Middle School Medieval History

Yearlong 2018/19

Syllabus Table of Contents

1. INCOMING STUDENT PROFILE

To be successful in this course, you will need to have a few pre-requisite skills. Make sure each of these descriptions is true of you. If you aren't sure, let's talk, and I can help make sure the course will be a good fit.

- ✓ Reads at or above a seventh-grade level
- ✓ Composes complete sentences
- ✓ Can write a focused paragraph (with some guidance from a parent or teacher)
- ✓ Uses a planner and tracks assignment progress
- ✓ Listens, take notes, and is willing to engage in group discussions (extroversion not required!)
- ✓ Types sufficiently well to transcribe a short e-mail or paragraph without frustration
- ✓ Possesses basic computer skills—browsing, accessing assignments, scanning, e-mailing, and managing files (help from a parent is fine, but I think you'll want to delegate these tasks as soon as possible.)

2. Quick Look

Class Dates: September 4—May 24

Class Times: M/W 12:30 p.m. EST, 60–75 min.

Instructor: Adam Lockridge

E-mail: alockridge@scholeacademy.com

3. Detailed Schedule

Classes will take place on Mondays & Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. EST for 32 weeks and 63 classes on the following dates*:

September (7): 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 26
October (10): 1, 3, 8, 10, 15, 17, 22, 24, 29, 31
November (6): 5, 7, 12, 14, [Thanksgiving Break] 26, 28
December (4): 3, 5, 10, 12 [Christmas Break]
January (8): [Christmas Break], 7, 9, 14, 16 [End 1st Semester], 21, 23, 28, 30
February (6): 4, 6, 11, 13 [Winter Break], 25, 27
March (8): 4, 6, 11, 13, 18, 20, 25, 27
April (7): 1, 3, 8, 10, [Easter], 22, 24, 29
May (7): 1, 6, 8, 13, 15, 20, 22 [End 2nd Semester]

*In case of circumstantial cancellation (illness, family emergency, etc…), I will plan to get a substitute, record a makeup session, or schedule an additional meeting (as needed).

4. Office Hours

If a parent or student needs to meet with me, please try to schedule a time during scheduled office hours. If you have a recurring schedule conflict with these times or have a time sensitive need, please feel free to re-quest an alternate time and I will do my best to accommodate. *When you request a meeting, please specify a time zone.*

Monday and Wednesday, 11am-noon EST
Tuesday and Thursday, 12:30-1:30pm EST
By appointment: Send an e-mail requesting alternate times

5. Virtual School Technology

Live meetings will take place using an app called **Zoom (www.zoom.us)**. Everything else, like submitting an assignment or accessing a course document, happens on **Schoology (**www.school-ogy.com**)**. The virtual classroom will provide students with interactive audio, text chat and an interactive whiteboard in which texts, diagrams, video and other media can be displayed and analyzed. We will provide students with a link (via email) that will enable students to join the virtual classroom.

Specific information regarding the technology used by Scholé Academy (including required technology) can be found by visiting the Technology in the Classroom section of the Student Parent Handbook. Students will submit documents by scanning and uploading them to their personal computer and uploading them to the course assignment page.

6. COURSE MAP

Quarter 1: The Early Middle Ages
    Prelude: The Rule of Saint Benedict
1. The Roots of Christendom
2. The Early Christian Church
3. Byzantium
4. Islam
5. Holy Roman Empire
6. Norsemen

Quarter 2: The High and Late Middle Ages
1. The Medieval Synthesis
2. The Hundred Years War
3. Feudalism
4. The Crusades
5. Scholasticism

QUARTER 3: Sources of the Middle Ages
1. The Age of Bede
2. Alfred the Great
3. Einhard, Life of Charlemagne
4. The Magna Carta

QUARTER 3: Renaissance and Reformation
1. Italian Renaissance
2. Tudor England
3. The Age of Discovery
4. Martin Luther
5. English Reformation
6. Counter-Reformation
7. Elizabethan England

7. COURSE TEXTS

Books in the course will be used in a variety of ways—some for close reading, others for exposure, and some excerpts used for specific lessons. I want to give families flexibility in purchasing books, so I have divided the reading list into three categories—Anchor, Core, Reference, and Resource texts.

A. Anchor texts (to buy)
B. Core texts (to borrow or download)
C. Reference Texts (optional resources)
D. Audio Books
E. E-books
F. Book list and ISBN numbers

A. Anchor texts: Buy on paper

The study of these books will be the focus of our class. Student should own their own copies and preferably be at liberty to underline and highlight. Specific edition is required—see Amazon Ideas list for the course (below).

