., Santa Maria Maggiore, St. Peter's
D. Interweave among Muslim, Jewish, and Christian culture
   1. Spanish architectural and artistic forms along the pilgrim's route.
   2. The twisted columns of the *baldachin* of St. Peter's in Rome, an allusion to the columns of old St. Peter's, in turn reminiscent of those found by St. Helen, the mother of Constantine, in the remains of the temple of Jerusalem.
E. Pilgrimage travel literature: *The Pilgrim's Guide* for how to survive the journey to Santiago.

III. Journeys to the East

A. The *Annales Frankorum* of Eginhard of Franconia, biographer of Charlemagne.
   1. Charlemagne's embassy to the Persian caliph Haroun al-Rashid (787): Isaac the Jew returns, bearing presents from the caliph (801).
B. Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela records his travels from Spain to the east (late 12th century).
   1. Provides information about the Jewish community in Baghdad
C. Marco Polo--the greatest medieval traveler.

Short Essay

1. How and to what extent were the powers and authority of the English king restricted during the 12th and 13th centuries? What accounts for these restrictions?
2. In what ways did Franciscanism represent a departure from traditional monasticism as it had developed between the 6th and 11th centuries?

Lecture Six: Symbols of Faith

We pick up the trail of Marco Polo as he travels first to Beijing, where he serves the Great Khan for seventeen years, and then back to Italy, where the account of his travels inspires other explorers--including Christopher Columbus--to expand further the frontiers of geographic knowledge.

We turn next to medieval art in its three main religious variants--Christian, Jewish, and Muslim. Each tradition expresses in its own way the theme of intermediation between heaven and earth. The Romanesque cathedral offers a visual symbol of this divine-human contact, its nave pointing eastward toward Jerusalem and its vertical series of arches drawing the eye heavenward. The Celtic cross further symbolizes the meeting of opposites in its combined horizontal and vertical elements, linked by the circle of perfection representing the *orbis mundi.*

This same theme of intermediation between heaven and earth appears in Jewish art--for instance, in the six-pointed star of the Capernaum synagogue--and in Muslim art and architecture, which symbolizes the meeting of opposites in its combination of rectilinear with curvilinear lines and of monumental forms with minute detail.

Readings:

Power, ch. II

I. **Travels of Marco Polo (cont.)**
   A. Service in the court of Kubilai Khan, 1275-1292
      1. Battle between the Khan and his uncle, the Christian Nayan
   B. Embassy to Beijing (1292) to find a new bride for the Khan; return to Venice in 1295; later imprisonment in Genoa.
   C. Marco Polo's importance: his written travel account expands the known world

II. **Christian Art**
   A. Architecture: development of the Romanesque style, 11th and 12th centuries.
      1. St. Paul Outside the Walls--an elongated arch intermediates between nave and apse
      2. Third abbey church at Cluny--a series of arches leads the eye heavenward
      3. St. Alban's cathedral--ascending series of arches, threefold arched entry evokes trinitarian and Jewish symbolism
      4. Durham cathedral--Norman Romanesque style with military connotations

   B. Sculpture, relief, illumination
      1. Celtic cross (8th century) symbolizes the meeting of heaven and earth--four points joined by a circle.
      2. Frontispage from book of kells (8th century)--images of saintly intermediation
      3. Otto II receiving the homage of the nations--the king is portrayed as quasi-divine; he intermediates between heaven and earth.
      4. Church doors of Bernard of Hildesheim (late 10th-early 11th centuries)--relief detail of expulsion from Garden.
      5. Moissac church--image of Christ in glory, ringed by halo (from the Greek *helios*).
      6. Capital relief of Modena cathedral--figures with enlarged heads and eyes, reflective of Romanesque style.

III. **Jewish Art**
   A. Problem of definition--what does it represent?
   B. Style, subject, and symbol
      1. Torah niche of Dura Europus synagogue (middle 3rd century); image of menorah.
      2. Lintel relief of Capernaum synagogue--six-pointed star.

