

History Department — Trent University

Hist 3551Y/4050Y: Medieval Warfare

2010–2011 FW — Oshawa

Contact Information

Instructor: Jonathan Robinson

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Lectures: 116

Seminars: Room 106/127

Course Description

This course examines medieval warfare from a variety of different perspectives. Warfare is a large subject, so we shall not be able to cover everything, although we shall look at many of the most important aspects. We shall take a topical rather than chronological approach, while remaining sensitive to changing tactics and technology over the (roughly) thousand year period under consideration. The fall term will be devoted mostly to thematic investigations of the arms and personnel of medieval warfare: e.g., mounted and infantry warfare, armour, projectile weapons, fortifications and sieges, and naval warfare. In the spring term, we shall take a more in-depth look at the Crusades and the Hundred Years War—the Vikings are discussed in the fall term—and other related topics, such as spying, the treatment of prisoners, urban “warfare,” war and the formation of international law, and, of course, the role of women in war.

Course Format Everything takes place on Thursday. The format of this course will be comprised of a two-hour lecture (11:10–13:00), followed by three one-hour tutorials (13:10–14:00; 14:10–15:00; 15:10–16:00); students will be assigned one of these tutorials. Please respect this assignment and come to the one you have been assigned.

Students will be required to complete two projects (normally an essay) each term in addition to their *regular attendance and participation*. Please note that fourth-year students have a few extra assignments to complete (see below).

Books & Readings

Required Books

A “Course Reader” (= [CR])

K. DeVries, *Medieval Military Technology* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1992)

M. Keen, ed., *Medieval Warfare: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

H. Nicholson, *Medieval Warfare: Theory and Practice of War in Europe, 300–1500* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004)

Recommended Books

M. R. B. Shaw, trans., *Joinville and Villehardouin: Chronicles of the Crusades* (London: Penguin Books, 1963)

D. L. Sayers, trans., *The Song of Roland* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1957)

Other Readings Other readings (= **[handout]**) belong to the public domain, and are usually available online, free of charge. We shall make use of them and be grateful they didn't add to the cost of all the other books. However, students are responsible for acquiring these texts themselves, reading them, and bringing them to class for discussion.

The PDF version of the calendar of readings has embedded links to these readings, but I shall also provide this information in class the week before we discuss them. If you experience any difficulty and expect help and sympathy, you should let me know well in advance of when we are to discuss these texts in class. (Last-minute emails will not help your cause much.)

Course Evaluation

Grading Scheme

HIST 3551Y			HIST 4050Y		
Assignment	Weight	Due Date	Assignment	Weight	Due Date
Participation	15 %	<i>Thursdays</i>	Participation	10 %	<i>Thursdays</i>
Fall Test	10 %	9 Dec 2010	Fall Test	10 %	9 Dec 2010
Fall Essay Proposal	5 %	21 Oct 2010	Fall Essay Proposal	5 %	21 Oct 2010
Fall Essay (10–12 pages)	20 %	25 Nov 2010	Fall Essay (15–20 pages)	20 %	25 Nov 2010
Spring Essay Proposal	5 %	3 Feb 2011	Spring Essay Proposal	5 %	3 Feb 2011
Spring Essay (10–12 pages)	20 %	10 Mar 2011	Spring Essay (15–20 pages)	20 %	10 Mar 2011
Final Exam	25 %	April 2011	Final Exam	20 %	April 2011
—	—	—	Article Reviews (4)	10 %	<i>2 per term</i>

Essays Each term you must write a short essay (using a reasonable font, line-spacing, and margins). This assignment must be typed, properly referenced, and follow an accepted style guide (historians tend to use the guidelines set out in the [Chicago Manual of Style](#)). Please note that clarity, thoughtfulness, and minimal abuse of the language are expected.

About a month before the essay is due, students must submit an essay proposal, which outlines the general topic under investigation and provides a preliminary thesis which you hope to examine and (dis-)prove. You must also provide a list of five sources (articles or books); at least one of these *must* be a “primary” source and serve as the focus of the essay. I typically allow a great degree of latitude with regard to the essay topic, but *each student must consult with me about the topic they would like to pursue before the proposal is due!*

Article Reviews

(For 4050Y students only.)

Fourth-year students are also required to submit four “article reviews” throughout the year, two per term. Each review should summarize and evaluate the designated article; they are due *before* the start of the class in which the reading is to be discussed.

Format: You should begin each entry with a short summary of the main arguments, and follow this with an evaluation of those arguments. You should provide your reasoned views on the significance, strengths and weaknesses of the ideas and arguments involved. Be concise. The journal entries need be no longer than one or two pages. These assignments must also demonstrate clarity, thoughtfulness, and a solid grasp of the English language.

Due Date: These are due in the fall term on *weeks 8 and 12*. However, since the mid-term will be written on week 12, I recommend that you try to hand it in earlier (they

may, of course, be handed in at any time).

Other Policies

Attendance & participation: Your presence in both the lecture and a tutorial section is expected. Students are expected to have done all the readings for each class, though it is understandable if—once or twice—the student has made a *valiant* effort to do so, but, heroically, has fallen a little bit short. Even more importantly: your participation in the tutorials (especially) and lectures is eagerly desired and expected . . . there is a grade for it, after all. If you are uncomfortable speaking in front of the class, there are other equally valid ways to participate, such as by email or by making use of office hours.

Late submission of work: In the interests of equity, penalties (**2 % per day**) will be assessed for late submission of the essay. For the reviews, the penalty will be **10 %** per day.

Please note that electronic submission of all assignments is encouraged, but not necessary. In this case, the official submission time of an assignment is based on when it appears in my inbox. Late paper submissions must be stamped or validated by someone with the authority to do so.

University and Departmental Policies

Academic Integrity Academic dishonesty, which includes plagiarism and cheating, is an extremely serious academic offence and carries penalties varying from a *o grade* on an assignment to expulsion from the University. Definitions, penalties, and procedures for dealing with plagiarism and cheating are set out in Trent University’s Academic Integrity Policy. You have a responsibility to educate yourself—unfamiliarity with the policy is not an excuse. You are strongly encouraged to visit Trent’s Academic Integrity website to learn more—www.trentu.ca/academicintegrity

Access to Instruction It is Trent University’s intent to create an inclusive learning environment. If a student has a disability and/or health consideration and feels that he/she may need accommodations to succeed in this course, the student should contact the Disability Services Office (BL Suite 109, 748–1281, disabilityservices@trentu.ca) as soon as possible. Complete text can be found under Access to Instruction in the Academic Calendar.

University Grading Scheme

A+	90–100 %	B+	77–79 %	C+	67–69 %	D+	57–59 %	F	0–49 %
A	85–89 %	B	73–76 %	C	63–66 %	D	53–56 %		
A-	80–84 %	B-	70–72 %	C-	60–62 %	D-	50–52 %		

Other Useful Websites

- University Calendar: <http://www.trentu.ca/calendar/>
- Department of History: <http://www.trentu.ca/history/>
- “Trent in Oshawa”: <http://www.trentu.ca/oshawa/>
- *De re militari*: The Society for Medieval Military History: www.deremilitari.org/
- Internet Medieval Sourcebook, ed. by Paul Halsall: www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.html
- Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East: www.sscl.org/
- Medievalists.net: www.medievalists.net/