



APOCALYPSE THEN? THE LATE MEDIEVAL CRISIS [BRIT 290] FALL 2025

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Office Location	British Faculty Offices	Email	dgreen@harlaxton.ac.uk
Course Meeting Days and Time	Tu/Thur 2.30-3.45	Student Drop-In Office Hours	Tues/Thurs 1.00-2.00pm or by appointment
Course Mode	In-person		

Catalog Description:

This course explores the impact of plague, war and famine on late medieval Britain. The turmoil of these years led to repeated challenges to the established social and political order in the form of peasant revolts, heretical movements and the depositions of kings, and yet it also saw extraordinary cultural expression in art, architecture and literature. The course concludes with a consideration of recent comparisons drawn between the Black Death and the coronavirus pandemic.

May be used to complete a Certificate or Minor in British Studies.

Credit Hour Policy Statement:

Standard lecture: "This class meets the federal credit hour policy of 1 hour of class with an expected 2 hours of additional student work outside of class each week for approximately 15 weeks for each hour of credit, or a total of 45- 75 total hours for each credit." (Def 1)

"This class meets the federal credit hour policy of 3 hours of supervised study per week for approximately 15 weeks for each hour of credit, or a total of 45-75 hours for each credit. For this 3 credit course students are expected to devote a minimum of 135 hours." (Def 2)

Course Learning Objectives:

Students who complete this course successfully will:

- Have a broad understanding of key historical themes and topics.
- Be able to evaluate different interpretations of the subject matter and approaches to it.
- Gain acritical awareness of the primary material and secondary works used in these interpretations and approaches.
- Be able to synthesise information from lectures, discussion groups and reading to make evidence-based arguments both orally and in writing.

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Methods of Instructions:

Combination of lectures, seminars and individual tutorials. Students will be encouraged to read widely among primary and secondary sources and will have considerable latitude in choosing research topics.

Key Text(s): Michael Brown, *Disunited Kingdoms: Peoples and Politics in the British Isles 1280-1460* (Longman, 2013).

Robin Frame, *The Political Development of the British Isles, 1100-1400* (Oxford University Press, 1990).

G.L. Harriss, *Shaping the Nation: England, 1360-1461* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

Michael Prestwich, *Plantagenet England, 1225-1360* (Oxford University Press, 2005) [[available online via UE library](#)].

Other Class Materials: Primary source materials will be available on Blackboard for each class.

Course Schedule:

PART ONE: INTRODUCTIONS

1. Course Administration and Overview
2. Perceptions of the Medieval and the Middle Ages
3. Context: Britain and Ireland in the Later Middle Ages

22. A Crisis of Chivalry? Peasant Revolts and the Nobility

23. An Empire in Crisis? The Plantagenet Dominions

24. An Empire in Crisis? The Plantagenet Dominions

25. An Empire in Crisis? The Plantagenet Dominions

PART TWO: THE FOUR HORSEMEN

4. *Famine*: The Great Famine
5. *Plague*: The Black Death
6. *Plague*: The Black Death
7. *Plague*: The Black Death
8. *War*: The Hundred Years War
9. *War*: The Hundred Years War
10. *War*: The Hundred Years War
11. *War*: The Hundred Years War
12. *War*: The Hundred Years War
13. *Death*: The Cult of Death

PART FOUR: CONCLUSIONS

26. Pandemics in the Popular Imagination
27. Conclusions and Review
28. Research Paper submission

14. Text and Image Analysis Submission

PART THREE: CENTURIES OF CRISIS?

15. A Crisis of Kingship? Depositions and Civil Wars
16. A Crisis of Kingship? Depositions and Civil Wars
17. A Crisis of Kingship? Depositions and Civil Wars
18. A Crisis in the Church? Lollardy and Popular Religion
19. A Crisis in the Church? Lollardy and Popular Religion
20. A Crisis of Chivalry? Peasant Revolts and the Nobility
21. A Crisis of Chivalry? Peasant Revolts and the Nobility



