

LATIN 488M/631: MEDIEVAL LATIN
Space, Place, and Travel in Medieval Latin
University of Maryland, College Park
Fall 2021
Prof. Carin Ruff

MEETING TIME: Mondays 5:00 pm – 7:40 pm

CONTACTING ME: Email — carinr@gmail.com — is the way to reach me. I am not on campus except on nights when this class is meeting, but I am happy to meet via Zoom any time. Email me to set up a time.

TEXTS & COURSE WEBSITE: Latin texts for class readings will be provided mainly in digital format and occasionally in photocopy or printouts. I will post texts, secondary readings, bibliography, links to online reference sources, manuscript images, etc., as well as updates to the schedule of readings and assignments, at <https://ruffnotes.org/umd-medieval-latin-fall-2021/>. I will email you when I update the schedule or add materials, but do bookmark that site and check back frequently.

ABOUT THE COURSE:

Latinities: We will explore texts from late antiquity to the high Middle Ages including a variety of genres, styles, and registers: travelogues, letters, exegesis, monastic rules, verse satire, plans and maps, and more. We will sample the variety of Latinities that emerged after the classical period and after Latin ceased to be anyone’s native language. You will expand your sense of what Latin can be and do, develop flexibility in orienting yourself to new genres, unfamiliar subjects, and unlikely scenarios; and become familiar with vocabulary and concepts of Christian Latin. We will practice using the reference tools best suited to postclassical Latin and work on becoming more sophisticated users of dictionaries.

Theme: I have chosen texts grouped around the theme of space, place, and travel, which will give us a chance to think about the real and imaginary scope of the world as understood by authors who used Latin in the late empire and after. We will explore some of the critical approaches of “the spatial turn” that have been applied to the study of premodern texts and those who are interested can dig further into critical approaches in their term projects.

Manuscripts: For almost every text we read, we will also look at digitized manuscripts in which that texts survive. For some texts — notably plans and maps — reading the manuscript will be our primary approach to the text. You will thus come away from this course with some basic experience in paleography — reading medieval scripts and understanding how script and manuscript layout change over time — and in navigating online repositories of digitized manuscripts.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS, TEXTS, & TOPICS:

☞ N.B.: This schedule is subject to adjustment, as our reading progresses and our interests develop.

Aug. 30 Introduction

Sept. 6 Labor Day, no class

Sept. 13 *Itinerarium Egeriae* and Valerius of Bierzo’s letter in praise of Egeria

Sept. 20	Adomnán, <i>De locis sanctis</i>
Sept. 27	Adomnán and Bede, <i>De locis sanctis</i> Student presentations on secondary literature to be assigned
Oct. 4	Bede, <i>De templo</i> Student presentations on secondary literature to be assigned
Oct. 11	The Plan of St. Gall and the Rule of St. Benedict Student presentations on secondary literature to be assigned THIS WEEK: Email me to make an appointment to talk about final project ideas.
Oct 18	The Plan of St. Gall and the Rule of St. Benedict, cont'd. DUE: 1 st take-home translation test/exercise
Oct 25	Nigel Whitacre, <i>Speculum Stultorum</i> DEADLINE to talk to me about final project ideas.
Nov 1	<i>Speculum Stultorum</i> , cont'd.
Nov 8	Giraldus Cambrensis, <i>Itinerarium Cambriae</i> selections
Nov 15	Giraldus Cambrensis, cont'd.
Nov 22	Hereford Mappa Mundi and associated texts DUE: 2 nd take-home translation test/exercise
Nov 29	Hereford Mappa Mundi and associated texts, cont'd.
Dec 6	Student presentations of final projects in progress
Dec 13	Student presentations of final projects in progress
Sat., Dec. 18, 10:00 am	DUE: Final projects

PREREQUISITES: This course presumes satisfactory completion of a Latin course at the 300 level or equivalent preparation. You should have mastered the elements of Latin grammar, have substantial experience reading Latin, and be prepared to translate extended passages of Latin each week. Assignments in this class presume a basic command of the concepts and vocabulary needed to analyze the grammar of a Latin text and explain it to others. No previous work in postclassical or medieval Latin is presumed.

SEMINAR WORK & ATTENDANCE:

This is where, in ordinary years, I give you a stern lecture-paragraph about how being present for your classmates is especially crucial in a small seminar that meets only once a week. The work we do together in class cannot easily be made up, because it includes struggling together over the texts, sharing discoveries with each other, and raising questions that we can all follow up in further research.

That is all still true. But during COVIDtime, flexibility is of the essence. **If you have have symptoms that suggest possible illness, or if you have been exposed to the virus, let me know *quam primum*, err on the side of caution and stay home.** We have the online tools meet virtually to supplement what we do in class. We will make it work. That said, the success of our limited class sessions depends on everyone coming prepared to tackle the Latin and doing research to share as assigned. Far better to prepare imperfectly than to stay away for fear of the text.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES: Please see the UMD Course-Related Policies web page for policies on academic integrity, accessibility, COVID procedures, etc.:

<http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Grade scale: 97-100 = A+; 92-96 = A; 90-91 = A-; 87-89 = B+; 82-86 = B, 80-81 = B-; 77-79 = C+; 72-76 = C; 70-71 = C-; 67-69 = D+; 62-66 = D; 60-61 = D-; 59 & below = F.

Components of grade for this course:

30% Preparation and participation, including: in-class translation and manuscript work; and **short, informal presentations** to the class as assigned.

20% x 2 = 40%: Two take-home translation tests, each including a prepared passage from texts we have covered in class and a sight passage chosen from authors we have covered

30% Final project, including presentation of the project in process during the final weeks of term.

About the short presentations: I will assign short presentations on aspects of our weekly readings during the first half of term. These may involve finding background information on authors, texts, or historical context, or reading and reporting on a part of the secondary literature on one of our texts or topics. The precise number of these presentations will depend on how many people we have enrolled; everyone will do at least one.

About the final project: Each student will develop a term project resulting in a paper of 3000-4000 words (a length suitable for presentation as a conference paper). You may offer a literary reading of one or more texts. You may put medieval Latin texts in dialogue with texts from other periods or in other languages. You may explore questions of language, usage, or other technical matters, or historical, geographical, theological, or other questions that arise in our study of texts. You may work with texts of which we have read part in class, or explore texts we didn't have time to cover. (I have a *lot* of suggestions for texts I didn't have space to include.)

The nonnegotiable part of the project is that you must engage with the Latin text. Your project should demonstrate command of the language of your chosen text(s) informed by the work we have done together during the semester.

I encourage you to choose a small, manageable, closely-focused topic that leads the way to broader questions, rather than a huge question that will be hard to narrow down and get a grip on in the course of the term. I am happy to discuss project ideas and help you craft a manageable approach. We will discuss project possibilities further in class once we have started to dig into the texts.

Everyone will present their work in progress on their projects during the last two meetings of the term.

Auditors: Please plan to participate as far as you are able in translation and in making short presentations to the class when we need volunteers. You do not have to do a final project.