
St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo
Department of History
HIST 391-001
The Black Death
Fall 2018
Thursdays 2:30-4:20
SJ1 3012

Instructor Information

Instructor/Game Master: Jolanta N. Komornicka
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I am available outside of office hours by appointment

Course Description

The Black Death of the fourteenth century dramatically changed just about every aspect of medieval society. There are those who even argue that it is what inaugurated the beginning of the modern world. Over the course of the term, we will examine what the Black Death was, how it came to western Europe, and how it impacted the social, religious, political, and economic lives of the people of the fourteenth century. The course will be played as a semester-long game. Class time will consist of lectures, discussions, and game-related tasks. Note that this course only meets for 2 hours per week. The third classtime hour you are expected to devote to the research tasks that are part of the course (and the game).

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- A. Contextualize events and occurrences within the basic outlines of late medieval history
- B. Analyse primary documents, answering who, what, why, and for whom
- C. Accurately indentify the main argument and thesis in a scholarly article
- D. Identify the holes in their own knowledge, then structure and execute a plan to fill those gaps
- E. Work constructively with a team to assign tasks and equitably distribute the workload
- F. Analyze problems and devise strategies to solve them
- G. *Write your own course-related goal in the space below, including how you intend to monitor your progress toward the achievement of that goal:*

The Game

This course will be run as a game. You will be part of a team throughout the term. In game parlance, the team is your Plague Hospital, and you are on its staff. Assignments are Monsters, research work is a Quest, in-class activities are Adventures, and there will be badges to earn and experience points (XP) to gain. There are also Side-Quests you can undertake for bonus points. The in-game XP you earn is related to your course grade. You will be assessed primarily on your individual work, not on your team's dynamics. That said, having an effective team will ultimately make your life easier when you do your (solo) final project. All of this is explained in the **game manual** and will be explained in class.

Expectations

The basic requirement for participation is attendance and, in HIST 391, attendance is mandatory. The instructor takes attendance each class. Students who do not attend 80% of the classes have not adequately participated in the course and may, consequently, be denied the credit. Students, moreover, must fulfill all the course requirements in order to receive credit for HIST 391. This not only includes attendance in class but also all written assignments and examinations.

History 391 is not a survey course. It presupposes a basic familiarity with the major names, dates, and events of the European Middle Ages. While there is no prerequisite for the course, students may find it advantageous to first take HIST 260. Students who have not previously studied the details of medieval history may find it useful to “brush up” independently on their medieval history and are encouraged to speak with the instructor about appropriate ways to do so. **There will be ample opportunity within the course to full-in your own knoweldge gaps.** These are things we all have and the best solution is to learn how to efficiently plug the holes.

There are several tools available to help students familiarize themselves with the Middle Ages. The best reference source for quick facts about medieval topics is the *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, which is available in the reference department at both the St. Jerome's and Porter Libraries. The best online academic site for medieval primary sources is Fordham University's *Medieval Sourcebook*. The standard textbook used in survey courses on the Middle Ages is Edward Peters' *Europe and the Middle Ages*.

Each week's class focuses on a given theme or topic. The weekly two-hour meeting will be divided between a lecture and a discussion period with required exercises. During this time, students will explore a series of questions pertaining to the facts of medieval history and to the study of primary and secondary sources. The extra hour typically spent in class is to be added to the time spent outside the classroom doing work for this course. The workload for the course has been designed with that extra hour in mind.

Required Text

Information Now: A Graphic Guide to Student Research, Upson, Hall, and Cannon. ISBN: 9780226095691

There is no assigned Black Death textbook. However, I have placed several books on the Black Death on reserve in the St. Jerome's Library. You will find these books to be an excellent starting point for each phase of your research.

Course Requirements and Assessment

Assessment	Date of Evaluation (if known)	Weighting*
1. Participation	Weekly	5%
2. Footnote Analysis	Oct. 4	8%
3. Research Assignments	Sept. 30; Oct. 21; Nov. 11	36%
4. In Class Exam	Nov. 29	11%
5. Final Project	Dec. 5	30%
6. Student-chosen Assignments	Nov. 2	10%
Total		100%

Participation

The basic requirement for participation is attendance and, in HIST 391, attendance is mandatory. Students in HIST 391 also earn participation points by attending the the medieval lecture on Oct. 4th at 4:30 or the CAMELOT conference on Sept. 16th. Please arrange personal and work schedules in advance so that you are able to attend. You must submit a one-page written reflection, before the last day of classes, to summarize your thoughts on the event. You may upload it via Dropbox on Learn.

Students who do not participate in weekly lectures, or who fall behind on weekly readings and group work, will find it challenging to catch up. The best way to avoid this difficulty is to keep up to date with the workload. This means, each week, reading carefully and taking notes, but also reviewing material from the previous week. Students should come to class armed with questions or opinions and be prepared to voice them.