- *The Penguin Historical Atlas of the Medieval World*
- *The Rule of St. Benedict*
- *The Golden Legend*
- Dorothy Mills, *The Book of the Middle Ages*
- Dorothy Mills, *The Book of Renaissance and Reformation*
- *The Age of Bede*
- *Alfred the Great*
- *Two Lives of Charlemagne*

B. Core texts: Borrow, Buy, or Download to e-reader

These books are intended for exposure and enjoyment of stories from medieval literature. Students will be assigned to read and/or listen to several of these full works, but families may choose the best format. **Unless marked with an asterisk (*), all have free e-texts and audio available.**

- Column, *The Children of Odin*
- Pyle, *The Story of King Arthur and His Knights* (free) or Puffin Classics version by Green*
- Lang, *The Arabian Nights Entertainments* (free) or Dawood retelling (Penguin)*
- Pyle, *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*
- Tappan, *The Chaucer Storybook*
- Charles and Mary Lamb, *Tales from Shakespeare*

C. Reference Texts: Borrow, Buy, Download to e-reader, or Print from Schoology

These are a sample of the works which contain selections that I plan to use in class, but they will be short enough that I can share them on screen or post on Schoology as a pdf. (Others ideas will likely emerge along the way). I recommend that you download and print these selection from Schoology as they become available, but you are of course free to purchase the full books for your family library. I will aim to have these available 1-2 weeks before they are used in class, and I will strive to keep them under 10 pages (so as not to use excessive printer ink or paper).

- *The Penguin Historical Atlas of the Medieval World*
- *The Portable Medieval Reader* (Viking
- *The Portable Renaissance Reader* (Viking)
- *A Celtic Miscellany* (Penguin)

- *The Anglo-Saxon World*, (Oxford World Classics)

D. Audio Books

Audiobooks are a great way to enjoy stories and learn restfully, and many of the texts we use have been read by volunteers and distributed for free on **LibriVox.org**. Anytime I require a reading, students may choose to read along as they listen to a recording. Sometimes I will allow the student to "listen only" for certain books or portions of books without following along in the text. In those cases, I will make note and link to the free audio on Schoology as the reading assignments are published.

E. E-books and Screen Reading

It would be wonderful if families could purchase all the books, but I know cost and shelf space is always an issue for homeschooling families—mine included! Nonetheless, **I strongly recommend that students do not read books on backlit screens**. Kindle "Paperwhite" and other e-paper or e-ink technologies are the best option for families who want to save money by going digital. The up-front cost of an e-reader is still likely less than purchasing the paperback texts for a single course. Almost all such technologies have some access to the internet, so these need to be used under a reasonable level of adult supervision or restricted so that students are safe and free from distraction.

F. List of Books

For your convenience, I have created an Amazon Ideas list with links to the specific editions. If something looks overpriced, don't hesitate to check with me or look elsewhere. I tried to pick books that would be high quality, inexpensive, and readily available in paperback. Used copies of most of the books should be available as well. If you wish to shop elsewhere, please search using the ISBN number from the editions found on the Amazon list.

Important Note: This shopping list contains books from both Upper and Middle School History and Literature. Not all books are required for purchase for every class (see above).

View Amazon Ideas List for Medieval History and Literature: http://a.co/a5fy9EV

8. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces middle school students to the history of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Reformation—a period one might also simply call "Christendom." Often referred to as "the Dark Ages" or "The Age of Faith," this interesting and dynamic period is centrally important for understanding the role that Christianity played in shaping our world and transmitting to our own time the riches of civilization.

While this course primarily features historical study, it will also incorporate some reading of medieval literature, helping students to see and enjoy the integration of these two genres—not easily separated in the pre-modern world. As a middle school course, this class aims to introduce students to the history of the Middle Ages by means of an overview of the time periods, while also providing students with exposure to primary source documents from the Middle Ages, Reformation, and Renaissance.
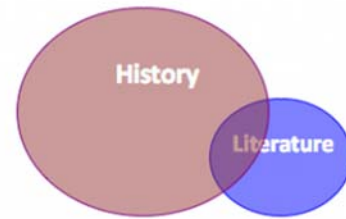
Students will be asked to consider and respond to carefully crafted questions as their window into "the Great Conversation." Occasionally, the teacher will present biographical, literary, and historical context through brief lectures, but all other classes will be seminar-style discussions on the classical texts. Students are assessed for their curiosity, participation, and diligence during discussions, as well as by means of short response papers, essays, and occasional quizzes.

This class is paired with our middle school course on medieval literature, taught by the same teacher and scheduled back-to-back with that course in a "block." Students who take both courses receive a discount. This course may also be taken as standalone history study.

