

Introduction to the Medieval World

HIST 10300-004 (CRN 49500)

2010-2011, semester 2

INSTRUCTOR

John Contreni
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Hours: Wednesday, 8:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m. any other mutually convenient time.
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NOTE: In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor's control. Here are ways to get information about changes in this course.

Instructor's email (listed above)

Instructor's phone (listed above)

+TIP. Make good use of the office hours. Feel free to consult with the instructor 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.

COURSE GOALS

This course introduces students to that part of Western European history commonly known as the "Middle Ages". Many students have a sketchy notion of what went on during the 1,000 years or so from about 500 to 1500 of the Common Era (C.E.) that make up this important historical period. Students who read fantasy and fiction about the Middle Ages or who appreciate films set in that period may know a bit more, but often their perceptions bear little relationship to actuality.

In addition to providing a **broad overview** of the medieval period, the course will **sharpen critical thinking skills** by teaching students how to look at past events in a meaningful way. Students will learn the significance of historical context in making judgments about a civilization's achievements and failures. Students will learn to think about big topics such as politics, society, economics, religion, and intellectual life. They will learn to be suspicious of monolithic approaches to human problems and to appreciate better differences, contradictions, and diversity in human affairs.

Students will also 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 They will learn to read historical documents in context and to analyze those documents for what they reveal about a particular period in human history. They will learn to present the results of their investigations of historical documents in effective and clear prose.

This course will use **lectures, readings, 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 the textbook Middle Ages were over.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Barbara H. Rosenwein, *A Short History of the Middle Ages*. 3rd edition. Toronto; University of Toronto Press, 2009. WWW.ROSENWEINSHORTHISTORY.COM (See below, p. 10: "Getting the Most Out of Your Textbook".)

2. Alfred J. Andrea. *The Medieval Record: Sources of Medieval History*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997 (also, Wadsworth Publishing. (See below, p. 11: "How To Read Historical Sources".)

READINGS, LECTURES, AND DISCUSSIONS

The **textbook** by Barbara Rosenwein and the **documents book** by Alfred J. Andrea have been carefully chosen to provide a broad overview of medieval civilization. For most weeks of the semester, students are expected to **read** one chapter in each of the books according to the schedule set forth below. Weekly **lectures** are keyed to the weekly **readings** and complement each other. It is important to keep up with the readings on a weekly basis. Lectures will assume knowledge of the readings. Discussions will take place during the scheduled discussion sections. **NOTE:** Exams will evaluate student mastery of both the textbook and the documents book.

+**TIP:** The reading assignment for this course averages to **53.3 pages per week**--a modest amount for a 100-level history course at a major research university. However, the level of difficulty of the reading, especially in the documents book, may be challenging. The best way to meet the challenge is to keep at it--do all the readings every week, **concentrate** on what you're reading, think about what you're reading. Like learning to ride a bicycle for the first time, it gets easier with practice. See below, "Getting the Most Out of Your Textbook" (p. 10) and "How to Read Historical Sources (p. 11), for specific tips to help with the reading assignment. Read and re-read; think and re-think.

Discussion sections will provide students with the opportunity to learn how to analyze and to investigate the meaning(s) of the documents compiled in the **documents book**, *The Medieval Record*, and the major points of the **textbook**, *A Short History of the Middle Ages*. Students will learn how to use documents as historians do and, thus, will sharpen their analytical, reasoning, and communication skills--skills that will prove useful throughout life. Students are not expected to know everything about the documents. The best discussions focus on **questions, problems, difficulties, and confusions**. Peter Abelard in our documents book (document 53, p. 266) said it best almost 900 years ago: "**Assiduous and frequent questioning is indeed the first key to wisdom.**"

+**TIP: A word about learning.** This course is built on the assumption that students want to be **active** learners, not passive learners. It assumes that students will work outside class at least **9 hours** per week. It assumes that they will attend class regularly and listen attentively to lectures, that they will pause in their reading to think about what they have read, that they will participate actively in discussions, and that they will ask questions to push the limits of their knowledge. A 100-level course at Purdue University is not a 13th-grade high school course.

