

Visions of Byzantium
Christian Raffensperger
History 204H – 1W
Fall Semester 2016
MWF 2:15–3:20 P.M.
Hollenbeck 313

History 204 is the sophomore-level methods class required of all History majors at Wittenberg. The primary goal of the class is to teach students the core skills required for a historian – chiefly how to write and understand historiography and how to organize, plan, research and write a research paper. We will do this all arranged around a particular topic, in this case – “Visions of Byzantium.” The class will read numerous primary and secondary sources to explore different visions of Byzantium, you will analyze those sources, compare the secondary sources for historiography papers, and then write a research paper of your own, in which you situate yourself within the historiography. Clearly, this is a writing and reading intensive class that will demand a good portion of your time and attention during the semester. Completing it successfully will be an important step on the road to being an active critical thinker and a practicing historian.

*Prerequisites: Engl 101; Sophomore Standing; History Major
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 and learning historiography. The assignments will build to those goals with the culmination being the completion of your own research paper. Specifics about the many assignments in the class are on the additional assignments sheet, but here I will go through some of the basic ideas behind our assignments.

Your knowledge of historiography will be built throughout the class with readings from various authors compared and contrasted. I encourage you to also look at the readings in Rampolla to understand some of the basics of what we will be discussing from the point of view of writing and citing and then Gregory to understand the background of some of the readings on Byzantium. You will have to write three historiography papers, one for each section of the class. Each paper will cover the specific articles we have read and put them in conversation with one another. Please remember that historiography is the study of how history is written, it is not the writing of history itself. Do not tell me the story of Byzantine women – that is history. Tell me, instead, what historian “X” has to say about Byzantine women, and then what historian “Y” has to say about Byzantine women and how the two are similar and different – that is historiography. If you have questions about this concept, please ask.

To enhance your understanding of the pieces we will be reading, each week we will have a quiz on the identity of the authors which we are reading that week. You must research these authors on your own and be prepared to talk about who they are; this is important information in understanding their work. All authors to be read for that week should be prepared for this quiz. Every author should be findable using google. Other material from the preceding week is also fair game for a question here.

You will also be asked to write three primary source analyses throughout the class, each time we discuss a primary source in class. These will cover the basics of who wrote the source, what it says, why it says and that how it fits into the context of the class. These should be comprehensive pieces of writing which demonstrate your understanding of the source.

The major component of this class is writing your own research paper. Contrary to popular belief, writing a large research paper is not accomplished in one night, 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. Each of these assignments is detailed on the assignments sheet and here are only discussed in overview.

Writing a research paper is a many-step process and we will develop those steps over the course of the class. You will explore multiple topics in the opening weeks of the class, and then write a research proposal on one of those topics. Once you have chosen a topic, real research begins and you should begin finding books and articles and building a bibliography. You will have to turn in an annotated version of your bibliography, as well as provide updates on what sources you are finding, where, and how over the course of the class. The paper structure is important to create a framework to build upon and as such, an outline will be required. This outline will be the basis for the resulting first draft and the eventual final paper. The majority of these assignments will be discussed in class collaboratively and will be shared with your peers. Peer review is an essential skill for a historian and is also part of your graded assignment for the class. This peer review also plays a role in your final paper presentation to the class, and to the rest of the History department.

The grades will be weighted as follows:

- Attendance: 6%
- Participation: 7%
- Quizzes: 7%
- Primary Source Analyses: 6% (3 x 2% each)
- Historiography Papers: 15% (3 x 5% each)
- Research Questions: 1%
- Research Proposal: 5%
- Annotated Bibliography: 2%
- Topical Outline: 2%
- Sentence Outline: 2%
- Draft Paper: 7%
- Final Paper: 20%
- Revised Paper: 10%
- Peer Reviewing: 5%
- Oral Report: 5%

Required Books

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* – This book will be your reference book for how to cite, how to write primary and secondary source analysis, etc. Please look at it and use it for your work in this class.

All additional readings will be in the source packet provided to you.