GRADING RUBRICS

RESEARCH PAPER GRADING RUBRIC

Criteria	Excellent A	Good B	Fair C	Poor D	Fail F
1. Thesis/line of argument	Original, compelling argument sustained throughout the paper.	Effective argument sustained throughout the paper.	Argument made but not sustained throughout the paper.	Poor or patchy argument (i.e. limited engagement with key issues).	Very ineffective argument showing no awareness of important issues.
2. Research a) use of appropriate primary & secondary sources b) correct use of citations & bibliographical references	Excellent research: integration of a wide range of primary & secondary sources, cited correctly.	Thorough research: use of a good range of primary & secondary sources. Minor errors in referencing.	Fair research (but some use of inappropriate / non- academic sources). Some errors in referencing.	Limited research leading to superficial coverage of subject. Incorrect means of referencing sources.	Inadequate research (i.e. use of inappropriate / non- scholarly sources)
3. Contextual awareness	Detailed knowledge of historical &/or cultural context (awareness of primary & secondary issues).	Clear understanding of primary issues, some grasp of secondary issues.	Uneven coverage of primary issues (some inaccuracies & omissions), little awareness of secondary issues.	Limited awareness of primary issues (numerous inaccuracies & omissions).	No contextual awareness or major inaccuracies and omissions.
4. Presentation (structure and writing style, incl. grammar and spelling)	Exceptional presentation: well written, highly coherent, & logically organised paper which includes a clear introduction / thesis statement & very effective concluding remarks.	Clearly written, effectively structured essay that incorporates a clear thesis statement & useful concluding remarks.	Reasonable paper but with some grammatical & stylistic problems &/or lacking structural clarity (e.g. limited introductory or concluding statements).	Poorly written & ineffectively structured essays: illogical organisation of material, poor grammatical structures & use of colloquialisms).	Very poorly written or very brief answers with extensive grammatical, organisational & presentational errors.

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PRESENTATION GRADING RUBRIC

Criteria	Excellent A	Good B	Fair C	Poor D	Fail F
Length	15-20 mins	>20 mins or 10-14 mins	8-9 mins	6-7 mins	<5 mins
1. Response to question/s posed	Focused and nuanced responses to all questions.	Clear responses to questions posed; few errors or omissions.	Fair response to questions but lacking sustained focus; some factual errors.	Limited engagement with key question/s; several errors of fact and/or interpretation.	No engagement with key questions / major inaccuracies and omissions.
2. Research	Extensive range of high-quality sources used (primary and secondary).	Thorough research: a good range of appropriate sources used.	Some reliance on non-academic / inappropriate sources.	Heavy reliance on inappropriate / non-academic sources.	Very poor choice of sources (e.g. all popular or non-academic works).
3. Handout/ PowerPoint	Informative, clear & imaginative design. Covers key points addressed & sources used. Excellent use of images (where appropriate).	Well structured, informative and clear. Good use of images (where appropriate).	Reasonably structured. Fair use of images (where appropriate).	Poorly structured, disorganised and/or overly brief. Poor use of images.	No supporting materials.
4. Delivery	Extremely coherent, distinctive and imaginative presentation of material.	Engaging and effective presentation of material.	Clear & reasonably assured delivered.	Poor &/or disorganised delivery indicating a lack of preparation.	Very poorly delivered & organised; no effort to engage the audience.
5. Connections made with the course	Effectively links issues under discussion to course themes.	Makes a number of helpful links to course themes.	Occasional connections to course themes	Very limited connections to course themes.	No engagement with wider course themes.
6. Response to class questions	Clear, confident, accurate and articulate responses to questions.	Good responses to questions; shows a clear understanding of important issues.	Fair responses but showing a limited grasp of wider themes or specific issues.	Poor responses showing only a very limited grasp of major issues.	Answers indicate no understanding of key issues.



CLASS PARTICIPATION RUBRIC

Grade	Assessment Criteria
A	Consistently excellent contributions to seminar discussion throughout the semester, showing evidence of extensive preparatory reading, a high level of curiosity, engagement with a wide range of subjects, and an excellent understanding of the historical/cultural context of the topics under review.
B	Consistent engagement with seminar discussions throughout the semester displaying a fair level of preparatory reading, a clear interest in the subjects, and a solid grasp of key themes and the historical/cultural context of the topics underreview.
C	Inconsistent contributions to seminar discussion over the course of the semester. Limited engagement with the subjects based on cursory preparation. Simplistic understanding of key themes and the historical/ cultural context of the topics underdiscussion.
D	Very limited engagement with seminar discussions. Poor understanding of key themes and a lack of knowledge ofthe historical/cultural context of the topics under discussion.
F	No positive engagement with seminar discussion, no evidence of preparatory reading.



Grading Criteria:

- 1) **Two source analysis papers (750-1,000 words each):** Each paper constitutes **15%** of the final grade.
- 2) **One research essay (1,500-2,000 words):** Constitutes **40%** of the final grade.

Students are encouraged to include maps, tables, and images in their papers.

Each paper must use appropriate citations and have a bibliography comprising a minimum of five scholarly sources.

Plagiarism: Is the unattributed use of another person's work. This constitutes cheating. If you are quoting another person's words directly, they must be placed in quotation marks and cited. Whether deliberate or not, plagiarism constitutes a serious violation of the Honor Code.

- 3) **Presentation:** This will be on the same subject as the research essay and delivered at an assigned date in weeks 4-13. It constitutes **15%** of the final grade.
- 4) **Class participation:** Constitutes **15%** of the final grade.

Honors: Students taking this course for Honors credit will be expected to write more extended and detailed analyses (1,000-1,500 words each) and research papers (2,000-2,500 words).