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

Note that each of the following boxes outlines the work expectations for each week. There are three components to each week's work assignment.

1. Topics: refers to the weekly lecture topics.
2. Discussion Assignment Topics: refers to the specific chapters from the readings in the Andrea and the Rosenwein books that we will discuss at our discussion section meetings.
3. Homework for Week 2 [etc.]: refers to the reading assignments for the **following week** and the work that will be due in the **following week's** meetings.

WEEK 1: 10 JANUARY

Reading assignment for **this week** (try to get this reading done before your discussion section meets)

- Entire syllabus
- *Short History*: read Prefaces (pp. 16-19), peruse the entire book, especially check out all the table of contents, the maps, the Glossary (pp. 350-354), and the Lists (pp. 355-364). Visit the Web site WWW.ROSENWEINSHORTHISTORY.COM
- *The Medieval Record*: Topical Contents (pp. xiii-xxi); Preface (pp. xxiii-xxv); Prologue (pp. 1-14); pp. 20-23. Note the Glossary, pp. 475-479. **Read Prologue and pp. 20-23, Lactantius (doc. 1) for discussion section.**

INTRODUCTION: "Welcome to the Medieval World!"

PART I. FROM LATE ANTIQUITY TO THE FIRST EUROPE, C.E. 300-950

Topic 1: "Where It All Begins: The Roman Empire"

Discussion Assignment Questions about the syllabus????
Discussion procedures
What about the "mini-essay" assignment?
How to read a Primary Source: Prologue, *Medieval Record* +Lactantius (*The Medieval Record*, # 1)

Homework for Week 2:

- *Short History*: ch. 1, "Prelude: The Roman World Transformed (c.300-c.600)"
- *The Medieval Record*: pp. 15-17 + ch. 1, "Caesar and Christ" + ch. 2, "Rome and Its Fringe Peoples"
- Write a mini-essay on one of the "Mini-Essay Topics" for ch. 1-2 of *The Medieval Record* and ch. 1 of *A Short History*
- Be prepared to discuss ch. 1-2 documents and *Short History*, ch. 1.

WEEK 2: 17 JANUARY

PART I. FROM LATE ANTIQUITY TO THE FIRST EUROPE, C.E. 300-950

Topic 2 "The Changing Face of the Empire—Christianity"

Topic 3: "Outsiders Become Insiders: The Barbarian Invasions"

Discussion Assignment: *The Medieval Record*, chs. 1-2 + *Short History*: ch. 1

Homework for Week 3:

- *Short History*: ch. 1, "Prelude: The Roman World Transformed (c.300-c.600)"
- *The Medieval Record*: ch. 4, "Monks, Popes, Bishops, and Saints"
- Write a mini-essay on one of the "Mini-Essay Topics" for ch. 4 of *The Medieval Record* and ch. 1 of *A Short History*
- Be prepared to discuss ch. 4 documents and *Short History*, ch. 1.

WEEK 3 24 JANUARY

PART I. FROM LATE ANTIQUITY TO THE FIRST EUROPE, C.E. 300-950

Topic 4 “Defining a New Culture: Monks, Bishops, Popes”

Discussion Assignment: *The Medieval Record*, ch. 4 + *Short History*, ch. 1

Homework for Week 4:

- *A Short History*: ch. 2, “The Emergence of Sibling Cultures (c. 600-c.750)”
- *The Medieval Record*: ch. 3, “Byzantium and Islam”
- Write a mini-essay on one of the "Mini-Essay Topics" for ch. 3 of *The Medieval Record* and ch. 2 of *A Short History*
- Be prepared to discuss ch. 3 documents and *Short History*, ch. 2.

WEEK 4 31 JANUARY

PART I. FROM LATE ANTIQUITY TO THE FIRST EUROPE, C.E. 300-950

Topic 5 “The Promise--and Disappointment-- of Byzantium”

Topic 6 “Defining a New Civilization: Muhammad and Islam”

Discussion Assignment: *The Medieval Record*, ch. 3 + *Short History*: ch. 2

Homework for Week 5:

- *A Short History*: ch. 3, “Creating New Identities (c.750-c.900)”
- *The Medieval Record*: ch. 5, “The Carolingian Age”
- Write a mini-essay on one of the "Mini-Essay Topics" for ch. 5 of *The Medieval Record* and ch. 3 of *A Short History*
- Be prepared to discuss ch. 5 documents and *Short History*, ch. 3.