IV. **Islamic Art**
   A. Problem of visual art--what is one allowed to depict?
   B. Symbolic value of color and shape
   C. Contrast between monumental and minute, straight and curved, finite and infinite
      1. Dome of the Rock (691)
      2. Hagia Sophia (middle 6th century)
      3. Isfahan Friday mosque--*mihrab* wall niche; exterior portal details.
      4. Persian tile detail--eight-pointed star

V. **The beginnings of music**
   A. Greek and Roman antecedents
   B. Christian era--development of vocal music; liturgical music; system of staff, pitch, rhythm, lines.

Short Essay

1. Describe the symbolic functions of the arch in medieval Christian architecture.
2. What is the "problem of definition" in Jewish art? Why is it harder to define Jewish art than to define Christian art?

Lecture Seven: Questions for Faith and Understanding

The great medieval theologians saw no conflict between faith and reason, but neither did they equalize these two ways of knowing. Rather, they put logic at the service of belief, seeking rational understanding of the doctrines of faith. Their efforts reflect the dual nature of the Middle Ages as a time of both faith and questioning.

St. Anselm of Canterbury drew upon ancient Greek styles of argumentation in explaining the existence of God and the need for humanity's redemption by Jesus Christ, who was at once fully human and fully divine. Likewise, Peter Abelard used logic to penetrate the mystery of the divine unity within the Trinity. Finally, St. Thomas Aquinas sought in his massive *Summa Theologiae* to explain how humans can attain knowledge of God as Pure Being.

Readings:

Southern, ch. IV

I. **The beginnings of music (cont.)**
    A. Technical development
        1. The musical staff
        2. Instructions for *organum*--combining several voices for harmony
        3. *Micrologos* of Guido de Arezzo--development of the scale and a syllabic language for distinguishing pitches (solinization).
        4. *Res Cantus Mensurabilis* of Francis of Cologne--shows how instruments were tuned and music read in 13th century.

II. **Applying reason to faith: St. Anselm of Canterbury**
    A. Ontological argument for the existence of God
        1. Use of syllogistic argumentation--Aristotelian.
        2. The argument is logical if you believe the premises.
    B. *Cur Deus Homo*
        1. Why was the God-man necessary to redeem humanity?
        2. Anselm's answer stresses balance and symmetry: it is fitting that a man redeem those who suffer the consequences of another man's sin.
        3. Anselm's argument shows the appropriation and transformation of Greek and Hebrew ideas and styles of argumentation.

III. **The turbulent career of Peter Abelard**
    A. Abelard's *Historia Calamitatum*
        1. Trial for heresy at the Council of Soissons (1121)--Abelard is accused of denying the unity of the three divine Persons.

        2. Abelard uses reason to understand the relationship among the divine Persons--how can God beget Himself?

IV. **Peter (the Venerable) of Monboissier, ninth abbott of Cluny (1122)**
    A. His correspondence reflects the spiritual concerns of his era--the need to repress heresy and promote asceticism among new monastic orders.
    B. Political struggle--Peter's armed conflict with Pontius, his predecessor as abbott, in 1125.
    C. Decline of Cluny following Peter's death in 1156.

V. **St. Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274)**
    A. *Summa Theologiae*--encompasses the sum total of medieval knowledge
        1. How humans know--human intellect as a power of the soul
        2. The act of being--God as Pure Being
        3. Argument from motion for God's existence
        4. Child-parent relationships--unjust to baptize Jewish children against their parents' wishes
        5. Policy toward heretics--combination of justice and mercy

Short Essay

1. Why does St. Anselm believe that a God-man was needed to redeem fallen humanity? What themes and conceptions from ancient Greece and the Hebrew bible do we find in Anselm's argument?
2. How does St. Anselm's ontological argument for God's existence differ from St. Thomas's argument from motion?
3. What does St. Thomas Aquinas mean when he refers to God as Pure Being?

Lecture Eight: Ideas and Images

The Middle Ages were a time both of intense faith and of intense pursuit of knowledge of the universe and man's place in it. The medieval view of the world was multitiered and suffused by faith--everything took its assigned place within the hierarchy of being, with God ruling over all.

This hierarchical conception of order was reproduced in miniature in the organization of the feudal manor--where lord, villein, cotter, and every other order of man knew his place--as well as in nascent commercial and financial institutions and the Gothic cathedral, which in its majestic vertical sweep directed the worshiper's thoughts and senses heavenward.

