

History 32000-001
The World of Charlemagne
2010, fall semester

INSTRUCTOR

John Contreni
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Hours: TTh 3:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.
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+Feel free to consult with the instructor at any point during your progress through the course. The time to seek help is when you begin to experience a problem, not at the end of the semester.

GOALS

In his own day Charles, king and later emperor of the Franks, was called "the Great". He was also known to his contemporaries as *Europae Pater*, "the Father of Europe". Today, the city of Aachen in Germany awards a "Charlemagne Prize" to the person who best advances the cause of European unity. A conference room in the buildings of the European Union in Strasbourg, France, is called "The Charlemagne Room". Who was this man whose long shadow stretches even to the beginning of the 21st century? More importantly, what did he do 1200 years ago that still commands our attention?

The "World of Charlemagne" offers us an important case study of historical change. For the first time since the break-up of the Roman Empire in the West during the fourth and fifth centuries, people began to think about what European civilization and society should be like. In the hands of Charlemagne and his advisors and successors, Europeans began to take action to implement their ideas. One of the results of their thinking and their efforts was the creation of the Carolingian Empire. It was Charlemagne's conquest and domination of most of western Europe during his long reign (768-814) that have earned him a pre-eminent place in historical annals.

Yet, there is much more to the world of Charlemagne than a tale of conquest and empire. What resources did Charlemagne draw on when he and his advisors fashioned their world? How successful were they? How did they respond to challenges, disappointments, and failures? How did their effort affect the lives of others--non-Franks as well as Frankish men, women, and children? What impact did Charlemagne's career have on politics, religion, the economy, intellectual and cultural life. We will also be interested to find out how Charlemagne's world endured after his death and what impact it might have had on European civilization in the short term and generally.

In addition to focusing on Charlemagne and his world, our semester's work will also attempt to analyze how civilizations try to fashion themselves. It will be attentive to the interplay between individuals and groups, between ideals and realities, between court and local interests, and

among competing sources of power and authority. The rich art of the period will be discussed as symbolic representations of how Carolingians thought about themselves and their society.

Although the semester's work will focus on Charlemagne and his world, the course will also include the perspectives of his successors and rivals, as well as of Saxons, Vikings, Muslims, Byzantines, bishops, abbots, and important men and women who also populated Charlemagne's world and helped to shape its successes as well as its failures.

Finally, the semester's work will provide students with an opportunity to develop their analytical (= thinking) skills by reading, thinking, and writing. They will learn to read historical documents in context and to analyze those documents for what they reveal about a particular period in human history. They will learn to present the results of their investigations of Carolingian documents in effective and clear prose.

This course will use **lectures, readings, research, writing, discussions, and images** to try as best as possible within 15 weeks to create a portrait of a complex and fascinating time, a time whose failures and successes affected history long after Charlemagne's world collapsed.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Rosamond McKitterick, *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
2. Paul Edward Dutton, ed., *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*. 2nd edition. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2004.

ALSO (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED):

Mary Lynn Rampolla. *A Pocket Guide to Writing History*. 6th ed. Boston: Bedford Books, 2010.

READING AND LECTURE SCHEDULE (follow order of chapters as listed below)

WEEK 1: 23 AUGUST

Reading assignment:

Charlemagne, pp. 1-27

Lectures:

- I INTRODUCTION
1. Introduction to Course and the Charlemagne “Problem”
 2. From Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages (ca. 500-750 C.E.)

WEEK 2: 30 AUGUST

Reading assignment:

Charlemagne, pp. 27-56

Lectures

- I INTRODUCTION
3. Europe’s Neighbors: Byzantium and the Muslim World
- II. FROM LONG-HAIRED KINGS TO EMPERORS
- 4 The Merovingians, the Frankish Aristocracy, and the Roman Papacy

WEEK 3 6 SEPTEMBER

Reading Assignment:

Charlemagne, pp. 57-88
Carolingian Civilization: # 3-5, 7-8

Lectures:

- II. FROM LONG-HAIRED KINGS TO EMPERORS
5. Charles Martel, Pippin III
 6. Charlemagne: King and Conquests

WEEK 4 13 SEPTEMBER

Reading Assignment:

Charlemagne, pp. 88-118
Carolingian Civilization: # 10-12, 19-23

Lectures:

- II. FROM LONG-HAIRED KINGS TO EMPERORS
 - 7. Charlemagne: Emperor
 - 8. Charlemagne: Legacy

Note: 16 September--submit note with choice of research topic and preliminary ideas about it.