Some students find it helpful to read more extensively on the material covered in the course. The best reference source for quick facts about medieval topics is the Dictionary of the Middle Ages, available in the Porter Library's reference department at D114.D5 1982.

Footnote Analysis—Darg

Students will be given two sets of footnotes from two different academic papers. After an initial discussion in class, students will evaluate the two sets and write up their conclusions. A more detailed description can be found in the Monster Manual or the Assignment Guidelines.

Research Assignments—Quests

As you do research in your teams, you will be reading a vareity of primary and secondary sources. For the primary sources that you select (minimum 2 per Phase), you will write a brief blurb introducing that source (in game lingo, you will fight the monster Blob-Tale). For the secondary texts (again, a minimum of 2 per Phase), you will write a précis (i.e. fight a Misgloze): a brief summary indicating who wrote it, what it's about, how it makes its argument, and why it's valuable for understanding the question of the Black Death. We will discuss how to do all of this in class and instructions are in the Monster Manual/Assignment Guidelines.

In-Class Exam—Corsned

There will be an in-class exam (the miniboss Corsned). It will consist of Multiple Choice, True/False, and Chronology. No Essay! It is meant simply to check that everyone has understood the basics of the history studied this term.

Final Project—Iswonk

Your final project asks you to make sense of all the information you've accumulated as part of your team. See the instructions in the Monster Manual/Assignment Guidelines. The final project draws on all the work you've done over the course of the term. We will discuss it at the beginning of the course and then in more depth as time draws nearer to preparing and submitting the project.

Student-Chosen Assignments

In addition to the assignments the instructor has provided, students will have a choice of 6 other possible ones to do (you only have to complete one). You can choose to do more than one, or do the same one multiple times, for more credit. These are the monsters Aceasecomic, Bell-Penny, Pitchkettled, Purfle, Ribble, and Wheeple.

*** Please look at the assessment weighting provided above once again.** You have the opportunity to change how you want your grade weighted. Some students know they excel at written work, while others prefer formal examinations. To that end, you have 5% that you can redistribute as you will (subtracting from one area, adding to another, but such that the total remains 100%). There are two hard rules.

#1. No assessment can be worth less than 3%.

#2. You cannot change the Participation weighting.

Note that if you adjust the Student-Chosen Assignments, the instructor will apply it to all the possibilities and make the reiteration adjustments as well (this will make sense once you've looked at your deck and read the Monster Manual/Assignment Guidelines). You are not required to make any changes to what has been provided. Any changes must be done as part of the Opening-Day Quiz (Erendrake), due on 9/14. By week 3, your choices are locked in for the term.

Course Outline / Class Schedule

Assigned readings are to be completed in advance of our class meetings (so for the readings listed under Sept. 13, complete those readings before Thursday the 13th). You may have noticed the dearth of assigned readings. In this course, you will be responsible for generating much of the course content (with the instructor's help, of course). Don't worry, you will end up doing plenty of reading, but it will be at your own pace and on topics that—within the parameters of the course—you find interesting. Part of the goal of this course is to get you more comfortable with doing research in History; therefore articles have been provided for you as standard bibliographic citations. You will need to look up where these articles are located and how to access them in advance of class.

Yes, the comics are required reading.

Five of the lectures will be posted on Learn. They will be available for 2 weeks each, during which time you can listen to them and view the powerpoints as many times as you desire. There's no quiz or anything similar attached. However, the end-of-term exam will primarily draw from lecture, therefore it is in your interest to listen and take notes when you have the opportunity to do so. The flipping of the lectures is done in order to give us enough in-class time to complete the activities that are part of the course. I will always take time for questions, so if you find something confusing or are curious about something in a lecture (whether delivered in person or posted online), make a note of it and ask.

Please Note: "Secondary Reading" or "Secondary Source" does not mean it is less important than a "Primary Reading"/"Primary Source." These terms are part of History jargon that you are expected to know (I'm sure you all know this by now, but every term someone surprises me). Refer to the explainer on Learn if you require a refresher.

Date	Sept. 6
Topic	Introduction to the Course and The Black Death – The Game. Intro Lecture
	At home, read through all the course materials and complete the Opening-Day Quiz (Erendrake).
Date	Sept. 13 – Phase 1 Begins
Topic	Modern Epidemiology
Readings	1. John Thielmann and Frances Cate, "A Plague of Plagues: The Problem of Plague Diagnosis in Medieval England," <i>Journal of Interdisciplinary History</i> 37:3 (2007): 371-393. 2. Pre-Plague Comic (see Learn) 3. <i>Information Now</i> , Introduction and Chapter 1
	In class you will receive your first text for your team. Your précis and primary blurb for Text 1 should be submitted by Sunday Sept. 30 at 10pm. Opening-Day Quiz (Erendrake) due on Learn by 10pm on Friday Sept. 14