WEEK 5 7 FEBRUARY

PART I. FROM LATE ANTIQUITY TO THE FIRST EUROPE, C.E. 300-950

Topic 7 “Europe and the Carolingians”

Topic 8: "The Legacy of the Carolingians"

Discussion Assignment: *The Medieval Record*, ch. 5 + *Short History*: ch. 3

Homework for Week 6:

Use Study Guide to prepare for exam I

WEEK 6 14 FEBRUARY

Exam I on Weeks 1-5: Wednesday, 16 February, 6:30 p.m., ME 161 (0-20 pts.)

PART II. BUILDING THE FIRST EUROPE, C.E. 950-1200

Topic 9 "The First Europe's Jewish Heritage"
Topic 10 "Peasant Life and the Agricultural Revolution"

Discussion Assignment: None this week; exam instead!

Homework for Week 7:

- *Short History*: ch. 4, "Political Communities Reordered (c.900-c.1050)"
- *The Medieval Record*: Pp. 199-200 + ch. 8, "The Secular Orders of Society"
- Write a mini-essay on one of the "Mini-Essay Topics" for ch. 8 of *The Medieval Record* and ch. 4 of *A Short History*.
- Be prepared to discuss ch. 8 docs. and *Short History*, ch. 4.

WEEK 7 21 FEBRUARY

PART II. BUILDING THE FIRST EUROPE, C.E. 950-1200

Topic 11 "A Medieval Reformation?"
Topic 12 "A Medieval Renaissance?"

Discussion Assignment: *The Medieval Record*, ch. 8 + *Short History*: ch. 4

Homework for Week 8:

- *Short History*: ch. 4, "Political Communities Reordered (c.900-c.1050)"
- *The Medieval Record*: ch. 7, "New Religious Trends"
- Write a mini-essay on one of the "Mini-Essay Topics" for ch. 7 of *The Medieval Record* and ch. 4 of *A Short History*.
- Be prepared to discuss ch. 7 documents and *Short History*, ch. 4.

WEEK 8 28 FEBRUARY

PART II. BUILDING THE FIRST EUROPE, C.E. 950-1200

Topic 13 "Why the Crusades?"
Topic 14 "The Mediterranean World and the Crusades"

Discussion Assignment: *The Medieval Record*, ch. 7 + *Short History*: ch. 4

Homework for Week 9:

- *Short History*: ch. 5, "The Expansion of Europe (c. 1050-c.1150)"
- *The Medieval Record*: ch. 11, "The Crusades: Expanding Europe's Horizons"
- Write a mini-essay on one of the "Mini-Essay Topics" for ch. 11 of *The Medieval Record* and ch. 5 of *A Short History*
- Be prepared to discuss ch. 11 documents and *Short History*, ch. 5.

WEEK 9 7 MARCH

PART II. BUILDING THE FIRST EUROPE, C.E. 950-1200

- Topic 15 "The Aftermath of the Crusades"
Topic 16 "The Age of Warlords and Castles"

Discussion Assignment: *The Medieval Record*, ch. 11 + *Short History*: ch. 5

Homework for Week 10:

- *Short History*: ch. 5, "The Expansion of Europe (c. 1050-c.1150)"
- *The Medieval Record*: ch. 6, "Restructuring and Reordering Europe, C.E. 850-1050"
- Write a mini-essay on one of the "Mini-Essay Topics" for ch. 6 of *The Medieval Record* and ch. 5 of *A Short History*
- Be prepared to discuss ch. 6 documents and *Short History*, ch. 5.