We also see this concern for order in the writings of Otto, bishop of Freising, who sought to orient man's vision away from the temporal city and toward the heavenly city, as well as in John of Salisbury's instructions for the proper exercise of kingship and in the geographic *tour de horizon* of Ranulf Higden.

Readings:

Katzenellenbogen (entire)
Male (*passim*)

I. **Albigensianism**
   A. Albigensians--a.k.a. the Cathari--seek purification of faith and conduct.
   B. *Inquisitor's Guide* (1323) of Bernard Gui
      1. The Albigensians are self-righteous in presuming their own purity; they elevate themselves to the level of the Apostles.
      2. They bring the Roman clergy into disrepute by accusing it of impurity.
      3. In attacking materiality as impure, the Albigensians undermine the Sacraments--especially Eucharist, baptism, confession.
      4. They attack veneration of images--e.g., the Cross--as idolatry.

II. **What do we think about this world and the Other?**
   A. The *Golden Legends* of Jacobo da Voragine--a compendium of lives of the saints.
   B. Caesarius's *Dialogus Miraculum*--a guide for choosing one's patron saint.
      1. *Dialogus* presents a contractual relationship between the Christian and his patron saint.
   C. Inventory of relics from a French church (1346)--relics provide direct evidence of connection between heaven and earth at a particular place.

III. **What do we think about our world?**
   A. The *Two Cities*--chronicle of Otto, bishop of Freising (12th century)
      1. First philosophical treatment of history.
      2. The city of time (Babylon) and the city of eternity (Jerusalem)--contrast between history as lived and as desired.
      3. Otto uses the language of physical geography to symbolize spiritual geography.
   B. The *Policraticus* of John of Salisbury
      1. A guide to proper conduct by the statesman.
      2. Difference between prince and tyrant--prince rules in interest of his subjects.
      3. Prince rules by divine right but is subject to the Church.

IV. **What do we know about the world?**
   A. The *Polychronicon* of Ranulf Higden (14th century)
      1. Effort to quantify the world's physical features
      2. Medieval geographical knowledge includes both physical and spiritual features--e.g., heaven, hell, Garden of Eden.
   B. The *Travels* of Sir John Mandeville
      1. Corroborates Marco Polo's account of his travels eastward.

V. **How do we buy and sell in the world?**
   A. Development of counting system
      1. The *Liber Abaci* of Fibonacci (1202)
   B. Description of a manor (1279)
      1. Manor as a territorial and productive unit.
      2. Manor as a legal entity--it is held directly from king.
      3. Hierarchy of ascribed statuses--no uncertainty about one's role in life.
   C. Evolution of the business unit--development of value system for commodities.
      1. Loan document (1192)
      2. Letter of exchange at Genoa (1202)
      3. Partnership document (1191)
      4. Terms for capital investment in Barcelona bank (1460)
   D. Guild organization
      1. Craft guild of Florence (1316)
      2. Guilds are Christian associations--Jews etc. excluded

VI. Gothic Art and Architecture

A. *Speculum Mundi*--Vincent of Beauvais writes of the search for order within the reality of chaos.

B. Gothic cathedrals as images of an ordered whole
   1. Canterbury Cathedral; crypt of the Black Prince--presence of the political within the spiritual.
   2. Cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris--rose window provides image of *orbis mundi*; flying buttresses connote lightness and allow stained glass; threefold entry.
   3. Chartres Cathedral--verticality rising to a series of pinnacled points.
   4. Amiens Cathedral--*ogive*-shaped points above entry; cathedral is a visual encyclopedia of detail, all organically interconnected.

Short Essay

1. Was Albigensianism a reformist or heretical movement within the Christian Church?
2. According to John of Salisbury, what are the main duties of a prince? Are there any limits to his authority? How does a prince differ from a tyrant?
3. Why does it make sense to speak of the Gothic cathedral as a visual encyclopedia and a *speculum mundi*?

Lecture Nine: Knights of Romance

In this lecture we consider the chivalric tradition in the many forms it took during the Middle Ages. At the dawn of the medieval period El Cid and King Arthur set the standard for the image of the chivalric hero as a champion of good against evil. The Arthurian knights Eric and Gawain exemplified additional qualities of the chivalric hero--adherence to honor and duty, pursuit of individual glory or *loff*, respect for the knightly code of courtesy, and awareness of one's human frailty.

