Conversion in Medieval Europe
Christian Raffensperger
History 203H – 1W
Spring Semester
MWF 10:20–11:20 A.M.
Hollenbeck 313

Conversion is a tremendously important process, not only spiritually, but also historically. The type of conversion examined in this class will largely be “political conversion,” which is both a religious and a political experience. As Christianity spread throughout medieval Europe, people and political entities encountered Christianity, the Christian Church, and its Roman legacy in their own ways. This class will deal with that interaction and examine the process of conversion, the experience of conversion, and the ramifications of conversion. This examination will serve as a laboratory for the study of history, and specifically our sources and our relationship with them. It will also serve as the background for the main purpose of this class, which is to teach students the basic skills in researching and writing a history paper. As a result, class time will be divided between a study of medieval conversion and a discussion of writing skills and research techniques. The ultimate goal of the class, and the main component of your grade will be the creation of a piece of historical research relevant to medieval conversion. Leading up to that will be completion of all of the relevant portions of the paper, including a proposal, outline, bibliography, and revisions.

Prerequisites: Engl 101 and Sophomore Standing
Writing intensive
This course counts toward the PAST minor

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Assignments and Deadlines
This class is required for all history majors with the goal of working on research and writing skills – specifically the skills required to write a major research paper. As such, the vast majority of assignments in this class will relate to the writing of that research paper.

Writing a large research paper is not accomplished in one night (contrary to popular belief), but is the product of lots of work over a long period of time. That work will be broken out in this class into a series of assignments that will take you from choosing a topic, to finding materials, to taking notes on those materials, constructing an argument, and through various drafts until reaching a final, finished product. The assignments are listed below, with their descriptions on the accompanying sheet.
In addition to the research paper and associated assignments, there will be a variety of quizzes (unannounced) spread out throughout the semester, as well as two exams. The exams are marked on the syllabus and all of these (quizzes and exams) will cover the material of the class, which means that both conversion and research paper content are fair game. (This means you must read and know Turabian!)

There will be two additional short analysis papers of approximately 3-4 pages. The goal of each analysis is to understand who wrote it, why they wrote, what does it say (both specifically and about the society that it comes from), and how does it correspond with the rest of the information we learned in class and in the other readings on similar subjects. For each of the papers, I also expect you to use footnotes to cite your evidence (per Turabian guidelines).

The grades will be weighted as follows:
- Attendance: 3%
- Participation: 5%
- Quizzes: 3%
- Exam 1: 10%
- Exam 2: 10%
- Primary Source Analysis: 2%
- Secondary Source Analysis: 2%
- Research Questions: 1%
- Library Search Exercise: 2%
- Research Proposal: 5%
- Annotated Preliminary Bibliography: 2%
- Search Records: 5%
- Working Bibliography: 5%
- Notes (check): 1%
- Topical Outline: 2%
- Sentence Outline and Bibliography: 2%
- Final Paper: 20%
- Revised Paper: 10%
- Peer Reviewing: 5%
- Oral Report: 5%

**Required Books**


Kate L. Turabian. *A Manual for Writers.*

**Required Items**
3x5 Cards
Card box (to hold 3x5 cards)
Schedule of Meetings and Assignments
Week 1 (January 9, 11, 13): The Christian World Meets the Roman World
(Fletcher, ch. 1; MacMullen chs. 1–3)
Introduction; What is conversion?; Roman paganism confronts Christianity

Week 2 (January 18, 20, No Class 1/16): Conversion of the Roman Empire
(Fletcher ch. 2; MacMullen chs. 4–9; Urbanczyk [Moodle]; Turabian, pp. 24-29 and 40-45)
Early Conversions to Christianity; Why do people convert? Do different groups convert differently?