9. Portrait of an Ideal Student

This "ideal student" does not, of course, exist; we are all on our way to becoming better students (including the teacher!), but we need somewhere to aim. This "portrait" is our guiding star.

1. Confident, respectful reader of the Western canon: One primary goal of our history and literature courses is to offer an age appropriate introduction to reading the Great Books. We hope that many of these classic works will become lifelong friends of the students, and we recognize that historical background knowledge is essential to reading texts from that time period. Therefore, ideal graduates of the course will have two characteristics: they will have the *confidence* to pick up a challenging book (like Homer or Plato or the Bible), expecting to learn something new (even after reading a second or third time); and they will *respect the texts*, seeing and appreciating that the contain stories and ideas that are worth hearing.

2. Appreciative recipient of Western Civilization: Historical study is a great opportunity to introduce students to our rich cultural inheritance of art, architecture, science, literature, education, law, medicine, and technology. Understanding and appreciating all that we have received reminds us that we are "standing on the shoulders of giants," and we can therefore engage in our own work with appropriate humility and gratitude.

3. Independent scholar: There are certain skills which, once mastered, provide a student with all that he needs to learn and grow independently.   An ideal student would be able to do the following naturally and with ease:

- clearly narrate or explain a new passage he has just read
- ask a good question that is inspired by a text
- intuitively begin to work through a possible range of answers

- outline a passage and use it to narrate or compose a summary
- keep a study journal with lecture notes, quotes from the text, definitions, and outlines
- compose a thoughtful and focused paragraph in answer to a question

These characteristics will be graded at an age-appropriate level through a variety of gentle but objective assessments.

10. THE TWO JOBS OF A STUDENT

When we enter any work, it is best to stop and ask, "Why?" Keeping the end goal in mind will energize our work and help us refocus when we get discouraged or distracted. The best one-word answer to the "Why study?" question I can give my students is this: stewardship. Stewardship is doing the most good that you can with the finite resources God has given you. In the case of scholarship, we aim to be good stewards of our intellects, our creative powers, and our moral sensibilities.

God has given mankind many amazing and wonderful capacities. We can talk. We can listen. We can think and imagine and create and compose. A good student remembers that these are gifts, and she recognizes that these gifts are given to us by God for a reason. Our job is to grow and to make the most of what he has given to us. To help ourselves become better students, we must commit ourselves to two things: work and prayer.

A. The Work of a Student

What can students do to become independent scholars, appreciative recipients of Western Civilization, and confident readers of the Great Books? As with any work, establishing good routines and productive habits will help you to grow in each of these areas.

During our first week of class I will share some examples of routines and habits that I recommend to my students; student will complete an exercise which will help them tailor these routines to their specific circumstances.

B. THE PRAYER OF A STUDENT

Here is a prayer that I will use in class. I encourage you to use it before you study too. It will serve as a reminder to be thankful to God, and it will help us remember the purpose of our study. When I pray this prayer in class, I pray it for myself too, since teachers are mostly just "grown-ups" who never got tired of school!

O Most-good Lord!
Send down upon us the grace of Thy Holy Spirit,
Who grants us gifts and strengthens the powers of our souls,
so that by attending to the teaching given us, we may grow
to the glory of Thee, our Creator,
to the comfort of our parents,
and to the service of the Church and our native land. Amen

This prayer reminds us that God is good, that we need Him, and that we must grow to become good steward of the gifts He has given us. It also reminds us that we work hard, not only or even primarily for ourselves, but for others: for God, for our parents, for our fellow Christians, and for all people around us in the place we call "home."

11. Student Assessment

As a teacher I must ask the question: how will I know if my students are staying on the path to becoming a good student? I will use a variety of means—asking you to report to me; asking you questions (not the "got you" kind, at least never on purpose!); chatting informally and sometimes meeting with your parents; reading your papers; and listening to your questions and comments in class. There is a variety of means of gathering information, but what information am I looking for? Primarily, I will want to know that you are completing your work, practicing and improving upon your writing, and participating in class. I am not omniscient, but I will carefully pay attention to details which my experience has shown to be reliable indicators of what students are accomplishing.

A. Completion

The most critical part of becoming an ideal student is quite simple: you must put in consistent time and effort into your study sessions. If you want to learn to play the piano, you must practice. If you want to master the arts of reading and discussing and writing, you must read and discuss and write. Therefore, many assignments will be evaluated as "complete" or "incomplete." Did you complete the reading assignment? Did you answer the question? Did you memorize the poem? In some cases, these will be based on self-report, validated by the parents of the students, which means that open and honest communication with both parents and teachers is critical to the success of this course (see section on Academic Integrity below).