WEEK 10 21 MARCH

PART II. BUILDING THE FIRST EUROPE, C.E. 950-1200

- Topic 17 "New Towns, New Society"
Topic 18 "Varieties of Religious Experience"

Discussion Assignment: *The Medieval Record*, ch. 6 + *Short History*: ch. 5

Homework for Week 11:

Use Study Guide to prepare for exam II.

WEEK 11 28 MARCH

Exam II on Weeks 6-10: Wednesday, 30 March, 6:30 p.m., ME 161 (0-20 pts.)

PART III. LAUNCHING THE FIRST EUROPE, C.E. 1200-1500

- Topic 19 Politics and Religion: A Stormy Marriage"
Topic 20 "The Success of Monarchy—Finally"

Discussion Assignment: None this week; exam instead!

Homework for Week 12:

- *Short History*: ch. 6, "Institutionalizing Aspirations (c.1150-1250)"
- *The Medieval Record*: ch. 10, "Political Theory and Reality"
- Write a mini-essay on one of the "Mini-Essay Topics" for ch. 10 of *The Medieval Record* and ch. 6 of *A Short History*
- Be prepared to discuss ch. 10 documents and *Short History*, ch. 6.

WEEK 12 4 APRIL

PART III. LAUNCHING THE FIRST EUROPE, C.E. 1200-1500

- Topic 21 "The Age of Innocence"
Topic 22 "Losing Face in the Age of Boniface"

Discussion Assignment: *The Medieval Record*, ch. 10 + *Short History*: ch. 6

Homework for Week 13:

- *A Short History*: ch. 7, "Discordant Harmonies (c.1250-1350)"
- *The Medieval Record*: ch. 9, "Faith, Reason, Authority"
- Write a mini-essay on one of the "Mini-Essay Topics" for ch. 9 of *The Medieval Record* and ch. 7 of *A Short History*
- Be prepared to discuss ch. 9 documents and *Short History*, ch.7.

WEEK 13 11 APRIL

PART III. LAUNCHING THE FIRST EUROPE, C.E. 1200-1500

- Topic 23 "Cathedrals and Literature"
Topic 24 "Universities and High-Powered Speculation"

Discussion Assignment: *The Medieval Record*, ch. 9 + *Short History*: ch. 7

Homework for Week 14:

- *A Short History*: ch. 8, "Catastrophe and Creativity (c.1350-c.1500)"
- *The Medieval Record*: ch. 12, "The Fourteenth Century: Catastrophe and Creativity"
- Write a mini-essay on one of the "Mini-Essay Topics" for ch. 12 of *The Medieval Record* and ch. 8 of *A Short History*
- Be prepared to discuss ch. 12 documents and *Short History*, ch. 8.

WEEK 14 18 APRIL

PART III. LAUNCHING THE FIRST EUROPE, C.E. 1200-1500

- Topic 25 "The Plague Years"
Topic 26 "Toward the Future: Religious and Political Patterns"

Discussion Assignment: *The Medieval Record*, ch. 12 + *Short History*: ch. 8

Homework for Week 15:

- *A Short History*: ch. 8, "Catastrophe and Creativity (c.1350-c.1500)"; "Epilogue"
- *The Medieval Record*: ch. 13, "The Fifteenth Century: An Age of Rebirth?"
- Write a mini-essay on one of the "Mini-Essay Topics" for ch. 13 of *The Medieval Record* and ch. 8 of *A Short History*
- Be prepared to discuss ch. 13 documents and *Short History*, ch. 8.

WEEK 15 25 APRIL

PART III. LAUNCHING THE FIRST EUROPE, C.E. 1200-1500

- Topic 27 "Toward the Future: Social, Economic, and Intellectual Patterns"
Topic 28 "Europe and the 'New' World"

Homework for Final Exam week:

Use Study Guide to prepare for exam III.

FINAL EXAM WEEK: 2 MAY

Exam III on Weeks 11-15: TBA (0-20 pts.)

EVALUATION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Student progress toward acquiring a good, general knowledge of early Europe will be evaluated by three essay exams, five mini-essays, and by **discussion participation**.

Exams: 60% (0-60 pts.)