Week 3 (January 23, 25, 27):
(MacMullen 2 [Moodle]; Fletcher chs. 3 and pp. 97-106; MacMullen chs 9 and 10; Conversion of Clovis [Moodle])
Consequences of Conversion; Conversion of the Franks and others; Missionaries to the “barbarians”; Problems with Arians and other heretics

Week 4 (January 30, February 1, 3):
Micro-Christendom and Battle for Conversion (Revised Research Questions; Secondary Source Analysis [Pluskowski and Patrick] – 2/3)
(Pluskowski and Patrick [Moodle]; Peter Brown ch. 16 [Moodle])
Rise of micro-Christendoms; Library Day on 2/3 (familiarization)

Week 5 (February 6, 8, 10):
Anglo-Saxon England 1 (Research Proposal – 2/10)
(Fletcher pp. 107–129; Mayr-Harting, pp. 13–39, 51–102; Frend [Moodle]; Turabian, chs. 1–2, 5–6)
Library Day on 2/8 (sources); The case of Anglo-Saxon England; Conflict between micro-Christendoms

Week 6 (February 13, 15, 17):
Anglo-Saxon England 2 (Revised Research Proposal; Annotated Bibliography – 2/17; Library Treasure Hunt)
(Bede pp. 72–142 [Moodle]; Mayr-Harting, pp. 40–50, 103–13
Venerable or Venomous? – Bede; Synod of Whitby; Library Day on 2/17 (treasure hunt)

Week 7 (February 20, 22, 24):
Anglo-Saxon England 3 (Exam 1 – 2/24)
Synod of Whitby in Action!; Friday will be our first exam.

Week 8 (February 27, 29, no class 3/2):
A Christian Medieval Europe
(Fletcher chs. 7 and 8; Turabian 15–17)
Christianity as the dominant force in medieval Europe; Inevitability of Conversion

Week 9 (March 12, 14, 16):
Meetings and Thesis Construction (Search Record; Working Bibliography – 3/12)
(no reading)
Schedule meetings with Dr. Raffensperger to discuss Search Record and Working Bibliography – Monday 3/12; Thesis construction workshop – Wednesday 3/14
Week 10 (March 19, 21, 23): Conversion of Bulgaria and Moravia (Topical Outline; Notes Check – 3/23)
(Fletcher ch. 10; Shepard, “Byzantine Missions” [Moodle]; Responsa of Pope Nicholas [Moodle])
Constantine/Cyril and Methodius; Slavonic Liturgy; Cases of Moravia and Bulgaria; Bulgaria and Boris’ place in medieval Europe

Week 11 (March 26, 28, 30): Bulgaria and Moravia cont. (Sentence Outlines; Bibliography – 3/30)
(Sullivan [Moodle]; Jenkins [Moodle]; Turabian ch. 7)
Church Councils; Ramifications of conversion; Modern perspectives on medieval history

Week 12 (April 2, 4, No Class 4/6): Conversion of Scandinavia
(Fletcher ch. 11; Saga of Olaf Tryggvason [Moodle]; Jochens [Moodle]; Turabian chs. 9–10)
Conversion of Scandinavia as the end of major conversions in Europe; Intertwining of politics and conversion; Late and Peaceful Conversion in Iceland

Week 13 (April 9, 11, 13): Conversion of Scandinavia 2 (Exam 2 – 4/13)
(Readings continued from week 12)
Exam 2 will be held on Friday, 4/13

Week 14 (April 16, 18, 20): What is Conversion? (Papers Due – 4/16)
(no reading)
When your paper is turned in, you must also turn in the notecards (in your box) actually used in the paper, along with all of your sources, and your notes; We will spend this week reflecting on what conversion means and how our understanding of conversion has changed over the semester

Week 15 (April 23, 25, 27): Final Presentations
Final Presentations will be held all this week and next as necessary

Week 16 (April 30, May 2): Presentations cont. (Revised Paper Due – 5/4)

Peer Reviewing
For the purposes of this course, you will be assigned to a group of three people for peer review. You will give each assignment that you give to me, to your peer review partners. They will mark them up with their comments and corrections and return them to you. You must save these marked up comments in a folder to be turned in at the end of the semester with your assessment of the effectiveness of your peer reviewers. These groups will also be used for your final presentations in class. Two members of the group will present on the work of the third to the class, during the last two weeks of the semester. This presentation should be a summary of their research, as well as critique of the methodology, sources, and style of the paper. Your peer reviewing will be graded, so be sure to do a thorough job.
Course Concepts
This course will help you learn to think as an historian. You should become comfortable with the technical concepts, skills, and vocabulary of the craft of history this semester--to the point that you will use these ideas and this rhetoric in all of your history courses. The key ideas and concepts of the course include the following material, so it is important that you think about them as you produce your essay.