WEEK 5 20 SEPTEMBER

Reading Assignment:

Charlemagne, pp. 118-136
Carolingian Civilization: # 24-25, 27, 39-40, 43

Lectures:

- II. FROM LONG-HAIRED KINGS TO EMPERORS
 - 9. Louis the Pious: “Charlemagne’s Heir”?/”The Great King’s Little Son”?
 - 10. Louis the Pious: Defining Christian Emperors

WEEK 6 27 SEPTEMBER

Exam I on Weeks 1-5: Tuesday, 28 September

Reading Assignment:

Charlemagne, pp. 136-171
Carolingian Civilization: # 9, 49, 51-52

Lectures:

- III. THE ORGANIZATION OF POLITICS, THE ECONOMY, AND RELIGION
 - 11. Empire and kingdoms

WEEK 7 4 OCTOBER

Reading Assignment:

Charlemagne, pp. 171-213

Carolingian Civilization: # 13, 16, 30-33, 41, 58-60, 65, 66, 72

Lectures:

- III. THE ORGANIZATION OF POLITICS, THE ECONOMY, AND RELIGION
 - 12. Political Institutions
 - 13. Rural Economy and Country Life

WEEK 7.5 11 OCTOBER

Reading Assignment:

Charlemagne, pp. 214-233

Carolingian Civilization: # 6, 14-15, 18, 26, 28, 29, 34, 35, 42, 53, 55

Lectures:

- III. THE ORGANIZATION OF POLITICS, THE ECONOMY, AND RELIGION
 - 14. The Frankish Church: From Reform to Critique
 - 15. Religion in a Christian Empire

Note: 14 October: submit 1-2 page progress report with discussion of thesis of paper + bibliography.

WEEK 8.5 18 OCTOBER

Reading Assignment:

Charlemagne, pp. 233-263

Carolingian Civilization: # 17, 36, 48, 50, 54, 62-64

Lectures:

- IV. FASHIONING A EUROPEAN CULTURAL LIFE
 - 16. Defining the Uses of Education and Culture
 - 17. Liturgy, Theology, and Science

WEEK 9.5 25 OCTOBER

Reading Assignment:

Charlemagne, pp. 263-291
Carolingian Civilization: # 37-38

Lectures:

- IV. FASHIONING A EUROPEAN CULTURAL LIFE
18. Visual Messages: Art and Architecture
19. The Cultures of Aristocrats and Peasants

WEEK 10.5 1 NOVEMBER

Exam II on Weeks 6-9.5: Thursday, 4 November

Reading Assignment:

Charlemagne, pp. 292-320
Carolingian Civilization: # 31, 44-47, 56, 61, 67, 68

Lectures:

- V. FAMILY FEUDS AND NEW INVASIONS
20. The Treaty of Verdun and After: Lothar, Louis the German and Charles

WEEK 11.5 8 NOVEMBER

Reading Assignment:

Charlemagne, pp. 321-345
Carolingian Civilization: # 57, 69-71, 73, 76

Lectures:

- V. FAMILY FEUDS AND NEW INVASIONS
21. Carolingian Kingdoms
22. The Nortmanni, New Huns, and the Saracens

WEEK 12.5 15 NOVEMBER

Reading Assignment:

Charlemagne, pp. 345-363

Daily Life: ch. 24

Lectures:

- VI. TOWARD THE FUTURE: THE LEGACY OF THE FIRST EUROPE
 - 23. Religion
 - 24. Schools, Scholars, and Debates

Note: 18 November: Submit polished first draft of paper.