It is worth noting here as well that there is ambiguity in the word "reading." The same passage of a text could be skimmed for 5 minutes or studied carefully for two hours. I will make sure to define this range of "reading" behaviors for students when I require them to self-report.

B. Composition quality

Often you will be asked to write an answer to a question or short essay prompt. I will evaluate your answers according to a simple rubric which includes style, organization, and invention (argument or narrative development). Student are not expected to achieve grammatical perfection in everything that they write. Grammar policing is frustrating to students and can inhibit natural writing development. My rule of thumb in most writing assignments is "Don't be sloppy." When a polished essay is required, students will be alerted and given instructions on how to find a proof reader for their papers. Often this will be a parent or an older sibling who will be asked to help by reading the composition out loud and pointing out basic errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. If significant errors remain, the teacher will offer to meet outside of class to help the student.

C. Participation

Participation is something that cannot be evaluated on a day-to-day basis, and it can also look very different depending on personality type. A highly extroverted student can sometimes seem to contribute much more to the class, and a shy or quiet person may say one brilliant sentence in the span of a week or two. This is as it should be, so long as the shy person *does* contribute and the extrovert does not dominate the discussion. I will set up parameters in class to make sure we achieve a good balance.

Students will be asked to take a short personality assessment called "Understand Myself," and I will ask them to share those results with me. (There is a $10 fee to access the test.) That will help me understand their dominant personality traits and assess them according to realistic measures. I will use a standard rubric, like the one I use for composition, but it will include Regularity (Is the student consistent in his level of participation?), Quality (Are the comments and questions relevant, insightful, and direct?), and Tact (Is the student a good listener, kind, and gracious?).

Middle School and High School Level History and Literature courses will be evaluated in similar ways. The difference in evaluation will reflect the difference in expectations. In general, Upper School courses will have more reading, longer writing assignments, more difficult texts, and discussions dealing with more abstract concepts. For example, discussing a character's choices, right or wrong, would be more concrete than talking about "morality" in the abstract.

12. Grading Scales

Grading is of necessity a reflection of the standards that are set, and standards set by Scholé Academy will likely not map directly on to your state and local requirements. Homeschooling parents are the final authority on the grade for the course as it is applied on a transcript. As an online school, we offer a grade recommendation based on our experience and objectives, and we provide transcripts for courses to assist you in your communication with other entities, such as umbrella organizations and local bureaucrats. We are fully aware, however, that states and local districts vary in their expectations, and you must translate your child's performance in a way that makes sense of those standards and expectations.

For our purposes, we are aiming to downplay the role of GPAs and modern grading systems to preserve a restful and contemplative approach to education. This is an indication of our desire to shield

our classes from the current climate of high stakes testing, competitive schooling environments, and grade inflation. A restful school needs a restful grading system. Therefore, our day to day communications will use the following grading scale:

*Magna cum laude* (MCL) – an especially gifted student performing at his or her best

Cum laude (CL) – work done by the average student performing at his or her best

Satis (S) – work that is completed as assigned and on time

Non satis (NS) – work that is incomplete, poorly executed, or late

I plan to assign many "S" marks, so please do not equate this with a "C" or as an indication of failure in any way.   Many assignments will be "complete" or "incomplete," and completion is a binary standard. CL and MCL will be reserved to express satisfactory completion combined with greater overall performance in composition and participation quality.

To generate numerical grades, I will use the following scale derived from the famous Golden Rectangle. It has three advantages: 1) the extra decimal places will serve as a reminder that grades are measurements which attempt to quantify a quality (and not the other way around); 2) it will slow down the "bean counters" among us (you know who you are!); and 3) a teacher must draw the line somewhere, so he might as well draw it somewhere pretty.
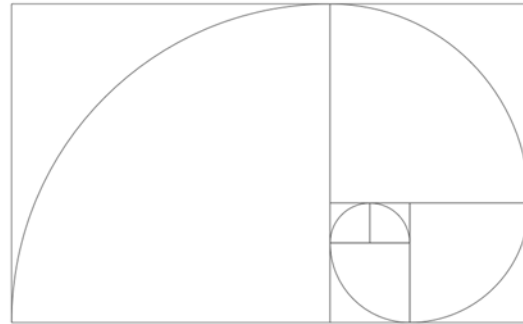
Grading weights and percentages

Completion	62%	*Complete*, since showing up is the lion's share
Participation	24%	*Participate*, since showing up is not the same as being there
Composition	9%	*Compose*, for reading without writing is to sleep. *
Memory work	3%	*Remember*, so that some things you may always keep
Discretionary point **	1%	*Be brave*, and let a lesson reach the heart
Total points	99%	And you'll get the *Highest Score* (though we only ever know in part)
Unearnable point	1%	That which remains, monument to our strife: *You can get all A's and still flunk life.* ***

*A quote attributed to St. Jerome.
**For those rare moments when a student does something so amazing, you can't help but award them an extra point.
***The last line of this poem is a quote from Walker Percy.