Historical Thinking Skills
History as:
(1) past
(2) account
(3) reconstruction
(4) interpretation

Research and Analytical Skills
Frame of reference, context
Topic v. thesis approach
Topic outlines v. sentence outlines
Inference v. proof
Interpretation, generalization
Annotation v. abstract
Primary v. secondary sources
Intentional v. unwitting evidence
Summary, paraphrase, quotation
Plagiarism
“Legitimate inference” and historical method

Writing Skills
Audience recognition
Structure: principle of selection; paragraph unit of writing
Expository, narrative and analytical writing
Corroborative detail
Citation: note form (footnote/endnote); bibliographic form
Technical style elements

Missed Examinations, Papers, and Class Sessions
A good rule of thumb is do not miss anything. However, if you are ill or have a conflict and cannot make a class, notify me in advance or as soon after the class as is possible. Do not miss examinations! If you have a conflict, notify me a minimum of one week in advance and we can schedule an exam as close to the normal time as possible. If you miss an examination for reasons that are not discussed with me ahead of time or are not catastrophic you will receive a zero, which is much worse than an F in your overall grade. Late papers are accepted for one week, but the grade will drop one full grade when turned in after class the day it is due. For each additional day thereafter (weekend day or weekday) that it is late, it will drop a fraction of a grade, for example—an A paper handed in after class will be a B paper, handed in the next day will be a B- paper, the next day a C+ paper.
Attendance Policy
As part of your grade for this class, and to get the most out of the class, you are required to attend on a regular basis. Attendance in this class is worth 3% of your grade, and attendance will be taken on a regular basis. If you are going to miss class, let me know in advance. If you accumulate 5 absences over the course of the semester, you will receive a grade of F for your attendance. If you miss 10 or more classes over the course of the semester you will receive a grade of zero for your attendance, much worse than an F when calculating your final grade. You are solely responsible for signing the attendance sheet, or notifying me of your absence, as proof of your presence in class.

Special Needs
Wittenberg University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. However, students are responsible for registering with the Academic Services Office, 203 Recitation Hall. If you are eligible for course accommodation due to a disability, please provide me with your self-identification letter from the Academic Services Office and arrange to talk with me about your learning needs as soon as possible. Early identification at the start of the term is essential to ensure timely provision of services. If you have questions about services for students with disabilities, please contact Vancenia Rutherford, assistant provost for academic services, 203 Recitation Hall, extension 7924.

Weather-Related Concerns
Whenever weather becomes a problem, I shall do my best to adhere to the university guidelines. If the university cancels classes, there will be no class. If the university has not cancelled class, but I am unable or unwilling to risk traveling, I will do my best to post a notice to this effect on Moodle as early as possible. I will do my best not to cancel class if at all possible.

If there is an exam scheduled or a deadline for a written assignment on a day when class is cancelled, you may assume that the exam or assignment will be due on the following class session.

Academic Honesty
Students in this course are expected to uphold the standards of Wittenberg’s Code of Academic Integrity. At its most basic level, this means that you will not turn in someone else’s writing as your own, quote from a source without proper acknowledgment, or provide a classmate with inappropriate help. You will be asked to submit papers and exams with the following statement followed by your signature: “I affirm that my work upholds the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity at Wittenberg, and that I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance.” Sanctions for violating these rules range from receiving no credit for a particular assignment to failing the course for a significant act of academic dishonesty. If you are in doubt about any of these rules, please talk to me before submitting your work.