

Ritual and Society in the Middle Ages

In this course we will examine six rites of medieval society. Less concentration will be placed on the historical development of each rite, than on its actual ceremony: words, gestures, symbols, costume; its preparation; duration; location; and interpretation at one given time.

Patterns of ritual observation will emerge that have universal application to rituals in the most primitive and advanced societies, which you will be welcomed to discuss and reflect on in class participation. But at the same time the six rites of baptism (Christian Initiation), the Mass (Eucharist), clerical ordination, coronation of kings, knighting, and marriage will help us to understand the mentality and what is distinct about western European medieval society, to which we trace our roots.

The following required reading will be supplemented by hand-outs each week:

Hall, Edward T. The Silent Language

Strayer, Joseph R. Western Europe in the Middle Ages

Schedule:

Week

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| I | Mon., Jan. 11: | Introductory meeting |
| II | | Baptism (Christian Initiation) |
| III | | The Mass (Eucharist) |
| IV | | Clerical Ordination |
| V | | Mid-term week: no class. Please make individual appointments to discuss research papers, bibliography |

Week

VI	Coronation of kings
VII	Knighting
VIII	Marriage
IX	Class reports (10-15 minutes each, on research topic)

Final exam week Mar. 13-19: Papers due latest Mon., Mar. 15

Your grade in the course will be determined by the following:

- * Preparation for weekly classes (one team presentation of the reading material will be asked of everyone)
- * Participation in class
- * Research paper on a medieval rite not discussed in class (minimum 15 pages).
- * 10-15 minute presentation of your research paper findings to the class.

The following are medieval rites of importance and interest for our understanding of medieval society, of which you may wish to choose one for your research topic:

Rite of Confession (Penetential Rite)

Funeral/Burial Rites

Pilgrimage

Ordo of a Synod (ecclesiastical council)

Trial by Ordeal

Ordo of the Dedication of a Church/ Deposition of Relics

Ordo of the Divine Office (Eight Hours)

Rite of Consecration of Virgins

Rite of Oblation of Children to Monasteries

Canonization of a Saint

Rite of Extreme Unction (Anointing of Sick and Dying)

Rite of Homage (Vassalage)

Ordo of the Monastic Meal

Ritual Combat (The Tournament)

Rite of Cursing