13. Academic Integrity

A. The Scholé Academy Learning Philosophy

Students are entrusted with the responsibility, under the guidance and authority of their parents, to abide by Scholé Academy's Learning Philosophy.

B. The Scholarly Vices and Academic Integrity

To help highlight the importance of academic integrity, please review these "Vices," copied from the Student-Parent Handbook:

- Pride**:** Pride drives students to love their opinion and thoughts such that they cannot learn from others or discern the broader wisdom from other minds that would inform them.
- Envy**:** Envy agitates the mind by refusing to honor the gifts and capacities of others; it hinders students from learning from other honorable and able students.
- Sloth/Laziness**:** This is where the good gifts and capacities of students go to die.
- Sensuality**:** Indulgence in sensuality (not only of the sexual variety) creates lethargy, befogs the imagination, dulls the intelligence, and scatters the memory; sensuality distracts from learning.
- Irritation/Impatience**:** Irritation and impatience repels exhortation, direction, and constructive criticism and thus deters students from mastery and leads them to increased error.
- Excessive Ambition (a form of intemperance): Excessive ambition leads students to leap ahead of their capacity without true mastery and integration (often out of pride), which ultimately slows down learning and leads to patchy, non-integrated understanding.

A student with **academic integrity** does two things. First, he resists these vices insofar as he is able. Second, he is honest with his parents and teachers when he realizes that he has failed. Small slips, like saying something overly opinionate in class, can be easily rectified by noting the offense and moving on. More serious offenses that show evidence of planning and calculation, like cheating on a test or plagiarism on a paper, will certainly have larger consequences (a failing grade, risk of expulsion). Remember that we all make mistakes, and that the discipline to self-correct and even "turn yourself in" is always the way to the best possible outcome of a mistake (or even outright sin). Getting caught cheating or plagiarizing will only make matters worse. If you do cheat (God forbid), tell someone who cares about you as soon as you come to your senses!

Success is good, because it is satisfying to enjoy the reward of honest effort. Failure can be good too, as the pain can be transformed into "growing pain" by learning from our mistakes. Dishonesty circumvents both, as a liar stands only to reap the harvest that he did not plant (creating false feelings of success), or it shields him from the life lessons that he needs to mature. Telling the truth is good for you, and it is the key to cultivating academic integrity.

14. About the Teacher

Adam lives in rural Kansas where he and his wife homeschool their three children. Adam studied Philosophy at the University of Kansas and received his MA in Philosophy from the University of Memphis. As a philosophy student, Adam was most interested in the history of philosophy. Over the past ten years, Adam has taught a variety of subjects in 5th-12th grades, mostly in the humanities. His study of philosophy taught him the joy of carefully reading old books and gave him a Socratic paradigm for in-class discussion—two essential components of his teaching style.

Although Adam's teaching interests have largely gravitated towards teaching the Great Books and classical rhetoric, he started his career as a 5th grade teacher at Westminster Academy in Memphis, Tennessee. After that, Adam taught Middle School Logic, Ancient History, three levels of High School Rhetoric, and Senior Capstone. For two of his years at Westminster he also served as the Director of Instruction.

In 2014 Adam became the Executive Director of St. Raphael School, an online program designed for Orthodox Christian homeschooling students. He designed their Liberal Arts curriculum, an integrated humanities program inspired by Eastern Christian spirituality and Orthodox Christian history. This is Adam's first year teaching at Scholé Academy, and he looks forward to teaching Rhetoric Capstone, Medieval History and Literature, and Ancient History and Literature. Adam will also serve as the Academic Director for St. Raphael School, now a part of Scholé Academy.

While teaching is one of Adam's favorite activities, he has a variety of interests which help remind him that, although "the unexamined life is not worth living," it is also true that the "unlived life is not worth examining." Thus, he tries to pull his nose out of a book (or away from the computer) long enough to take his wife to a concert, read to his children, go on a walk with his dog Buck, mow the churchyard, fix something that is broken, or otherwise hold back the forces of primordial Chaos.

The Lockridge Family - (from left) Milo, Rachel (holding Josephine), Adam, Ramona