WEEK 13 22 NOVEMBER

Reading Assignment:

Charlemagne, pp. 345-363

Lectures:

- VI. TOWARD THE FUTURE: THE LEGACY OF THE FIRST EUROPE
 - 25. The Culture of Lay Men and Women
 - 26. Social and Economic Change

WEEK 14 29 NOVEMBER

Reading Assignment:

Charlemagne, pp. 363-380

Carolingian Civilization: # 74-76

Lectures:

- VI. TOWARD THE FUTURE: THE LEGACY OF THE FIRST EUROPE
 - 27. Varieties of Political Experience

- VII. SUMMING UP
 - 28. Charlemagne's World at the New Millennium

WEEK 15 CATCH UP: 6 DECEMBER

Note: 9 December: Submit final, revised version of paper

FINAL EXAM WEEK: 13 DECEMBER

Exam III on Weeks 10.5-15:TBA

EXAMS

Three essay exams will provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their mastery of course materials. The exams are scheduled for **28 September, 4 November, and final exam week**. The exams will cover the previous five weeks' work and will not be cumulative. Each will count 0-15 pts. (15%) toward determination of the grade for the course.

DISCUSSION

The two main text for the course by Rosamond McKitterick and the *Carolingian Civilization* reader assembled by Paul Dutton present multiple perspectives on the world of Charlemagne. Awareness and appreciation of these perspectives will be enhanced by intelligent discussion of the weekly readings.

Possible discussion topics will be distributed in advance, but students should feel free to raise questions and make points about any aspect of the readings. Discussions based on the weekly readings are scheduled for Thursday meetings, but discussion is encouraged at any time.

Discussion participation will count 0-25 pts. (25%) toward calculation of the final course grade.

WRITING PROJECT

A good way to learn history is by doing history. Students enrolled in "The World of Charlemagne" will have the opportunity to work on a research project that will introduce them to the craft of the historian as well as to one aspect of the World of Charlemagne.

The writing project will count 0-30 pts (30%) toward the overall grade for the course. Points will be earned in the stages noted below. Comments on work submitted at the second and third stage should guarantee a strong result in the fourth stage.

The project should focus on a topic of interest to the student. Possible topics are limited only by the student's imagination and interests. Check with the instructor for the feasibility of topic ideas you might have (avoid giant, global topics as well as the very specific, technical ones). It might be a good idea also to page ahead in the readings for the course to get a sense of what topics might be interesting.

The writing project will consist of a 12-15-page essay (not counting title page or bibliography page, but including footnotes or endnotes), with one-inch margins, double-spaced, paginated, and in 12 pt. font or less. Please paginate your paper, but do not place your stapled paper in binders, folders, or plastic covers.

In order to produce the best possible work, the writing project will be completed in stages with ample time to revise and resubmit.

First stage: Submit note with choice of research topic
Consult with instructor about possible topics beforehand.
16 September

Second stage: 1-2 page progress report containing brief discussion of the paper's main thesis or point of view. Include list of bibliography accumulated thus far. (0-5 pts.)
14 October

Third stage: Submit polished first draft for review. (0-10 pts.)
18 November

Fourth stage: Submit final, revised version. (0-15 pts.)
9 December

Keys to Writing a Strong Research Essay

or,

"What in the World Does He Expect???"

Perhaps some students have written papers that consisted of locating three or four relevant books on a topic and then weaving together extensive chunks from those books. Increasingly, students pull material off the Web and call it research. This kind of paper is called a synthesis (if not done carefully, it can also be called *plagiarism!*). A "synthesis" is a blending of other people's thoughts. A research paper is built around the writer's own ideas or approach to the topic. Writing a strong research paper requires greater intellectual effort and more creative writing than a synthesis.

A research paper is not a report on something. Research in history bears many similarities to research in science. Historians try to solve problems, answer questions, and explain why and how. And just as in science, the most important part of research is often asking the right questions.

When you think about your topic, think about an issue or an event or a person that interests you. What is it that you want to know about the topic? What is it that you wish to learn? What is it that you wish to research?

Once you have the goal of the research in mind, you can start to gather evidence. For historians, there are basically of two kinds of evidence: **primary** and **secondary sources**. Primary sources are sources from the historical period itself. The documents in *Carolingian Civilization* are all primary sources. Secondary sources are sources created by modern authors, such as Rosamond McKitterick's book, *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity*. Although McKitterick consulted primary sources when writing his books, his own book is a secondary source since it comes from our times and not from the world of Charlemagne.

