

History 3602F

CRUSADERS AND MUSLIMS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Fall 2026

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This is a **draft** outline. Please see the course site on OWL Brightspace for a final version.

Course Description

The Crusades to the Holy Land were a '*moment in history*', as historians like to refer sometimes to an extraordinary event. Inaugurated by the First Crusade's conquest of Fatimid Jerusalem, it created a Latin Christian Kingdom in the middle of Islamic Syria-Palestine which lasted between the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries. During the 200 years of its existence the Crusaders kingdom and its satellites, Antioch, Edessa and Tripoli, were outposts of European military and economic interests in the Middle East creating a new Mediterranean political and cultural entity.

This Crusaders' course will study the history of the Crusades and its historiography, chronologically, thematically, comparatively, and analytically, but also as a period of change in medieval structures. We study their economies, cultures, and religions and how they were transformed under mutual influences of the Crusades to the Holy Land, Western Europe, the Byzantine Empire and the Islamic States.

Unlike most courses offered on the Crusades that focus on the Latin Kingdom alone we will cover both societies, Crusaders and Muslims. We seek to shed light on the social and economic interaction between Middle Eastern social, political and economic history and the Crusaders' states, and analyze the impact of such interaction on medieval Europe and the Islamic states.

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Course Syllabus

The course work is planned around four main themes:

i) The First Crusade including the preaching and the Call for the First Crusade, the groups participating in the march, the march and the conquest of Jerusalem, and how they affected the settlement and the formation of the Crusaders states.

ii) The economic foundations of the Crusaders states including the European social/economic/political systems of European feudal systems and compare them with the Islamic ones. We look at agriculture, manufacturing and trade, especially the effect of the Crusades on the development of the Italian cities, the Mediterranean trade and beyond.

iii) The third theme is that of institutions, political, social and legal, that evolved in the Holy Land, the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, before and after the fall of Jerusalem. Comparison with Islamic institutions highlights questions of social and economic achievements.

iv) Fourth theme returns to events. We analyze political developments in the Holy Land in light of the Second, Third and Fourth Crusades. The Second Crusade followed the fall of Edessa in 1143. The Third and the Fourth Crusades followed the Battle of *Hattin* and the elimination of the kingdom of Jerusalem and the loss of the interior. We will end with the liquidation of the Crusaders enterprise in the Holy Land in 1291 and the developments in the Islamic Middle East in its aftermath.

Methods of Evaluation

Class work required:

1. Study the content for each of the classes.
2. Prepare the weekly readings.
3. Read and understand the primary sources.
4. Select a theme for research paper from a list or choose your own.
5. Prepare a list of sources including primary sources.
6. Deliver 10-page research paper.
7. Write the final exam.

Students will acquire the knowledge of an important subject in world history of both medieval Europe and the Middle East. Students will also learn research methodologies, and knowledge in medieval western historiography. They will be trained in writing a historical paper, and if they wish, in oral presentation of research projects. Analytical and oral skills are useful for the future.

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Timing of assignments:

Research Paper due two weeks before the end of term.

Exam will be written on line.

Make-up tests, midterms, and exams can only be approved by Academic Advising. Please see https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for department procedures and requirements involving make-up tests and exams.

Late Assignments:

15% penalty for late papers

Course policies must accord with the advice given by Social Science Academic Advising on [Absence & Academic Consideration](#), the university's policies on [Academic Consideration for Medical Illness](#), and the Department of History's own [Undergraduate Policies and Statements](#)).

You must complete all course assignments in order to pass this course.

Course Materials Course Schedule and Readings

Two general textbooks, one a general history of the Crusades focused on the Christian world, the other on the Islamic side. Both were chosen because they recognize, albeit imply it only partially, the importance of institutions and social and economic background.

The European perspective.

My preference, is Hans Eberhard Mayer, *The Crusades*. Translated by John Gillingham (Oxford University Press), first published in 1965 in German but new editions of the English texts keep appearing. Any edition beginning with the second one of 1990 is OK.

OR Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades. A History*. Second Edition. Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1987, 2005.

Both textbooks have their advantages and either one will provide you with the general background you need. Both were used in the course over the years and students provided me with different opinions, as a result both appear here. Copies may be found in the used books store.

The Middle East perspective

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For many years we have used Peter M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades. The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517*. (Longman) It provides a bare-boned simplistic review of political events. It is useful for general view. If you can get a used copy it will provide you with the timelines. You may also use the library's copy. I kept the relevant page numbers in the syllabus. Now the Carole Hillenbrand's book, *The Crusades. Islamic perspectives*, (Edinburgh University Press, 1999) has been issued in paperback edition and we are embarking on a new textbook. I will ask for your opinion at the end of the course, so keep an open mind.

PRIMARY Sources

The study of the Crusades involves work in the primary sources, both Latin and Arabic IN TRANSLATION, and students are expected to use them in their research papers. A list of Crusaders texts in translations and other primary sources will be provided on OWL.

The following is a selection of primary sources, which will be read in class:

James A. Brundage, *The Crusades. A Documentary Survey* (Milwaukee, 1962) 2nd printing 1975.

