

INDEPENDENT STUDY IN MEDIEVAL HISTORY [HIST 491]

FALL 2025

Instructor	David Green	Phone	+44 (0)1476403019
Office Location	British Faculty Offices	Email	dgreen@harlaxton.ac.uk
Course Meeting Days and Time	Tu 4.00-5.15pm and tutorials by arrangement	Student Drop-In Office Hours	Tu/Thurs 1.00-2.00pm or by appointment
Course Mode	In-person		

Catalog Description

This course engages in research and/or focused readings for history majors and minors on aspects of medieval Western European history (c.1000-c.1500).

Students will be able to choose their own research area/s but particular attention will be paid to the British Isles and France in the later Middle Ages.

Prerequisites: permission of the instructor and prior coursework in history.

Credit Hour Policy Statement

“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 completing the course be able to:

- show a detailed knowledge of relevant events/factual details
- analyse historical and historiographical evidence
- demonstrate a clear understanding of scholarly conventions
- write an extended research essay in a clear and engaging manner using appropriate academic language
- employ appropriate scholarly apparatus (e.g. correct means of citation)
- use a wide range of primary as well as secondary sources

Methods of Instructions

Specific requirements will be determined according to the credits to be received for the course (1-3, Hons/Non-Hons).

Students will be expected to work diligently and engage in a good deal of focused reading throughout the semester following a program of guided research.

A subject or range of subjects for research will be determined following the completion of a proposal and a review of existing literature/scholarship. Dates will then be agreed for the submission of intermediary projects/papers before the submission of a final paper.

Students are expected to read widely among primary and secondary sources and may wish to take advantage of the availability of British and European sources/resources (architectural, archaeological, historical etc.).

Subject areas for study may include but are not restricted to:

- Anglo-French relations in the middle ages (e.g., the Hundred Years War, 1337-1453)
- Anglo-Celtic relations (Ireland, Scotland, and Wales)
- Kingship and queenship
- The Black Death
- Chivalry and knighthood
- Religious belief (including heresy and popular religion)
- Biographical explorations of major figures/families
- Medieval art and architecture
- Medievalism – the use of medieval concepts and ideas in later periods in art, literature, popular culture, politics etc.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introductions

Week 2: Library research

Weeks 3: Research proposal

Week 4: Research proposal – peer review (if appropriate)

Week 5: Literature review

Week 6: Literature review – peer review (if appropriate)

Weeks 7-14: Individual tutorials

Grading Criteria and Course Assessment

To complete the course, students will undertake a research project comprised of a proposal, literature review, and extended essay.

Assessed Work	Weighting	Submission Date
Research Proposal	15%	23 Sept.
Literature Review	15%	14 Oct.
Research Essay	70%	9 Dec.

Research Proposal

A research proposal makes certain that you have a worthwhile project and have acquired a good grasp of the relevant literature and the major issues, and that your methodology is sound. It shows that you have the competence and time to complete the project. It includes sufficient information to allow the reader/assessor/faculty member to evaluate the proposed study. The research proposal explains what you plan to accomplish and how you are going to do it.

Required Elements

Your research proposal should be a minimum of three pages in length and include a section on each of the following areas:

- **Title:** this should be concise and descriptive.
- **Thesis statement:** this should be relatively extensive and certainly more than a single sentence.
- **Research questions / key points:** formulate your research questions and explain their significance. You should have a project which addresses questions/issues which are clear and sufficiently well-defined for you to complete within the available time.
- **Methods / Work Plan:** show how you plan to tackle your research problem; describe the activities necessary for the completion of your project.
- **Bibliography:** works consulted and required.
- **Questions for tutor:** issues still to be determined or which require further clarification.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review outlines and evaluates the available scholarship that has been produced on a given topic or theme. A review differs from similar exercises (such as annotated bibliographies or critical analyses of primary and secondary sources) in several ways. First, the literature review does not merely describe a text or an academic's body of work: it examines and evaluates that work critically in relation to other works on the same topic. The focus of a literature review is governed and guided by an overarching research question, theme, argument or topic. By synthesising the body of work that is relevant to a particular topic in this way, a review of this sort establishes the available knowledge on a topic, defines the strengths and weaknesses of different works, and can help identify the main scholarly arguments, debates, research gaps and approaches relevant to the topic.

GRADING RUBRIC

CRITERIA	A	B	C	D
Analysis	Demonstrates clear understanding of the topic and includes a variety of sources from high-quality journals and publications.	Demonstrates fair understanding of the topic and includes primary research articles from well-respected journals in the field.	Shows limited understanding of the topic. Over-reliance on low quality journals and/or a few sources are not reliable.	Shows poor grasp of the topic. Most sources referenced are unreliable.
Structure	Organizational plan enhances the presentation, promoting ease in reading.	Well organized with organizational plan obvious throughout.	Organizational plan is inconsistent.	No clear organization.
Writing	Contains no spelling or grammatical errors and demonstrates creative use of language. Uses quotations and citations to enhance the review. Makes smooth transitions between sentences and sections. Uses appropriate and correct means of citation.	Contains few spelling or grammatical errors. Uses quotations and citations appropriately. Links sections/paragraphs effectively. Few errors in means of citation.	Contains noticeable but not distracting spelling or grammatical errors. Reasonably effective use of quotations. Some awkward transitions between sections. Consistent errors in citations.	Contains numerous distracting spelling or grammatical errors. Lacks or uses quotations ineffectively or inappropriately. Poor transitions between sections. No recognised means of citation used.
Synthesis	Summarizes and synthesizes the literature effectively and notes gaps in and/or limitations of the research.	Summarizes the overall picture obtained from the literature review and synthesizes the knowledge gained.	Summarizes the overall picture obtained from the literature review but lacks synthesis.	Lacks summary or synthesis of the information, leaving each article as a standalone piece and/or misinterprets the information and/or makes statements unsupported by the literature.

RESEARCH PAPER GRADING RUBRIC

CRITERIA	A	B	C	D	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 colloquialism s).	Very poorly written or very brief answers with extensive grammatical, organisational & presentational errors.

N.B. **Plagiarism** is the unattributed use of another person's work. This constitutes cheating. If you are quoting another person's words or directly using their ideas, they must be cited. Whether deliberate or not, plagiarism constitutes a serious violation of the Honor Code.

Withdrawal and Attendance Policies

Please see the Semester Calendar for the last day to Drop/Add a class and the last day to Withdraw from a class.

Student Absence

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 Support 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.

The Dean 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. This will be determined by the course member and included in their syllabus (e.g. a full-letter grade (A to B), or a third-letter grade (A- to B+).

Covid-19 Policy: Students should not attend class if they are feeling unwell. They should seek to notify their instructors of their absence and, if possible, participate in their classes online.

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.

If approval is granted:

- Missed class time due to student participation is to be considered an excused absence.
- It is the student's responsibility - to take the initiative by consulting with their instructors before the absence occurs, and - to do what is required by the instructor to make up all missed assignments and/or examinations.
- The grade of a student may not be lowered in any class due to excused absences.
- Instructors are required to assist students in these occasional situations of excused absences.

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.

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 include:

University of Evansville

- 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](#).