

Medieval Italy



Time and Location

T 10:40-11:30

R 10:40-12:35

FLI 101

Description

The Middle Ages (ca. 500-1300) was a period of fundamental transformations in Italian history. At the same time it was the only period between Antiquity and the modern age in which serious attempts were made to turn Italy into some sort of independent political unit. Such attempts foundered on the same rocks that exist today: the continuing crucial importance of local identities and problems. Before the modern era, Italy was a single independent state for only a few decades between the 460s and the 530s. However, unlike the early modern period, a good portion of the mainland was in some sense part of the same state for most of the early medieval period, and the kings of Italy, Ostrogothic, Lombard, and Frankish, were both powerful and rich. Early medieval Italy (with the exception of Rome and the papacy) has not traditionally attracted the interest of historians, despite its great significance for later developments. Italy, the fount of culture and civilization, shows very little in common with contemporary developments in early medieval Europe, except, perhaps a considerable legal sophistication, and the occasional chronicler with (Paul the Deacon) or without real literary abilities (Liutprand of Cremona). During the early Middle Ages, Italy, the mercantile center of the ancient and medieval Mediterranean, seems to have temporarily lost contact with the sea and to have been dominated by the rough warriors of the Germanic north, who introduced new forms of social organization: a closed economy, the manor, and feudalism. During the early Middle Ages, Italy first became part of the

northern Europe (as opposed to Mediterranean or southern Europe). A world of rural communities, with a small elite of aristocrats dominating and feeding itself from the labors of the peasantry, Italy before AD 1000 underwent exceptionally intense changes. Economic growth, territorial expansion, and dynamic cultural and social change, all marked the vitality of Italian society between 500 and 1000.

In this course we will examine the various aspects of this transformation. We will initially follow a topical, rather than chronological order. Our focus will be on the mainland, but we will also look at some of the neighboring areas, such as Sicily and Sardinia.

Textbooks

- Chris Wickham, *Early Medieval Italy: Central Power and Local Society, 400-1000*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001 [hereafter Wickham]; available as e-book through [Library West](#)
- David Abulafia (ed.), *Italy in the Central Middle Ages, 1000-1300*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2004 [hereafter Abulafia]; on two-hour reserve in [Library West](#)
- Katherine Ludwig Jansen, Joanna H. Drell, and Frances Andrews, *Medieval Italy. Texts in Translation*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009 [hereafter Jansen]; on two-hour reserve in [Library West](#)
- (optional) Christopher Kleinhenz, *Medieval Italy. An Encyclopedia*. New York: Routledge, 2004 [hereafter Kleinhenz]; available in the Reference section of [Library West](#)

Assignments

There is no attendance policy, but you are responsible for attending all lectures and reading the required texts. Class participation may be taken into account to determine the overall grade. The basis for evaluation of performance will be four quizzes, 10 journal entries, and two exams (Midterm and Final). The quizzes are exclusively based on primary source readings from your *Jansen* book and will consist only of multiple-choice questions (no essay). A careful study of the readings is necessary for a good performance at the quiz. The journal entries consist of e-mail messages sent on my address (fcurta@ufl.edu), in which you will discuss briefly the readings for the topics marked with (*) in the list of course weekly topics below. You can ask questions about the readings and/or make comments, raise issues that need clarification, etc. All journal entries should arrive at least 15 hours before the corresponding class meetings. Be sure to keep your postings to a reasonable length (175 to 250 words long). I do not want you to spend too much time on them, but I expect you to give an articulate presentation of your thoughts. Needless to say, I also expect you to check on correct grammar and spelling before clicking on "Send." The Midterm and Final exams will cover everything from lectures and readings. Both will consist of a short answer portion and a longer essay. Make-up quizzes, journal entries, or exams exam will be given only for very serious reasons. In every case, I will ask for written justification or proof. Extra-credit work will be accepted only for students with active participation in class discussions. The format of the extra-credit option shall be discussed with the instructor during regular office hours. The following point system will be used in determining the final grade:

Quizzes: 20 points
Journal entries: 20 points
Midterm: 30 points
Final exam: 30 points
Total: 100 points

Points	Grades
97-100	A
93-96	A-
88-92	B+

81-87	B
75-80	B-
68-74	C+
61-67	C
55-60	C-
48-54	D+
41-47	D
35-40	D-
under 35	E

Weekly Topics

Week 1 (January 8-13): Introduction.