1. *The Sermon of Pope Urban II at Clermont*, pp. 17-21
2. *The Capture of Jerusalem*, pp. 63-65
3. *Godfrey of Bouillon becomes "Defender of the Holy Sepulcher,"* pp. 70-73
4. *The Foundation of the Order of Knights Templar*, pp. 76-77
5. *The Battle of Hattin*, pp. 153-596.
6. *Le livre des Assises by John of Jaffa*,

From Peter W. Edbury, *John of Ibelin and the Kingdom of Jerusalem* (The Boydell Press, 1997) pp. 191-200

Preparation of primary documents is an essential component of the course needed for the historical and historiographical interpretation and analysis

For your benefit fuse the following analysis : identification of the primary source from which the reading is taken, the year in which the source was written, where it was written and for what purpose, when did the author live and what was the source's role and significance; Identify the historical persons and circumstances mentioned in the document, when did they live, where, and what was their historical significance; Get familiar with the event, or events, described in the document, where, when and why they occurred, historical background, etc.

LECTURE TOPICS AND REQUIRED READINGS

Week No. 1

INTRODUCTION to the study of the Crusades Structure, Themes, Historiography

Readings: R. -S. pp. xxix- xxxiii; 1-25.

Mayer, pp. 1-7 (Holt, pp. 1-8), Hillenbrand, Chapter One, Prologue, pp. 1-31

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Week No. 2

BACKGROUND TO THE FIRST CRUSADE I: EUROPE AND BYZANTIUM

Readings: Mayer, pp. 8-37
 Byzantium
 On OWL
Western Europe on the Eve of the Crusades
On OWL

Week No. 3

BACKGROUND TO THE FIRST CRUSADE II: THE MIDDLE EAST

Readings: (Holt, pp. 9-15, 167-177) Hillenbrand, Chapter two,
 The first crusade and the Muslims' initial reactions,
 pp. 31-88.

Week No. 4

THE FIRST CRUSADE: PREACHING THE IDEA AND THE ROLE OF THE PAPACY

Readings: R.-S., pp. 1-25. Mayer, 8-37

DOCUMENT 1: **The Sermon of Pope Urban II at Clermont,**
 On OWL

Consult also (<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook1k.html>)

Week No. 5

THE FIRST CRUSADE: THE REALIZATION

Readings: R.-S., pp. 26-49. Mayer, pp. 38-57
 (Holt, pp. 16-30)

DOCUMENT 2: **The Capture of Jerusalem**
 On OWL

Week No. 6

ESTABLISHMENT OF CRUSADER STATES: POPULATION, MONARCHY AND FEUDAL LORDS

Readings: R.-S., pp. 50-111. Mayer, pp. 58-92
 (Holt, pp. 31-37, 38-59) Hillenbrand, Chapter three,
 Jihad in the period 493-569/1100-1174, pp. 89-170.

The Population of the Crusaders States
On OWL

DOCUMENT 3: **Godfrey of Bouillon becomes defender of the Holy Sepulcher,**
On OWL

Week No. 7

THE LEGAL SYSTEM

Readings Edbury, pp. 127, 155-162
Le livre des Assises of John of Jaffa,
On OWL
Political and Ecclesiastical Order
On OWL
Hillenbrand, Chapter five, How the Muslims saw the
Franks: pp. 257-327.

Week No. 8

THE ECONOMY: AGRICULTURE

Readings: Agricultural History
On OWL
Hillenbrand, Chapter six, Aspects of life in the Levant
in the Crusading period, pp. 329-429

Week No. 9

THE ECONOMY: TRADE AND THE ITALIAN CITIES

Readings: Venice and the Crusades
On OWL
R. S. 215-244.

Week No. 10

INSTITUTIONS: LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Readings: Social Classes the Minorities
On OWL
Hillenbrand, Chapter six, Aspects of life in the Levant
in the Crusading period, pp. 329-429

Week No. 11

THE MILITARY ORDERS, ARCHITECTURE, CASTLES AND WARFARE

Readings: Mayer, pp. 93-107. R. S. 82-111, Hillenbrand, chapter seven, Armies, arms, armour and fortifications, pp. 431-509.

DOCUMENT 4: **The Foundation of the Order of the Knights Templar,**
On OWL
The Teutonic order
On OWL

Week No. 12

SALADIN AND THE BATTLE OF HATTIN

Readings: Mayer, pp. 107-136. R. S. 109-11.
(Holt, pp. 38-66) Hillenbrand, chapter eight, the
conduct of war, pp. 511-587

DOCUMENT 5: **The Battle of Hattin**,
On OWL

**FACTORS OF ISLAMIC RECOVERY: DEMOGRAPHY,
ETHNICITY, RELIGION, ECONOMY, POLITICAL
ORGANIZATION: THE NEW MIDDLE EAST**

Readings:
(Holt, pp. 82-137) Hillenbrand, Chapter six, Aspects of life
in the Levant in the Crusading period, pp. 329-429
The Impact of the Crusades
On OWL

For the research paper

For writing Research papers in History every student needs to use a guide. Please acquire one if you don't already have. It will be useful for ever. Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History, Sixth Edition*. (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010)

OR William Kelleher Storey and Towser Jones, *Writing History. A Guide for Canadian Students, Third Edition*. (Oxford University Press, Canada, 2011)

Communication policies:

The professor can be contacted through e-mail and weekly office hours will be announced.

Use of generative artificial intelligence (AI): Refer to Western's [site for AI guidance](#) or to the Centre for Teaching and Learning's [resources on academic integrity and AI](#)

You may use generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, in this course for activities such as researching and refining your ideas, or drafting an outline to organize your thoughts—but not for generating prose. All writing submitted in this course must be your own. Any use of such tools must be fully cited, acknowledged, and explained. If in doubt, please ask me for clarification and advice.

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Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.