Date	Sept. 20
Topic	China to Europe
Readings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. David Mengel, "A Plague on Bohemia? Mapping the Black Death," <i>Past & Present</i> 211 (2011): 3-34. 2. Caffa Comic (see Learn) 3. Marseille Comic (see Learn) 4. <i>Information Now</i>, Chapter 6
Date	Sept. 27
Topic	Blame
Readings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Samuel K. Cohn, Jr., "The Black Death and the Burning of Jews," <i>Past & Present</i> 196 (2007): 3-36. 2. <i>Information Now</i>, Chapter 2 3. Avignon Graves Comic (see Learn) 4. Princess Comic (see Learn)
Date	Oct. 4—Phase 2 Begins
Topic	<p>Medical Interventions</p> <p>Lecture for today will be posted on Learn.</p> <p>In class we will begin the set-up for the minigame.</p>
Readings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Information Now</i>, Chapter 3 <p>Due: Footnote Assignment, 10pm on Learn</p> <p>In class you will receive your second text for your team. Your précis and primary blurb for Text 2 should be submitted by Sunday Oct. 21 at 10pm.</p>
Date	NO CLASS Oct. 8-10. Oct. 11th = Tuesday, Oct. 12th = Wednesday
Topic	No Class
Date	Oct. 18
Topic	<p>Coping and Surviving</p> <p>Lecture will be posted on Learn. In class: minigame.</p>
Readings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The Black Death Comes to Norwich</i> 2. France comic (see Learn)
Date	Oct. 25—Phase 3 Begins
Topic	<p>Effects: Religion</p> <p>Lecture will be posted on Learn. In class: minigame.</p>
Readings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Avignon comic (see Learn) <p>In class you will receive the third text for your group. Your précis and primary blurbs for Text 3 should be submitted by Sun. Nov. 11 at 10pm.</p>

Date	Nov. 1
Topic	Effects: Art and Literature In class we will debrief from the minigame.
Readings	1. <i>Information Now</i> , Chapter 4
	Nov. 2: Student-chosen assignments due, whether to instructor directly or on Learn, at 10pm.
Date	Nov. 8
Topic	Effects: Politics Lecture will be posted on Learn.
Readings	1. <i>Information Now</i> , Chapter 5 2. England Comic (see Learn)
Date	Nov. 15
Topic	Effects: Economics and Labor
Readings	1. <i>Information Now</i> , Chapter 8 2. Walsham Comic (see Learn)
Date	Nov. 22
Topic	Later Plagues and a Transformed World
Readings	1. <i>Information Now</i> , Conclusion
Date	Nov. 29
Topic	EXAM (Corsned) – IN CLASS
Dec. 1	Training on respawning monsters and all side-quests due.
Dec. 5	Final Project Due at 10pm on Learn. No late assignments permitted for the Final Project (Iswonk).

Late Work

Late work will be accepted, but subject to a 5% penalty for every 24-hour period the assignment is late. The final project must be submitted on or before the due date and time.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory, both for discussion and lecture. However, life happens. Students are afforded one unpenalized absence from class, no documentation required. You have a card in your deck to this effect. You can hand it in either before or after the missed class. Use it wisely. Whether you are in or out of class on a given day, you are responsible for knowing the material covered. If you miss a class, find a friend and get notes from them, then contact the instructor to clarify anything in those notes.

Important Information

Academic Integrity: To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo and its Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (AFIW) are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage and the Arts](#)

[Academic Integrity webpage for more information.](#)

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the [St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the [St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances](#).

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the [St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Appeals](#).

Note for Students with Disabilities: The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Mental Health Services:

On Campus

- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 x32655
- [MATES](#): one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counselling Services
- Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek from the Student Life Centre

Off campus, 24/7

- [Good2Talk](#): Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Extended Assessment Unit Phone: 519-749-4300 x6880
- [Here 24/7](#): Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- [OK2BME](#): Support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 x222

Full details can be found online at the Faculty of ARTS [website](#)

Download [UWaterloo and regional mental health resources \(PDF\)](#)

Writing and Communication Centre

The Writing and Communication Centre (WCC) works with students as they develop their ideas, draft, and revise. Writing and communication specialists offer one-on-one support in planning assignments, synthesizing and citing research, organizing papers and reports, designing presentations and e-portfolios, and revising for clarity and coherence.

You can make multiple appointments throughout the term, or you can drop in at the Library for quick questions or feedback. To book a 25- or 50-minute appointment and to see drop-in hours, visit uwaterloo.ca/wcc. Group appointments for team-based projects, presentations, and papers are also available.

Please note that communication specialists guide you to see your work as readers would. They can teach you revising skills and strategies, but will not change or correct your work for you.