- A bit of Italian geography [Kleinhenz 409-412]; see a relief map of the [Italian Peninsula](#); see also images of a typical [Tuscan](#) and [Apulian](#) landscapes
- Sources of the early medieval history of Italy [Wickham 1-8; Kleinhenz 215-218]
- The many Italies of the Middle Ages [Abulafia 1-23]

Week 2 (January 16-20): Roman legacy [Wickham 9-27]

- Romans and barbarians in Italy; see a [map](#) of the Late Roman Empire and an example of Roman [centuriation](#) surviving in the Italian landscape
- Late Roman society and post-Roman rulers (from Odovacar to Theoderic the Great) [Kleinhenz 396-397, 794, 806-807, 948-954]; see a reconstruction of a [villa rustica](#), portrait of [Petronius Maximus](#) (emperor in 455) and [Anicius Olybrius](#) (emperor in 472); see also a portrait of [Theoderic the Great](#) on one of the medallions struck in his name and another of [Cassiodorus](#) in a later illuminated manuscript; see also a [map](#) of the Ostrogothic and neighboring kingdoms at the death of Theoderic

Week 3 (January 22-27): The kingdom of Italy [Wickham 28-63]

- The Lombards before Lombardy [Kleinhenz 5, 13-14, 649-650]; see examples of sixth-century [bow](#) and [disc-fibulae](#), typically associated with rich female graves in Hungary
- (*, due on Wednesday, January 24, in the evening) Conquest and kingdom [Paul the Deacon, [History of the Lombards Books I and II](#); Kleinhenz 102-103, 647-648, 735-736, 862-867, 1056-1057]; see a [map](#) of the Lombard kingdom before its conquest by Charlemagne; see an image of [King Agilulf](#) (on the helmet fragment preserved at Bargello, in Florence) and the image of a [Lombard horseman](#) on a shield ornament found in a warrior grave in Stabio; see the altar of [King Ratchis](#); see a [mosaic](#) from the oratory of Pope John VII in Vatican; see also the portrait of [St. Benedict of Nursia](#) from the catacomb of Hermes in Rome
- Carolingian Italy [Kleinhenz 37, 210-211, 294-295, 376-380, 655]; see a [map](#) of the Carolingian Empire, a portrait of [Charlemagne](#) and another of [Louis the Pious](#); see a [coin](#) struck for Louis II and his wife, Angilberga

Week 4 (January 29-February 2): Economy and society [Wickham 80-114]

- Cities; see a [plan](#) of [Florence](#), showing the location of the Cathedral (formerly Santa Reparata Church) and an aerial view of the [Piazza della Republicca](#), the ancient Roman forum; see an aerial view of [Lucca](#) showing the survival of the Roman street grid, but also the peripheral position of the cathedral; see also a [aerial picture](#) of the [Piazza dell'Anfiteatro](#) in Lucca and another of the [Church of St. Ambrose](#) in Milan

- Countryside [Jansen 225-227; Kleinhenz 6-7, 190-191, 868-871]; see the ruins of the church erected in the sixth century on Col di Zuca (Invillino) and the church of St. Mary Magdalene in Col Santino; visit the medieval village of Poggibonsi near Siena; see a plan of the Castelseprio site and visit the Church of Santa Maria Foris Portas with the famous eighth-century (?) frescoes; see an image of the Bobbio Abbey and of San Salvatore in Brescia
- The early medieval society [Wickham 115-145]; see an image of Varsi near Parma, with a view of the Church of St. Peter

Week 5 (February 5-9): The South [Wickham 146-167]

- Byzantine Italy [Jansen 506-507; Kleinhenz 165-167]; see a map of the duchy of Benevento during the eighth century, a map of Byzantium ca. 800, a map of Italy ca. 1000, and ; see the Church of San Vitale in Ravenna; see images of Otranto and another of Bari; see views of Monte Gargano and Tricarico (Lucania); see a gold coin (solidus) of Emperor Constans II
- (*, due on Wednesday, February 7, in the evening) The Beneventan principality [Jansen 165-166, 501-505; Kleinhenz 23-26, 106-107, 755-757]; see a gold coin (solidus) of Sicard, Prince of Benevento, and a silver coin (denarius) of Sico; see a picture of Pierre Toubert, a model of the incastellamento and the ruins of the castello of Pontecorvo, built by Rodoald, gastald of Aquino; visit the Church of Santa Sofia in Benevento (with a views of the plaza) built by Arichis II; see a presentation of the Benedictine abbey at San Vincenzo al Volturno; see a reconstruction of the eleventh-century appearance of the Abbey of Montecassino; see images of Benevento, Naples, Salerno, Amalfi, and Isernia; read the History of the Lombards by Erchempert of Benevento
- Arabs in Italy [Jansen 490-500; Kleinhenz 46-48]; see a map of the Abbasid Caliphate; see aerial views of Kairouan, Syracuse, Taormina, and the ribat of Sousse, from which was launched the expedition to Sicily led by Asad ibn al Furat (827); see a map of the conquest of Sicily; visit the Favara (al-Fawwara) Castle and see a golden tari (quarter-dinar) struck in Sicily under the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim

Week 6 (February 12-16): The failure of the state [Wickham 168-193]

- From Louis II to Conrad II (875-1024): the end of the Italian independence; see a portrait of Charles the Bald and another of Charles the Fat; see a coin of Guido of Spoleto; see also a picture of a Hungarian warrior on horseback (as Magyars may have looked like).
- (*, due on Wednesday, February 14, in the evening) The new aristocracy [Jansen 423-427; Kleinhenz 267-269, 376, 772-775, 895-896]; see a picture of Vito Fumagalli
- The rise of urban autonomy; see an image of popes Gregory the Great, a map of Rome in the Middle Ages (with a plan of the initial Borgo Leonino), and visit the S. Sabina Church and the Schola Saxonum, the church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin (with a view of the interior), and the Scala Sancta in the former Lateran palace; visit the Pantheon and the (new) papal palace at the Lateran; see also the Casa dei Crescenzi and the Torre delle Milizie

Week 7 (February 19-23): Cities and communes [Abulafia 168-193]

- (*, due on Monday, February 19, in the evening) Communal movement [Jansen 51-54; Kleinhenz 341-359, 629]; see a picture of Giovanni Tabacco; see also a view of the cathedral in Monza and an image of the iron crown of Lombardy, with which German emperors were crowned in the cathedral; see views of the basilica of San Zeno in Verona (with an image of the tympanum)
- Urban government [Jansen 42, 55-60]; see a picture of the palazzo del podestà in Bologna
- Urban elites and factionalism [Jansen 230-233]; visit Soncino and San Gimignano; see a portrait of Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa, a map of twelfth-century Italy, another of Frederick's Italian expeditions, and read the stipulations of the Peace of Constance (1183); see a reconstruction of the carroccio of Milan, the commemorative monument in Legnano and a nineteenth-century rendition of the battle at the moment Emperor Frederick was wounded in the melee

Week 8 (February 26-March 1): The Norman Kingdom of Sicily [Abulafia 58-81]

- (*, due on Monday, February 26, in the evening) From Roger II to Frederick II [Kleinhenz 248-249, 253-254, 382-385, 493-494, 775-780, 1068-1070]; visit **Melfi** and **Noto**; see a portrait of King Roger II in La Martorana and visit the **royal chapel** in Palermo; see a portrait of King William II from the Cathedral in Monreale and portrait of **Tancred of Lecce** in a twelfth-century manuscript; see the **gold seal** of Henry VI following his proclamation in Palermo (1194) and a portrait of **Frederick II**; visit Emperor Frederick's castle at **Lucera** and read about the emperor's **encounter** with the Ayyubid sultan al-Kamil in 1228; visit **Castel del Monte**, the "hunting lodge" Frederick II built in Apulia in 1249; read the **sentence of deposition** that Gregory IX pronounced at the Council of Lyons against Frederick II (1245) and see the ruins of the **Castel Fiorentino** where Frederick II died in 1250
- Norman administration [Jansen 65-70, 122-123, 175-186, 234-240; Kleinhenz 212-213, 318-319, 412-413, 840-842]; visit the villa of the **Rufolo** family in Ravello and **Tagliacozzo**, the site of the victory of Charles of Anjou over Conradin, Frederick II's grandson; another of **Charles of Anjou** receiving the crown of Sicily from Pope Clement IV (1266)

Week 9 (March 4-8): Papal Italy [Abulafia 82-103]