Summary of Assignments

Assignment	Value	Submission Date
Essay 1 (Source analysis)	15% of the final grade	18 September
Essay 2 (Source analysis)	15%	9 October
Presentation	15%	To be delivered in weeks 4-13
Research Essay	40%	5 December
Class contributions	15%	

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Withdrawal and Attendance policies:

Harlaxton College expects regular class attendance by all students. Students are considered sufficiently mature to appreciate the necessity of regular and punctual attendance, to accept this personal responsibility and to accept the consequences of failure to attend. When absences occur due to emergency or medical reasons, students are expected to notify their instructors of the absence prior to class or to seek the assistance of the College nurse or a member of the Student Experience Team for help in notifying instructors.

Instructors have the authority to grant excused absences for medical, psychological, or personal reasons upon review of appropriate documentation and professional recommendation supporting such a request. In the event of long-term illness, reasonable accommodations will be made to allow a student to complete a course. In these cases, the Dean will need to approve the long term nature of the accommodation.

The Dean of Harlaxton College has the authority to grant excused absences for medical, psychological, or personal reasons.

Each instructor is expected to maintain an attendance policy in keeping with the nature of the Harlaxton program and may consider it in evaluating performance in their courses.

Policy Governing Unexcused Absences:

Harlaxton College operates an attendance policy that is binding on all faculty and students. The number of unexcused absences that are allowed before incurring a penalty is related to the number of times a class meets each week. For courses which meet three times a week, students are allowed a maximum of three unexcused absences during the semester without attracting penalty points. For courses meeting twice a week two such absences are permitted, and for courses meeting once a week a single absence is allowed. Additional unexcused absences will attract a grade penalty.

Policy Governing Excused Absences:

- Excused absences are not given to facilitate student travel independent of College-sponsored travel.
- Students may be permitted to miss class because of participation in academic field trips.
- Instructors must co-ordinate and confirm academic fieldtrips with the Dean, prior to the commencement of the Semester to ensure their inclusion in the Semester timetable.
- Where authorization for an academic fieldtrip is requested after the commencement of the semester, the request must be submitted to the Dean.

Honor Code:

All students at the University of Evansville agree to the University honor code: *I will neither give nor receive unauthorized aid, nor will I tolerate an environment that condones the use of unauthorized aid.*

Course AI Policy

In this course, submission of any work that is not entirely your own is considered academic dishonesty unless otherwise specified. This means that the use of generative AI tools is prohibited, except for certain assignments for which you are given specific guidelines and examples of appropriate AI use. When permitted, you must clearly identify and cite the AI tools used. Submitting AI-generated work as your own constitutes a violation of academic integrity as an example of unauthorized aid.



University Policy Statements

Disability Policy

The University of Evansville is committed to providing an accessible and supportive environment for students with disabilities. It is the policy and practice of the University of Evansville to make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. Students should contact Disability Services at 812-488-2663 to seek services or accommodations for disabilities. Written notification to faculty from Disability Services is required for academic accommodations.

The University of Evansville Disability Services office will share the request for academic accommodations with the Academic Support team at Harlaxton College. Staff members at Harlaxton will meet individually with students to discuss needs and provide additional information related to examinations or other assessments.

Students from partner institutions should provide the appropriate letter of accommodation from their institution to the Academic Support team at Harlaxton College.

Institutional Equity and Title IX

UE is committed to fostering an atmosphere free from harassment and creating an inclusive campus for all members of the University community regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, religion, ethnicity, country of origin, ability, or veteran status. All Faculty members are considered Responsible Employees and required to report instances of discrimination, harassment, or sexual violence to the Office of Institutional Equity.

If you or someone you know has been harassed, assaulted, or discriminated against you can find the appropriate resources by contacting the Assistant Director of Institutional Equity and Title IX Coordinator: email titleix@evansville.edu ; phone (812) 488-5261. For more information visit <https://www.evansville.edu/offices/titleix/policy.cfm> .

You may also choose to speak to a Confidential Resource about your experience. Confidential Resources at the University of Evansville include:

- Counseling Services: counselingservices@evansville.edu, 812-488-2633
- Health Center Professionals: healthcenter@evansville.edu, 812-488-2033
- Spiritual Formation Coordinator: 812- 488-5265, spiritualformation@evansville.edu

Harlaxton College:

- College Nurse: Lesley Selby, RGN, +44 01476 403027, lselby@harlaxton.ac.uk
- Counselling Services: counselling@harlaxton.ac.uk

Non-Discrimination Statement

The University of Evansville expects all members of its community to treat each other with respect and civility.

Harassing behaviors directed towards any member of our community will not be tolerated. As part of its commitment to non-discrimination, the University specifically prohibits harassment based on any other characteristics set forth in its nondiscrimination statement as follows: including race, color, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, creed or religion, national origin, age, disability, veteran status and all federally protected groups/classes. Any form of harassment undermines the mission of the University and negatively impacts the University community as a whole.

Complaints, Grievances, and Appeals

The University of Evansville seeks to resolve all student concerns in a timely and effective manner through policies and processes documented in the University [Course Catalog](#) and [Student Handbook](#).