- There will be **three exams** in the course, two during the regular semester (**16 February and 30 March, both at 6:30 p.m. in ME 161**) and one during the regularly scheduled **final exam week**. 50 minutes will be allotted for each exam.
- The exams will each count 20% (0-20 pts.) toward assessment of student achievement in the course.
- Study guides for each exam will be available the week before the exam date. The study guide will provide the location and time of a voluntary review session.
- Exams will require students to write **two essays**, one on a general historical theme based on lectures or the textbook and a second based on the documents. In each category students will have a **choice** of two essays problems from which to choose.

Discussion Participation: 20% (0-20 pts.)

- Each student is expected to attend **and** to participate in weekly discussions.
- It is important for the success of the discussions that each student read every document for the week and come to the discussion prepared to discuss **or** to ask questions about the documents. If you find the documents difficult or challenging, review the weekly mini-essay questions or the "Questions for Analysis" presented before each document in *The Medieval Record* for hints on what you should be learning from the documents. Also, **use the office hours to discuss any problems with understanding the documents. Remember to review the documents before coming to your discussion section, since you may be a bit hazy about what you read last week.**
- Attendance and participation in discussion will count 20% (0-20 pts.) in determining overall achievement in discussion. Perfect attendance with little discussion will earn 12 of the 20 points (= a passing grade of "D-"). Depending on attendance and level and quality of participation students will earn fewer or more than 12 points for participation in daily discussion. Absence from weekly discussion earns 0 points for that week's discussion.
- **+TIP:** Many students report that they do not participate as much as they should in discussion because they hesitate to speak out in groups, feel that they are shy, or feel that they have little to contribute. We understand these concerns, but it's time to contribute to and participate in learning and not sit on the sidelines. The only dumb question is the one that never gets asked! So be brave!

Mini-Essays: 20% (0-20 pts.)

- Document based homework. Students will receive a set of "mini-essay questions" for each of the **12** reading assignments in *The Medieval Record* and in *A Short History*. Students will select one question from among **5** of the **12** sets of "mini-essay questions" as the topic for a two- to three-page written mini-essay (500-750 words, double-spaced; 1" margins; 12 pt. or smaller font) responding to the chosen question. See below, p. 11, "How to Read Historical Sources" and pp. 1-14 in *The Medieval Record*.
- Each mini-essay will be evaluated on a ten-point scale depending on how well it responds to the question and uses the evidence of the relevant documents or the textbook. Expectations for student performance on the mini-essay in terms of analysis and written communication skills will rise after the first mini-essay.
- Mini-essays must be turned in during the discussion section in which the relevant reading assignment will be discussed. **Late mini-essays will be evaluated, but not scored or counted.**
- The average score earned by the **5** mini-essays will count 20% (0-20 pts.) toward assessing achievement in document-based homework.
- **Note:** choosing one topic for a mini-essay, does **not** mean that the student is not responsible for reading and understanding the other documents for the weekly discussions.

+TIP: 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 (49-43723). For hours and other information consult the lab's Web site: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/> . The lab has a copy of this syllabus and is aware of the History 103 writing assignment.

Summary

Exam 1 (16 February)	0-20 pts.
Exam 2 (30 March)	0-20 pts.
Exam 3 (exam week: TBA)	0-20 pts.
Mini-essays	0-20 pts.
Discussion	<u>0-20 pts.</u>
TOTAL	0-100 pts.

Final Grade Scale

A+ = 97-100	B+ = 86-87=	C+ = 79-81	D+ = 67-68	F = 0-58
A = 92-96	B = 82-85	C = 76-78	D = 62-66	
A- = 88-91	B- = 79-81	C- = 72-75	D- = 59-61	

How to Take Good Notes

Taking good notes on lectures and readings is an important skill that involves listening, thinking, and analyzing thoughtfully and with precision. Creating your own set of notes is one of the best ways to become an active learner since by taking notes, the student puts information into his or her own words in a way that is meaningful (= full of meaning) to the student. Following are some suggestions that you might want to consider adopting or adding to your own note-taking technique.

Use one notebook or binder for each course. Take notes on one side of the page only so that later when you review your notes you can go from page to page without flipping pages front side to backside. This technique helps with concentration.

