MEDIEVAL INTERFAITH RELATIONS
HIST 5202—TUES. 5:30-8:00PM
PROF. ALEX J. NOVIKOFF

Course Overview
This graduate seminar looks at medieval interfaith relations from a trans-national perspective, looking at zones of cross-cultural contact across the medieval Mediterranean and Northern Europe and over the whole of the Middle Ages. To keep things manageable, the syllabus has been divided according to discrete topics or chronological periods. Each week will engage with a different topic or cluster of topics related to interfaith relations. Some of these topics center around a particular location or faith group while others deal more broadly with intellectual, cultural, or commercial relations. While Catholic Europe looms large, due consideration will also be give to Jews, Muslims, Byzantine Christians, and various “heretical” groups within Christianity and Judaism. Above all, the readings have been meant to provoke conversation, comparison, and debate as to the evolving nature of medieval interfaith relations and they are also intended to stimulate your own thinking about a topic that today is as relevant and urgent as ever.

Readings
- The majority of the readings consist of articles and books chapters that will be placed in the dropbox folder for this class. You are responsible for tracking down, scanning, and placing in the dropbox the readings that you have been assigned to present on in class. Everyone is expected to read everything, but the persons presenting on the week’s readings are especially expected to prepare in advance any background necessary.

Requirements
- Regular attendance and participation in class discussion is essential. To be best prepared, it is important to have read the articles and chapters in advance and to be ready to discuss them within the wider context of the week’s theme (their strengths, weaknesses, and the avenues of research that they open up).
- Everyone will present twice on a reading (or pair of readings if they are sufficiently short) during the semester. This means ensuring that the readings are scanned and accessible in the Dropbox folder, preparing a 1-2 page handout touching on the major points of the article, and then leading a discussion on the contributions of the article (usually by means of some prepared questions).
- There are no exams for this seminar. However, there is a final term paper of approximately 16-18 pages. We will discuss this in greater detail in class, but my suggestion is to select a topic/theme from the semester’s syllabus and to develop it into a fuller historiographical essay. If you have another project in mind that intersects with this class’s themes, I am open to that.
- Please email me if you have any concerns or if you need to miss a class: anovikoff@fordham.edu. I hold regular office hours in the Center for Medieval Studies (405H) on Tuesdays (2pm-4pm) and at my Lincoln Center office (MW 3-5pm).
Syllabus

Week 1 (Jan. 19): Course Overview
• David Nirenberg, Neighboring Faiths: Christians, Muslims and Jews in the Middle Ages and Today (Chicago, 2014), chaps. 1 + 9.

Week 2 (Jan. 26): Defining Orthodoxy in Late Antiquity

Week 3 (Feb. 2): Jews and Early Medieval Christian Policy Towards Jews
• Christian Attitudes Toward the Jews in the Middle Ages: A Casebook, ed. Michael Frassetto (London, 2007), essays by Patricia Skinner (on southern Italy) and Daniel Callahan (on Jerusalem).

Week 4 (Feb. 9): Catholic-Byzantine Relations up to the Twelfth Century

[Feb 16: Tuesday Follows a Monday Schedule]

Week 5 (Feb. 23): Jewish and Christian Commercial Relations in the Muslim World
• Olivia Remie Constable, Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World: Lodging, Trade, and Travel in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages (Cambridge, 2003), 3 + 9.

**Week 6 (March 1): Jewish Intellectual Life in the Muslim World**


**Week 7 (March 8): Religion and (In)-Tolerance in the Age of Crusades**

• David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1996), intro and chaps. 6-7.


**Week 8 (March 15): Religion and (In)-Tolerance in the Age of Crusades II**

• Brian A. Catlos, *Infidel Kings and Unholy Warriors: Faith, Power, and Violence in the Age of Crusade and Jihad* (New York, 2014), parts II and IV.


[March 22: Spring Recess, No Class!]

**Week 9 (March 29): Jewish-Christian Relations in the Twelfth Century**


**Week 10 (April 5): The Problem of Heresy in the High Middle Ages**


• Reviews of R. I. Moore.

Week 11 (April 12): Jewish-Christian Relations in the Later Middle Ages
• Ryan Szpiech, Conversion and Narrative: Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic (Penn Press, 2012), 2 chaps. TBD.

Week 12 (April 19): Byzantium, the Ottomans, and the West
• Nancy Bisaha, Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks (Philadelphia, 2004), intro and chap. 2.
• Nadia El Cheikh, Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs (Harvard, 2004), chaps. 1+3.

Week 13 (April 26): Interfaith Relations at the End of the Middle Ages
• David Nirenberg, Neighboring Faiths: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in the Middle Ages and Today (Chicago, 2014), chaps. 4 and 7.

Week 14 (May 3): Final Presentations

Week 15 (May 10): Final Presentations