- Popes and emperors during the Investiture Controversy [Kleinhenz 458-460, 530-532]; visit the **Sala Ducale** and the **Sala Regia** in the Vatican papal palace, as well as the **Church of S. Maria in Capitolio** (in Aracoeli, with a view of the interior) and the statue of **Cola di Rienzo**
- Papal administration [Kleinhenz 846-855]; see a map of the **Patrimony of St. Peter** in Italy in the mid-eleventh century
- Midterm

Week 10 (March 18-22): The "commercial revolution" and urban signorie [Abulafia 104-146]

- Italian maritime expansion in the Mediterranean: Genoa and Venice [Jansen 117-121, 159-161, 514-516; Kleinhenz 399-405, 1085-1087, 1121-1133]
- Trade and urban economy [Jansen 7-9, 104-109; Kleinhenz 89-92, 235-238, 780-784, 1109-1111]
- (*, due on Wednesday, March 20, in the evening) **Urban signorie**: Piacenza, Verona, Milan, and Ferrara [Jansen 43-46, 124-126, 337-350; Kleinhenz 335-336, 708-720, 892-893, 1134-1137]; see a view of the **Este castle in Ferrara**, another of **Mantua** with the palace of the Gonzaga family, and an aerial view of **Parma**; see a picture of **Pierre Racine**, the French scholar who studied the **signoria of Piacenza**; see an equestrian statue of **Cangrande della Scalla**, the lord of Verona (1311-1329), and views of **Vicenza**, **Feltre**, **Belluno**, **Padua**, and **Treviso**, all cities he included into the Veronese state; see Archbishop **Ottone Visconti's** triumphal entry into Milan and **Napo della Torre's** capture in 1277; see also views of **Bergamo**, **Cremona**, and **Brescia**, three of the Lombard cities included into the state of Milan during **Azzone's** rule; see also a view of **Modena**, incorporated into the state of Ferrara under the rule of **Obizzo II d'Este**

Week 11 (March 25-29): Family and daily life in medieval Italy [Abulafia 147-160 and 183-196]

- Domestic life and food; see examples of **ivory combs**, of **Gela ware**, **protomaiolica (plate)**, **bacini** (and on the **facade** of a building), and **oliphants**
- Housing and urban architecture [Jansen 228-229, 265-267]
- (*, due on Wednesday, March 27, in the evening) Kin structure in medieval Italy [Jansen 423-427, 441-445, 451-455; Kleinhenz 330-332]

Week 12 (April 1-5): Rural Italy during the Middle Ages [Abulafia 161-182]

- Castelli and lords [Kleinhenz 599-601]; visit Biella (Piedmont); the Luccan borghi at Santa Croce di Valdarno, Pietrasanta, and Camaiore (the latter two in the region of the Versilia coast)
- Rural life in southern Italy [Jansen 3-6]; visit Origgio near Milan
- Rural economy [Jansen 12-19]; visit the abbeys of Chiaravalle (near Milan) and San Benedetto Polirone (near Mantua)

Week 13 (April 8-12): Language and culture [Abulafia 197-211]

- A brief history of the Italian language [Kleinhenz 603-605]
- Literacy, schools, and libraries [Jansen 459-465, 472-473]; visit the universities of Bologna and Padua
- (*, due on Wednesday, April 10, in the evening) Vernacular literature [Jansen 526-527; Kleinhenz 11, 15-16, 37, 59, 60-61, 89, 160-161, 214-215, 278-286, 298-299, 374-375, 537-565, 1018-1019]; read the *Ritmo Cassinese*, the *Ritmo bellunese*, browse Brunetto Latini's *Li livre dou tresor*, and read two stanzas in an Italian dialect (of unknown origin) in Raimbaut de Vaqueiras's *Eras quan vey verdeyar*; see an introduction to the work of *Sordello da Goito*, one of the first Italian troubadours; read a sonnet by Giacomo (Jacopo) da Lentini, as well as a poem by *Compiuta Donzella* (with English translation); read *Chiaro Davanzati's* poem on the stormy sea, Ezra Pound's translation of Guido Cavalcanti's sonnets, *Cino da Pistoia's* sonnet to Dante Alighieri (in English translation), and Dante's own *Vita nuova* in English translation; listen to modern renditions of St. Francis of Assisi's *Cantico delle creature* (with accompanying text) and of the *Laudario di Cortona* (with a sample); read *Guittone d'Arezzo's* sonnet to the Virgin Mary