+TIP: For each week's lecture and reading assignment, it might be useful to begin notes with a synopsis of the readings, even if the synopsis is simply an outline of the chapters in our textbooks along the lines of the following example from Week One's readings:

ROSENWEIN, CH. 1: "PRELUDE: THE ROMAN WORLD TRANSFORMED (c.300-c.600)"

[Introduction]

- **The Provincialization of the Empire (c.250-c.350)**
- **A New Religion**
 - **Doctrine**
 - **The Sources of God's Grace**
- **Art from the Provinces to the Center**
- **The Barbarians**
- **The Ruralization of the West**
- **The Retrenchment of the East**

ANDREA, CH. 1, "CAESAR AND CHRIST" Remaking the Pax Romana

- **1. Imperial Reorganization: Lactantius, *On the Deaths of the Persecutors***
- **2. Late Roman Society: *The Theodosian Code***

Early Christianity and the Roman World

- **3. Persecution and Deliverance: Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History***
- **4. The Peace of This World: Augustine of Hippo, *City of God***
- **5. Christianity and Imperial Culture: Christ Triumphant: Ravenna Mosaic**

A table such as this one provides a convenient, bird's-eye view of the contents of the chapters we will be reading and discussing during Week One. Placed at the beginning of a set of notes on Topics 1, 2 and 3, the table and notes will integrate readings and lectures in one place in your notebook.

When taking notes it is not necessary to record every word (how tedious!), but be sure to copy the outline for the lecture and use it as the framework for your paraphrase of the lecture. The lecture outlines are post on Blackboard and can be downloaded and used as templates for note taking. Do not fall into the trap of thinking that since something the instructor says seems perfectly clear and obvious, there is no need to make a note on it. Dozens and dozens of clear and obvious statements over the course of the semester will tend to become blurred and jumbled. Statements worth recording are generally introductory or general comments (scene setting), cause-and-effect statements, conclusions, and results statements.

Getting the Most Out of Our Textbook

Barbara H. Rosenwein, *A Short History of the Middle Ages*

A textbook represents many decisions. The author, for example, decides what kind of a book he or she wishes to write. An instructor who chooses a text, decides on a particular text for well-defined reasons. A textbook, then, is to be taken seriously and if the most is to be gotten out of it, the reader should "attack" it aggressively, learn as much as he or she possibly can from the book. What follows are a few hints or guidelines intended to help you read Barbara H. Rosenwein's, *A Short History of the Middle Ages*.

First of all, get acquainted with your textbook before you dive into it. You will be "living" with it for the next fifteen weeks and how much you get out of it depends on how much you know about it from the very start. Note that there is a Web site for the book and that at the end of each chapter the reader is invited to review "Study Questions" posted on the Web site.

Look first at the Table of Contents. The reader, at first, may not know anything about the various chapter titles and subtitles, but a glance at the Contents will alert the reader to how the author has conceived her work. Our textbook has been divided into a "prelude" and two major "Parts". The titles of the "Parts" tell the reader that the author has a very definite attitude toward each of the periods covered in the parts. Each part also has several chapters, each with titles. Most of the chapter titles are rather picturesque. This tells us that the author is a good writer: she doesn't waste a word. For an example, look at Part One, chapter 2, "The Emergence of Sibling Cultures". Even without reading the chapter, the reader

knows two things about it: that the chapter will be about new cultures emerging and that those cultures somehow will be related to each other as "siblings".

Rosenwein's book is richly illustrated with **maps** and many **illustrations**. These illustrations are tools for learning and not merely pretty pictures. Look at them, ponder them, ask yourself questions about them, above all, try to see how they relate to the theme of the chapter.

Also note at the **Glossary** at the end of the book, pp. 350-354.

The most important part of a reader's preliminary investigation of a book should focus on what the author has to say about her own book. In her **Prefaces** (pp. 16-19), Barbara Rosenwein shares with us her concept of the book and of the Middle Ages. Note here what she writes about the relationship between social, economic, cultural, and political history in her text. What is social history? What is political history? Note also what she writes about the geographical focus of her book. Why did she make this statement?

