This Freshman Seminar examines the history of ethno-religious minorities in the pre-modern Mediterranean. We will investigate what allowed minority and majority groups to exist side by side, what was the nature of this coexistence, and how did it change over time. The class focuses on the Iberian Peninsula, but we will be looking as well at Norman Sicily, the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem, the Maghreb, and Venice-Ottoman relations. We will explore in this course the textures of power relations and the structures of inter-faith violence and exclusion. But we will also look at communal autonomy and cross-cultural cooperation. Together, we will ask how multi-ethnic and multi-confessional societies were organized in the past, and think how they can do so in the present.

Goals

* Analyzing major issues in the history of majority-minority interaction in the pre-modern Mediterranean world. By the end of the course, you should be familiar with key social, political, legal, and religious aspects of Christian-Jewish-Muslim encounters, especially for the later middle ages and the early modern period.

* Developing reading and analytical skills by engaging critically with current scholarship and historical documents. By the end of the course, you should be able to combine an analysis of primary sources with a broader synthetical understanding of key concepts and approaches in present-day academic scholarship.

Grading

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<th>Assignment Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Participation (weekly)</td>
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<td>10%</td>
<td>1st Assignment: Article Analysis (1-2 pages), due 09/12</td>
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<td>2nd Assignment: Primary Source Analysis (2 pages), due 10/01</td>
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<td>3rd Assignment: Paper Proposal (1 page + bibliography), due 10/17</td>
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<td>4th Assignment: Book Review (2 pages), due 10/31</td>
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<td>Final Research Paper (10-12 pages), due 12/16</td>
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Course Policies

* Attend all sections. If you must miss a class, please notify me by email in advance, except in the case of an emergency. Failure to attend class consistently without an authorized excuse will result in a lower participation grade and, in the event of four or more unexcused absences, a failing grade in the course.
* Bring copies (paper or electronic) of the day’s readings to class.

* The basics of class participation consist of: [1] reading the assigned primary sources and/or the secondary literature before class; [2] arriving to class prepared for discussion of the readings. I care about the quality of your participation. You are not expected to memorize or recite the readings, but to have your own opinions on them and/or to ask questions about specific things you find interesting, difficult to understand, and so forth; [3] engaging in respectful and informed discussion with other class members. Listening closely to your classmates is key. If you disagree with them, point to evidence supporting your claim; [4] initiating contact with the instructor when having questions, ideas or concerns regarding the course and its assignments. In addition, each student will be asked to lead one discussion by proposing 2-3 questions regarding the assigned reading for class discussion.

* Papers should be turned in to the instructor in hard copies in the classes they are due. Late submission of papers will be penalized.

* As the student code of conduct states, Johns Hopkins has a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism. Ethics violations of any kind are taken seriously and may result in dismissal. For more information, see http://advanced.jhu.edu/current-students/policies/notice-on-plagiarism-2/

* Special needs: Students with disabilities or special needs should know that, in order to preserve confidentiality and privacy, the Office of Disabilities does not automatically inform professors of students' needs. If you have a documented disability and need special consideration, please ensure that the Office of Disabilities notifies me in advance of any deadline. I want our class to be a comfortable and productive learning environment for everyone, so if you are having difficulties, I encourage you to let me know.

Required Books


The books should be available for purchase at Barnes & Noble Johns Hopkins, 3300 St Paul St.
**Weekly Course Readings**

I. Foundations of Majority-Minority Relations in the Pre-Modern Mediterranean

09/03: Introduction

09/05: The Church and the Jews

*Reading*


09/10: Protected Minorities in the Islamic World

*Source*


*Readings*


09/12: Opportunity and Precarity: Minorities as Servants of Rulers

*Sources*

# "Jewish Viziers" in *Medieval Iberia*, pp. 110-130.

1st Assignment

# Read closely  Brian A. Catlos, “Accursed, Superior Men: Ethno-Religious Minorities and Politics in the Medieval Mediterranean” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 56:4 (2014), pp. 844-869. Write a short (1-2 pages) essay that responds to the following questions: How does the author portray the nature of majority-minority relations in the pre-modern Mediterranean? Do you find his central claims convincing in relation to the evidence he presents? Make sure to support your argument with examples from Catlos' article.