Recommended Book

Timothy Gregory, *A History of Byzantium* – This book will provide context for the discussions that we are having about specific issues relating to Byzantium. I will assign pages from it, and I believe that reading them will help you in class. You are also encouraged to read it for background when you have questions or seek context for the specific weekly readings. There are library copies as well. All readings from Gregory are recommended, but not required.

Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

Week 1 (August 22, 24, 26): Introduction to Byzantium

Reading: Gregory, Introduction

Discussion Topics: What is Byzantium?; Where is Byzantium?; What is History 204?

Week 2 (August 29, 31, September 2): Prokopios the historian?

Reading: Prokopios, *The Secret History: with Related Texts*, ed. And transl. Anthony Kaldellis (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2010); Gregory, ch. 6.

Discussion Topics: Prokopios, Justinian, Theodora and their world; Prokopios as author; Reading primary sources; Goals of the author

Assignment: Primary Source Analysis paper on Prokopios due Monday, September 5.

Week 3 (September 5, 7, 9): Byzantine Identity I

Reading: Cyril Mango, *Byzantium: The Empire of New Rome* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980) – chapter 1 “Peoples and Languages”; Anthony Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

Discussion Topics: Discussion of library and search engine use, in class; Language, ethnicity and the construction of identity; Place/role of the Slavs in Byzantium; Role of “Romans” in Byzantium

Assignment: Research Questions due in class Friday, September 9.

Week 4 (September 12, 14, No class September 16): Byzantine Identity 2

Reading: A.P. Kazhdan and Ann Wharton Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985) – chapter 5 “Byzantium and Alien Cultures”

Discussion Topics: Center-Periphery Relations; Roman and non-Romans in Constantinople and the Empire; Appropriation of Roman/Byzantine Identity

Week 5 (September 21, 23, No class September 19): Byzantine Identity 3

Reading: Anthony Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power in New Rome* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015)

Discussion Topics: Terms – Ideology, politeia, republic; How does Kaldellis differ from the field and what we have read? (historiography)

Assignment: Research Proposals due in class on Friday, September 23; Historiography paper 1 (Byzantine Identity) due Monday, September 26.

Week 6 (September 26, 30, No Class Wednesday September 28): Michael Psellus and his times

Reading: Michael Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers: The Chronographia of Michael Psellus*, transl. E.R.A. Sewter (New York: Penguin, 1966); Gregory, chs. 10 and 11.

Discussion Topics: Basil II as ideal ruler? What is Psellus's relationship to power? Does this affect his writing? Consider ideas of influence and authorship

Assignment: Primary Source Analysis paper on Psellus due Monday, October 3.

(Extra Credit Opportunity – Wednesday, September 28) No class Wednesday – Dr. Raffensperger will be presenting work at OSU. If you would like to attend, you are welcome and I will give you extra credit. It will be an example of how scholars do work, interact, and especially get and give feedback.

Week 7 (October 3, 5, No class October 7): Religion in Byzantium 1

Reading: Cyril Mango, "New Religion, Old Culture," in *The Oxford History of Byzantium*, ed. Cyril Mango (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 96-120.

Discussion Topics: Terms – Christological controversy, Arianism, Monotheletism, paganism, Monophysitism; What is Orthodoxy? The example of Libanius; Relationship of Christianity to Byzantium

Week 8 (October 10, 12, 14): Religion in Byzantium 2

Reading: Patricia Karlin-Hayter, "Iconoclasm," in *The Oxford History of Byzantium*, ed. Cyril Mango (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 153-168; Mark Whittow, *The Making of Byzantium, 600-1025* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996).

Discussion Topics: Terms – icon, Iconoclasm, iconoclast, iconodule; What is iconoclasm? What are icons and how are they important to Byzantium, as a whole and people in specific? The role of Islam in iconoclasm

Assignment: Annotated Bibliography due Monday, October 10;

Week 9 (October 19, 21, No Class October 17): Religion in Byzantium 3

Reading: Andrew Louth, “The Emergence of Byzantine Orthodoxy, 600-1095” in *The Cambridge History of Christianity: volume 3: Early Medieval Christianities, c. 600-c. 1100*, ed. Thomas F.X. Noble and Julia M.H. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 46-64.