Reading a text, of course, has its own rules. You shouldn't read it as you would a newspaper nor should you, on the other hand, underline every word and try to memorize every word. You should however feel free to make marks in your own book! Underlining, notes, questions marks, etc. can be important aids to learning and recalling information. You should try to read more than the words. It is the conclusions, the key concepts, and the important ideas that matter most. These are the kinds of statements that should be underlined to reinforce learning.

A good writer will help the reader by signaling what is really important. Rosenwein does this by breaking her chapters up into smaller parts that are set off by subtitles. The subtitles act as a flag or a signpost. They tell the reader what is coming up so he or she does not have to guess. Rosenwein is especially adept at using helpful images, for example, describing the Roman Empire as a "scarf" draped around the Mediterranean Sea.

But the writer can't do it alone. **The reader must approach the text with an active intellect, separating the statements that lead up to a conclusion from the conclusion itself. Once you think you have the conclusion or the major point in mind, it will be much easier to see the relevance of the supporting statements.**

One final hint: don't be lazy and ignore words you don't recognize. Look them up! The glossary at the back of the book is precisely for this purpose!

How To Read Historical Sources

Alfred J. Andrea, *The Medieval Record*

+**TIP**: It is important that each student learn how to master the readings in this book. We think that the document-based approach to learning history is so important that we have dedicated 70% of the course grade (50% of the exams + mini-essays + participation in discussion) to the contents of *The Medieval Record*.

Many of the suggestions for getting the most out of the Rosenwein book will also work for Andrea's *The Medieval Record*. Be sure to read the **head notes** that preface each historical document. Don't be lazy and skip over the **footnotes**—they contain important explanatory information. (For example, you'll find the reason for Procopius's hatred of Justinian in the footnotes to that reading.)

Words followed by asterisks in the Andrea book are explained in the **Glossary** at the end of the book. See "rhetoric" on p. 20. In addition to these vocabulary-builders, you'll want to look up words that do not appear in the glossary, but also may not be familiar. See "systemic" and "concatenation" on p. 20 as well.

A historical source is anything a historian might use to try to reconstruct the past. Sources are usually documents, but they could be literally anything--paintings, films, buildings, pollen samples.

Sources are sometimes called **primary** sources to emphasize their nearness to the historical period they discuss. A **secondary** source is remote from the period it discusses. Thus, the documents in *The Medieval Record* are primary sources; Professor Rosenwein's textbook on the Middle Ages and the writings of modern historians are secondary sources.

There are a wide variety of documentary sources--letters, newspapers, poems, legal contracts, memoirs, histories, student transcripts, drivers' licenses, birth certificates, etc., etc.

But not all sources are created equal. Some are factual like a driver's license or a birth certificate. Others, such as a memoir or a letter, are more subjective.

When we look at a source, the most important questions we need to ask are: "What is the value of this document?" "What does it tell me?" We need to learn how to appreciate the document as a window onto its subject or time. Thus, to take a simple example, a birth certificate all by itself might at first glance not seem like a very important or interesting document. But to the trained eye a birth certificate can yield all kinds of interesting historical information.

One of the purposes of the reading and writing assignment this semester in History 103 is to help students sharpen their historical eyes. There is nothing mysterious or esoteric about reading historical documents. The skills one uses in reading documents essentially are the same ones scientists employ in interpreting their data or that attorneys use in putting together briefs. Someone in marketing might consider a variety of factors (product, pricing, and demographics) before making a marketing decision. These are the skills of analysis. However, unlike the sources the scientist, attorney, or marketing analyst uses, many historical sources (certainly medieval ones!) come from a remote time and place. As Leslie Poles Hartley wrote in his 1953 play, *The Go-Between*, "**the past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.**"

When we read historical documents we need to be attuned to historical differences, to the "foreign" element of the past. The following guidelines may help in coming to grips with the documents we will be reading this semester.