A good research paper will be based on one or more primary sources and several secondary sources (articles in scholarly journals as well as books). The interpretations of modern scholars can help us to understand our research problem better and can provide important information.

At this point, the project is well launched: a topic has been decided on and research materials gathered.

The next important task, perhaps the most important, is to come up with a **thesis or a point of view** that will form the backbone of the research essay. What argument or statement will your paper be making about the research topic? Finding a thesis can be intellectually challenging, but once a thesis is determined, it can be intellectually exhilarating. And once you have determined the point of view that will drive the paper, all the other pieces of a strong research paper will tend to fall into place.

For example, the paper's thesis will determine how and which **evidence** actually is used in the paper. Resist the temptation to put all those notes you took into the paper--some may not be relevant to the thesis and, thus, sadly but necessarily, should be left aside.

The paper's point of view will also drive the paper's **organization**. How will you organize the paper to effectively present your argument and the evidence that supports it? How will you be sure that the argument flows smoothly and interestingly for the reader?

Speaking of the reader, a final element of a strong paper is a **clear, grammatical writing style**. We don't need to be Shakespeares, but we should be able to get our message across with effective prose. Effective means **interesting, colorful, and forceful**. Too often students adopt a fakey academic style that comes across as stiff and ponderous, and especially *wordy* (= using four or five small words when one good one will do). On the other hand, too many students write as if they're chatting on the phone, informally and with a somewhat limited vocabulary.

Avoid passive sentences and weak verbs (usually versions of *to be*: is, was, etc.) and choose instead active sentences and interesting, colorful verbs and see how sparkling your prose will become. No one said that history writing has to be dull writing!

For a handy guide to all these issues, Mary Lynn Rampolla's *A Pocket Guide to Writing History* will prove useful.

These four elements, **thesis/point of view, evidence, organization, writing style**, constitute the criteria by which the writing project will be evaluated. Each element will count 25% of the overall grade for the project.

WRITING LAB

The Purdue University Writing Lab is available to all students in all courses and offers a wide variety of help and useful information to enhance writing skills. The lab is located in 226 Heavilon Hall (494-3723). For hours and other information consult the lab's website: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/writinglab/>. The lab has a copy of this syllabus and is aware of the History 320 writing assignment.

SUMMARY

Exam 1 (9/28):	0-15 pts.
Exam 2 (11/4):	0-15 pts.
Exam 3 (wk 16):	0-15 pts.
Paper (9/16; 10/14; 11/18; 12/9):	0-30 pts.
Discussion:	<u>0-25 pts.</u>
Total:	0-100 pts.

A+ = 100-96 pts	B+ = 89-86 pts.	C+ = 79-76 pts.	D+ = 69-66 pts.
A = 95-93 pts	B = 85-83 pts.	C = 75-73 pts.	D = 65-63 pts.
A- = 92-90 pts.	B- = 82-80 pts.	C- = 72-70 pts.	D- = 60-62 pts.
F = 59-0 pts.			

GET READY FOR A GREAT SEMESTER!

+FINAL TIP: During the last two weeks of the semester, you will be provided an opportunity to evaluate this course and your instructor. To this end, Purdue has transitioned to online course evaluations. On Monday of the fifteenth week of classes, you will receive an official email from evaluation administrators with a link to the online evaluation site. You will have two weeks to complete this evaluation. Your participation in this evaluation is an integral part of this course. Your feedback is vital to improving education at Purdue University. I strongly urge you to participate in the evaluation system.

Cheating / Plagiarism—a distasteful topic that, unfortunately, needs to be addressed.

Plagiarism refers to the reproduction of another's words or ideas without proper attribution. University Regulations contains further information on dishonesty. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses, and will be treated as such in this class. You are expected to produce your own work and to accurately cite all necessary materials. Cheating, plagiarism, and other dishonest practices will be punished as harshly as Purdue University policies allow. Any instances of academic dishonesty will likely result in a grade of F for the course and notification of the Office of the Dean of Students.