Discussion Topics: Role of the patriarch; Missionary Activity, or not; Learning and scholarship within a Christian framework

Assignment: Topical outline due Wednesday, October 19; Historiography paper 2 (Religion in Byzantium) due Monday, October 24.

Week 10 (October 24, 26, 28): Meetings and Thesis Construction Workshop

Reading: No Reading this week

Discussion Topics: We will meet in class only on Monday; The other days you will need to schedule a meeting with me to discuss your progress on your research paper.

Assignment: Sentence outline due Friday, October 28

Week 11 (November 2, 4, No class October 31): Anna Komnene as Author

Reading: Anna Komnene, *The Alexiad*, transl. E.R.A. Sewter, Introduction by Peter Frankopan (New York: Penguin, 2009); Gregory, ch. 12.

Discussion Topics: Does female authorship matter? How does she construct her argument, or does she? Who is she and does that matter?

Assignment: Primary Source Analysis paper on Anna Komnene due Monday, November 7.

Week 12 (November 7, 9, 11): Daily Life in Byzantium 1

Reading: Cyril Mango, *Byzantium: The Empire of New Rome* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980) – chapter 2 “Society and Economy”

Discussion Topics: The structure of Byzantine society; Role of the government, church, etc.; Differences between urban and rural life

Assignment: Draft Paper due Friday, November 11.

Week 13 (November 14, 16, 18, 21): Daily Life in Byzantium 2

Reading: Clive Foss, “Life in City and Country,” in *The Oxford History of Byzantium*, ed. Cyril Mango (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 71-95; A.P. Kazhdan and Ann Wharton Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985) – chapter 3 “Popular and Aristocratic Cultural Trends”

Discussion Topics: The city as center; Changes in construction and definition of identity; Material culture as a way to understand the past and identity; Clothing, diet and culture; literature and what it can tell us about Byzantium

Week 14 (November 28, 30, December 2, No Class November 23, 25): Daily Life in Byzantium 3

Reading: Nicolas Oikonomides, "Entrepreneurs," in *The Byzantines*, ed. Guglielmo Cavallo, transl. Thomas Dunlap, Teresa Lavender Fagan and Charles Lambert (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 144-171.

Discussion Topics: Market Economy and merchants in Byzantium; Foreign trade and foreign influence?; Government regulation of the economy or participation in trade; Using economic history to understand the past

Assignment: Final Paper due Monday, November 28; Historiography paper 3 (Daily Life in Byzantium) due Monday, December 5.

Week 15 (December 5, 7, 9): Presentations

In-class presentations about your own research and your peer review partners' research. The department will attend, as time allows.

Assignment: Peer Review folders due Monday, December 5; Final Revised Papers due Friday, December 9.

Communication with Faculty

If you have questions about class, would like to know your grade, would like to set up a time to meet, or need to let me know that you will not be in class, please email me. When you email me, please put the topic in the subject line so I know what you would like to discuss. Your email should begin with a salutation such as "Dear Professor Raffensperger". It should not begin with "hey" or "I need". Your email should close with something polite as well. "Best wishes" "have a good day," or something similar is just fine, followed by your name. I would emphasize that they are not fussy, outdated conventions, but things that you will need to know to live in the world. Employers will not appreciate the casual informality with which you might be most comfortable.

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 6% 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 3 unexcused absences over the course of the semester, you will receive a grade of F for your attendance. If you miss 5 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

Your learning in this course is important to me. I invite you to talk with me about ways to ensure your full participation in this course. Please be aware that Wittenberg is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. If you are eligible for course accommodations because of a disability, you need to register with the Academic Services Office, COMPASS Center located in Thomas Library. After you register, give me your accommodation letter from Academic Services and arrange to talk with me about your learning needs privately in a timely manner. Early identification at the start of the term is essential to ensure timely provision of services. If you have questions or would like more information about services for students with disabilities, please contact Grace Whiteley, Disability Services Coordinator/Student Success Coach, whiteleyg@wittenberg.edu

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.