Week 14 (April 15-19): Art in medieval Italy

- Architecture [Jansen 241-246; Kleinhenz 737-751]; see an aerial view of the Church of Sant'Ambrogio in Milan (with a view of the ribbed vaults in the interior); see the facade and the plan of the cathedral in Pisa (with a view of the incrustation and the pointed arches in the interior); see the baptisteries of Pisa, Parma, and Florence; see the facade of the church of San Miniato al Monte in Florence; see the western facade and the incrustation on the northern facade of the Cathedral in Orvieto; see the facade of the Doge's Palace in Venice; see the facade and plan of the Cathedral in Milan; see Giotto's bell tower (*campanila*) of the Cathedral in Florence; see a guild niche on the facade of Or San Michele (Florence)
- (*, due on Wednesday, April 17, in the evening) Painting and sculpture [Kleinhenz 19-21, 33-34, 38, 58-59, 223-225, 255-256, 308-311, 668-669, 824-834]; see the relief above the entrance into the Cathedral of Modena and the tympanum of the Cathedral in Parma; see Benedetto Antelami's statue of David on the facade of the Cathedral in Fidenza; see the frescoes in the churches of Sant'Angelo in Formis and St. Peter in Otranto; see Bonaventura Berlinghieri's *St. Francis Altarpiece* for the church in Pescia, Nicola Pisanos' pulpit for the baptistery of the Cathedral in Pisa, Giovanni Pisano's pulpit of the Church of Sant'Andrea in Pistoia, Pietro Cavallini's *Seated Apostles* in the Church of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere (Rome), Cimabue's *Enthroned Madonna*, Giotto's *Enthroned Madonna* and *Lamentation* (in the Arena Chapel in Padua); see Taddeo Gaddi's *Meeting of Joachim and Anna*, Orcagna and Daddi's tabernacle in Or San Michele (Florence), Duccio di Buoninsegna's *Maestà*, Simone Martini's *Annunciation*, *Pietro Lorenzetti's Birth of the Virgin*, and *Ambrogio Lorenzetti's Peaceful City and Peaceful Country*
- Music [Kleinhenz 28-29, 106, 453-454]; listen to Enigma's use of Gregorian chant; listen to examples of plainchant and Gregorian chant; see a modern performance of "proper chants" (introit and offertory) and listen to *Agnus Dei*; see an example of neumes and listen to examples of Milanese (Ambrosian) chant and organum; see a portrait of Guido d'Arezzo and the Guidonian hand (wrongly) attributed to him (with a performance showing its use for sight singing); see a portrait of Jacopo da Bologna and an example of madrigal; see a portrait of Francesco Landini and an example of ballata

Week 15 (April 22-24): Greeks, Muslims, and Jews in medieval Italy. Sardinia and Corsica [Abulafia 215-250]

- (*, due on Monday, April 22, in the evening) Greeks in southern Italy [Jansen 259-260; Kleinhenz 322-323, 444-453, 463-465, 771-772]; see a [map](#) of the central region of Salento where Greek (Griko) is still spoken; see an icon of St. Nilus of Rossano and a view of the [Abbey of Grottaferatta](#); see a view of the [Church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin](#) (Rome); see a view of the [Church of Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio](#) (Martorana) in Palermo (with a view of the [mosaics](#) in the interior)
- Muslims and Jews in medieval Italy [Jansen 487-488, 508-513; Kleinhenz 45-46, 536-537, 580-583]; see a [tari](#) (quarter-dinar) struck in Amalfi as an imitation of a Sicilian tari; see the [portrait of the Norman ruler](#) on a wooden panel from the [Palatine Chapel](#) in Palermo; see the [Norman coronation mantle](#); see views of the [Zisa](#) and [Cuba](#) palaces in Palermo (with a detail of architectural decoration called *muqarna*); visit [Jato](#), in western Sicily; see a [page](#) of the manuscript containing the *piyyut Mi-al har horev* (*Eulogy of Moses*) attributed to Obadiah the Proselyte
- Sardinia and Corsica [Jansen 47-50; Kleinhenz 257, 1013-1016]; see views of [Ajaccio](#) and of the mountain area in the interior of Sardinia ([Barbagia](#)); see a [map](#) of the *giudicati* of Sardinia; see a manuscript illumination showing the [coronation of Barisone of Arborea](#) as king of Sardinia by Emperor Frederick Barbarossa (1164); see a [view](#) and a [map](#) of Castel di Castro built by the Visconti family above the Bay of Cagliari

May 1, 7:30 a.m.-9:30 am: Final exam