09/17: Autonomy and Interdependency: The Jewish Community

*Sources*

# Royal Grants to the Jewish Community of Barcelona (available on [Fordham University Sourcebook](#))

# Jewish Views of Royal Monetary Policy in Aragon (available here)

*Reading*

09/19: **Autonomy and Interdependency: The Muslim Community**

**Source**

**Reading**

**II. Contact and Conflict in Mediterranean Frontier Societies**

09/24: **Muslims in Norman Sicily**

**Source**

**Readings**


09/26: **Roger II: Rex or Emir?**

**Source**

**Readings**


10/01: **Crusaders and Muslims in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem**

**2nd Assignment**
# Compare and contrast the versions of Pope Urban II's call for a crusade with the accounts given by contemporary Arab historians. Write a short essay (2 pages) that addresses one of the following questions:

*The Crusades are often described as a "holy war." What evidence do you find in the primary sources indicating that contemporaries saw them as such?*

*The Crusades were a fundamental moment in the encounter between Latin Christianity and Islam. What are the differences in the ways Christian and Muslim historians portray the religious Other?*

Make sure to bring examples from the primary sources for the claims that you are making in your essay.
Sources

10/03: Western Christians in the East
Reading

10/08: Negotiating the Reconquista: The Kingdom of Valencia
Source
# Documents related to the Conquest and Surrender of Valencia in Constable, Medieval Iberia, pp. 273-286.

Reading

10/10: Life in an Iberian Frontier Society
Readings

III. Violence Against Minorities and Its Rationale

10/15: Violence and Community 1
Reading

10/17: Violence and Community 2
Reading
# Nirenberg, Communities of Violence, Chapter 5.

3rd Assignment
# Write a brief (1 page) description of your proposed topic for your Final Research Paper. Name as well at least 2 secondary sources (an academic journal article, a chapter in a monograph, an essay in a collective volume, etc.) you find pertinent to this proposed paper. Explain in 1-2 sentences how the secondary sources shed, in your opinion, some light
on the topic. Topics could be an independent expansion of one of the themes covered in class, though they must include other bibliographical items.

IV. Minorities Crossing Boundaries

10/22: Mediterranean Mercenaries 1

Reading

10/24: Mediterranean Mercenaries 2

Reading
# Hussein Fancy, The Mercenary Mediterranean, chapter 5, 6, and epilogue.

10/29: No Class

Individual meetings about final essay

10/31: Gender and Conversion Across the Mediterranean

4th Assignment
# Write a 2 pages review essay on Eric R. Durstler, Renegade Women: Gender, Identity, and Boundaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011). A review should include an account of the book’s general argument. Choose, in addition, one of the book chapters and address in your review how the case narrated in the chapter demonstrates the broader thesis of the book. The conclusion of your review should include a critical assessment of the extent to which the book’s thesis is convincing and/or further questions that arose after reading the book, especially in relation to other topics discussed in the class.

11/05: Slavery in Christian Spain

Reading
# Debra Blumenthal, Enemies and Familiars: Slavery and Mastery in Fifteenth-Century Valencia (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), chapters 1 and 6 (online access available through the library website).

11/07: Slavery in Muslim North Africa

Reading

11/12: The Life of the Go-Between 1

Reading
11/14: **The Life of the Go-Between 2**

*Reading*
# Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels*, chapter 6 through epilogue.

11/19: **Trade Beyond Borders: Ancient Institutions**

*Source*

*Reading*

11/21: **Trade Beyond Borders: Modern Trajectories**

*Sources*
# “Letter of a Merchant in Aleppo, 1551”
# “The Charter of the Jewish Merchants, 1589”

*Reading*

12/03: **Empires between East and West 1**

*Reading*
E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects Between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), introduction and chapter 1. (Online access available through the [library website](#))

12/05: **Empires between East and West 2**

*Reading*
Rothman, *Brokering Empire*, chapters 5, 7, and afterword.

12/16: **Submit Final Assignment**

Write a research-based essay of 10-12 pages. Essays should include an analysis of primary sources and engage with the relevant scholarship, as you practiced in the previous course assignments. Essays are to be submitted via email in word document or PDF file, double spaced and in 11-font. Please contact the instructor with any pertinent question.