CONTEXT

What is the context for the document? It might help to ask the famous questions, "Who, What, When, and Why?", when trying to establish the environment (the "foreign country") in which the document was produced. Eusebius's (# 3) world was different from that of Benedict of Nursia (# 17). Peter Abelard's (# 53) world was different from both that of Eusebius and Benedict.

AUTHOR

This is the "Who" question. Who wrote this document? What did he or she do in life? What stake did he or she have in what was written. Be careful here: even the most factual looking report can have an "agenda" or point of view behind it. It's very important to think about the author.

FORM

This is the "What?" question. What kind of document are we reading? Is it one of the factual ones or is it subjective? Is Einhard's account of Charlemagne (# 24) more or less trustworthy because someone who was close to the great king wrote it? Are works of literature such as the *Song of Roland* (# 47) less historically useful than a legal document such as *The Magna Carta* (# 69)?

AUDIENCE

These are the "When?" and "Why?" questions. Who did the author have in mind when he or she wrote the document? Maybe this is never explicitly stated, but can we figure this out from the evidence of the document itself? Would peasants have appreciated Abelard's *Sic et Non* (# 53)? Would the people who enjoyed the biography of Charlemagne (# 24) have appreciated the ordinances of the merchants of Southampton (# 49)? What do the answers to these questions tell us about audience? About the nature of documents and the motivations of their authors? What relevance would a story about torture and persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire (# 36) have to a community of nuns in the tenth century?

THE UNINTENDED

Finding the unintended in a document can be the most exciting discovery one makes when reading a historical source. We all know the intention the state has in mind when it issues driver's licenses--to certify individuals to drive on the state's roads and to collect revenue from them for the

privilege of doing so. But, someone with access to the records of a state's division of motor vehicles could comb through the files (using a computer, no doubt!) to determine the average age (or height or weight) or the gender of drivers 20 years ago compared to drivers today. The state DMV surely never intended to become a collector of such useful information, but unintentionally it did.

What can we glean from Einhard's account of Charlemagne (# 24) aside from the main story? The Gospel according to the Marks of Silver (# 61) is humorous, but is there another purpose to it? Gunther of Pairis's account of the taking of Constantinople (# 76) seeks to justify that event. What else does it tell us?

SILENCES

Ditto for this category. Sometimes what a source does not say can be a very significant indicator of the source's point of view and world. Where are the peasants in the lives of Charlemagne?

+TIP: Awareness of context, author, form, audience, the unintended, and silences will be expected to develop and become evident in the mini-essays and discussion.

WHAT DOES THE DOCUMENT MEAN TO ME?

Having read the document, what have I learned from it? Anything about early Europe, about the subjects of the documents, about humanity in general, about historical sources, about reading and analysis? Why? Or was reading the document more or less like reading a cereal box? Why?

+TIP: All of these readings will be new to almost all students. The readings concern topics of great interest to the people of the Middle Ages, but are not frequently considered by us on a day to day basis (that's why we come to college—to expand our intellectual horizons—and take courses such as this—to learn what was important to other people and what their concerns can tell us about our world). So, mastering these sources will take effort, not simply to read them, but to understand them as well.

You might create a note card for each source and jot down some basic points to help you remember the significance of each source. A note card on our first reading, an excerpt from Lactantius's *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*, might look like this:

Document # 1: Lactantius, *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*

Lactantius—3rd century—originally a pagan, converted to Christianity.

A scholar—worked for Emperor Diocletian.

Excerpt describes Diocletian's activities and criticizes all of them. L describes D as "the author of crimes and inventor of evils." Hostile to D.

Clear that L's religion has influenced his treatment of D.

Despite L's hostility toward D, it seems that D was a very active emperor.

Keywords: Christians/pagans/emperors. ???Where was Nicomedia and what is its sig.???

Notes from discussion:

A card bearing a brief synopsis of the document could also serve to record insights and comments from Thursday discussions.

To help when studying for exams, cards could be "mixed and matched" in relevant categories. Perhaps the Lactantius card could be reviewed in the context of other cards/excerpts that deal with Christianity or pagans or emperors. Studied in context, meaningful patterns will begin to emerge among the 97 documents in the Andrea book.

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:

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 Dean of Students Office.