The stories of Sir Lancelot and Peter Abelard present a rather different view of chivalry, in which self-restraint and devotion to duty loom less large and in which the protagonists' love for their ladies brings on dire consequences. The love story of Abelard and Heloise illustrates the conflict between body and soul--between material concerns of the present and spiritual concerns of the beyond--that becomes more prominent as we move toward the Renaissance.

Readings:

Southern, ch. V
Gilson (entire)

I. **Gothic art and architecture (cont.)**
   A. Interior of Amiens cathedral--ogive arches reinforce verticality.
   B. Interior of St. Denis cathedral--arithmetic ascent from pilaster capitals to ogive points to clerestory to ceiling.
   C. Siena cathedral--illustrates the more earthbound quality of Italian Gothic style.
      1. Stretches of dark marble inside and out reinforce horizontality--suggests the spiritual-material balance of Italian Christianity.
   D. Nicola Pisano's baptistry pulpit from Pisa--octagonal shape symbolizes the Resurrection.
   E. "Cimabue Crucifixion" (late 13th century)--attenuated corpus symbolizes the meeting of heaven and earth.

II. **The chivalric tradition in literature**
   A. El Cid--portrayed in legend as the spiritual champion of Christianity.
   B. King Arthur
      1. 6th century Celtic chieftain--becomes basis of a literary tradition.
      2. The Welshman Nennius elevates Arthur to quasi-divine status; he becomes the ultimate champion of good against evil--a Christ-like figure.
   C. Chretien de Troyes (1160s) provides earliest lengthy account of the Knights of the Round Table.

1. Chretien provides an idealized picture of the feudal nobility of his time--a *speculum mundi*.
2. Story of the knight Eric--exemplar of the chivalric code of courtesy
   a. While wandering in forest Eric meets a damsel in distress; he rescues her lover from discourteous giants; the rescued knight renders Eric homage.

D. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (14th century)--the ultimate chivalric romance.
   1. Gawain battles the Green Knight according to prescribed rules; he receives a summons to fight the Knight again at a designated place one year hence.
   2. Prior to the second battle, Gawain meets a knight while searching for the meeting place; he submits slightly to the knight's wife and accepts her garter as protection, doubting his own ability in battle; Green Knight nicks Gawain's neck to school him in humility; the garter serves to remind him of his imperfection.
   3. Themes: honorable conduct, attainment of *loff*, awareness of human imperfection.

E. Sir Lancelot
   1. In contrast to Gawain, he makes no pretense of resisting Arthur's queen, Guinevere

F. Parsival's quest for the Holy Grail.

III. Abelard and Heloise--a very different chivalric tale

A. Abelard meets Heloise and schemes to win her; he persuades her uncle Fulbert to commit her to Abelard's care.
B. Abelard's love for Heloise distracts him from philosophy--illustrates the struggle between love and duty.
C. Heloise becomes pregnant and bears the child Astrolabe; Abelard offers to marry Heloise secretly in order to protect his reputation and job; Fulbert agrees but Heloise rejects the arrangement, fearing Fulbert's treachery and damage to her own and Abelard's reputations.
D. Nonetheless, Abelard and Heloise are married; Fulbert and his men wreak vengeance on Abelard; he retires to the wilderness but continues to attract students and denounce his critics.

Short Essay

1. What are the main differences between the Gothic architectural style of northern Europe, and that of Italy as reflected in the Siena cathedral? What different sorts of symbolism do these two styles suggest?
2. What are the main thematic similarities and differences between the story of Sir Gawain and those of Beowulf and the *Mabinogion* that we have earlier examined?
3. In what respects does the story of Abelard and Heloise qualify as chivalric literature?

Lecture Ten: Morality, Entertainment, and Human Fellowship

We arrive, finally, at the 14th century--a time of devastating plague, organizational upheaval and spiritual ferment within the Church, and an early evolution of political units toward the modern nation-state. By this time medieval music has evolved from plainchant to polyphony and the harmonization of multiple voices, and a variety of new musical forms has emerged--lays and ballads, vivelays and rondos, penitential and dance music.

The stories of Boccaccio's *Decameron* and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* illuminate the mentality of a world in transition from intense faith to equally intense questioning. The combination of religious and secular themes in these tales bespeaks the intellectual ferment of the age and prefigures the secularism and skepticism of the coming Renaissance.

Readings:

Power, ch. IV
Tuchman, forward, chs. 2, 4, 5, 16; the rest *passim*.
Ziegler, chs. I-VI, XIII-XVII; the rest *passim*.

I. **The turbulent 14th century**
  A. The Black Plague (1348)
    1. Devastating impact on productivity of the Sienese school of visual art.
  B. The papal exile to Avignon
    1. St. Catherine of Siena induces the pope to return to Rome
  C. Mysticism--search for a direct connection with God through intense personal spirituality.
    1. Goal is ecstasy (*ex-stasis*--being outside oneself)
    2. Problem for the Church--personal focus of mysticism reduces the need for priestly intermediation
    3. Encroachment of the "age of reason"
  D. Political evolution, 14th and early 15th centuries
    1. "The Hundred Years' War" (1347-1453)--constant warfare
    2. Rise of nationalist entities

II. **The evolution of musical ideas**
  A. Secular music
    1. Bawdy theater music of late imperial period--use of cithara and complex trumpet calls
    2. Itinerant troubadors and balladeers in early medieval period
      a. Professional balladeers create *Chansons des Gestes*--4 note repetitions provide structure for narrative
      b. Amateur scholars--*golliards*--write down Latin poetry to be set to music.
      c. Technique: minstrel maintains the triad (three basic notes) while troubador embroiders it.
    3. Solo singing (lay and ballad) and choral music (vivelay and rondo)
      a. These forms link secular and religious music.
    4. Dancing songs--especially carols
  B. Church music
    1. Plainchant organized by Pope Gregory I in patterns and modes
      a. Hymns with soloist and chorus
      b. Development of sung Mass by 1000
      c. 1100--plainsong notation becomes familiar
      d. 1300--recognizable notes
      e. *Callistine Codex*, including *Pilgrim's Guide* that discusses pilgrimage music
  C. Development of polyphony in 10th and 11th centuries
    1. Multiple voices create *organization*--ordered harmonic relationship among parts.
    2. Evolution of four-part harmony by 1200--tenor holds the primary tone while soloists embroider it.
    3. Development of counterpoint--melodies running against each other.
  D. New texts and sequences for plainsong--basis for *motet* ("little word")
    1. Evolution in middle 13th century of three-point motet
  E. *Carmina Burana* or "plow songs" (13th century)
    1. Collection of love songs and religious poetry
    2. *Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi*: theme of insecurity and fate, which brings the mighty low--the world operates unpredictably according to its own rules.

III. **Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron***
  A. Life of Boccaccio (1313-1375)
  B. *Decameron* ("Ten Days")
    1. A "human comedy" (as vs. Dante's *Divine Comedy*); prelude to Renaissance secularism.
    2. Succession of 100 tales told over ten days by group of young patricians--tales condemn clerical abuses, exalt pleasures of the flesh, examine fortune and love.
    3. Panfilo's story of the dissolute Chiparello, who presents himself as pious and deceives the priest with a false deathbed confession; Chiparello is revered after death as a saint.
    4. Nefule's story of Yehanout's efforts to convince the Jew Abraham to convert to Christianity; Abraham makes pilgrimage to Rome,

where he concludes that the Church's survival in the midst of rampant corruption proves its divine foundations.

5. Tales are sarcastic toward faith but end with a twist that upholds faith.

IV. Chaucer

A. Chaucer is a court poet like the skalds, erudite (*doctus*) like Abelard, and mixes religious and secular themes like Boccaccio.

B. *Canterbury Tales* (1386)--30 individuals representing all medieval social types meet at Tabard Inn on their way to Canterbury; each tells two tales in a variety of styles and genres.

C. Tales depict the mentality of a world in transition from intense faith to intense doubt.
   1. Knight's Tale
   2. Miller's Tale
   3. Tale of the Wife of Bath
   4. Prioress's Tale

Short Essay

1. In what ways does musical development during the 12th and 13th centuries reflect the medieval concern for order within a world of uncertainty and chaos? How is this theme addressed in the *Carmina Burana*?

2. Is Boccaccio's *Decameron* an irreligious work of literature?

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