

HISTORY 234: KINGS, KNIGHTS, AND CRIMINALS: RESEARCH IN MEDIEVAL BRITISH SOURCES; 2021

The goal of this course is to immerse you in research based largely on primary sources. It unfolds in two parts, the first giving minimal but essential context, the second providing opportunity to do what historians do, using (translated, printed, and indexed) documents produced by the English royal government (supplemented by supporting modern scholarship). The format shifts in this second part from informal discussion to individual or small group meetings.

Requirements : regular, alert attendance and contributions to our discussions. If zeal and diligence slide, there will be an essay or take-home exam at the end of Part One; but please do not make this necessary! Your major goal is to write a serious research paper (of about 15-20 pp) on an individual career in context chosen from the list suggested (or agreed upon in discussion with the instructor).

OUTLINE of SESSIONS :(dates somewhat tentative)

Introduction: THE PHYSICAL SETTING AND ITS MEANING (2 Feb)

PART ONE: GETTING TO THE COALFACE—BROAD CONTEXTS FOR RESEARCH PROJECTS: Building a Platform for a Stable Kingdom in an age of invasions

From mature Anglo-Saxon to Anglo-Norman Kingdom (4 Feb)

Beowulf (any translation)

[James Campbell](#), "The Anglo-Saxon State: A Maximum View,": in Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (Hambledon and London, London, 2000).

[C. Warren Hollister](#), "The Rise of Administrative Kingship: Henry I," in Hollister, *Monarchy, Magnates and Institutions of the Anglo-Norman World*.

Law and Governance: the work of Henry II (9 Feb)

[Raoul Van Caenegem](#), "English Law and the Continent," in *The Birth of the English Common Law* (1988)

[Paul Brand](#), "Henry II and the Creation of the English Common Law," in Harper-Bill and Vincent, eds., *Henry II: New Interpretations* (2007).

The English and Others. (11 and 16 Feb)

(1) A United Kingdom in the Medieval British Isles? (11 Feb)

Rhees Davies, *THE FIRST ENGLISH EMPIRE* (Oxford, 2000).

(2) Crossing the Channel, Fully Armed (16 Feb)

[True Chronicles of Jean le Bel](#), tr. Nigel Bryant (Boydell, 2011) [Read, the Introduction and, say, 100 pp of text, either in a block or several smaller blocks, to get a sense of the invasion]

Crime, Disorder, and the Common Law. A Society of Laws or a Crisis of Public Order? (18 Feb)

[E.L.G. Stones](#), "The Folvilles of Ashby-Folville, Leicestershire, and their Associates in Crime" *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser. 7 (1957)

[Anthony Musson](#), *The Evolution of English Justice* (1999), "Conclusion: Attitudes to Justice."

[R.W. Kaeuper](#), "Law and Order in 14thC England: the evidence of special commissions of oyer and terminer, *Speculum* 54 (1979)

[R.W. Kaeuper](#), "Debating Law, Justice and Constitutionalism," in Kaeuper, Dingman, and Sposato, eds., *Law, Governance and Justice* (Brill, Leiden, 2013)

PART TWO: RESEARCHING A PARTICULAR FIGURE AND ANALYZING ISSUES HIS/HER LIFE RAISES.

Introduction to sources and research (23 Feb).

After this introduction, individual (and possibly small group) meetings carry the course through to end of term. **Constant consultation is advised.** Some MINIMAL DEADLINES for consultations to which I will devote entire days:

Initial meetings to discuss questions on primary evidence and useful secondary sources (9 March Feb OR 16 March).

We may hold a Progress meeting, to discuss how your interpretation is taking shape (23 March)

(On these days I will be in my office; but simply stop by to talk as questions arise. Via email I will schedule meetings either for individual researchers or groups working on the same figure and topic.

The goal is for each student to produce a high quality study of an individual life as it can be dug out of royal government records and any relevant secondary sources.

FORM for the paper: Thorough citations of sources will be expected. Your footnotes should resemble those you find in modern works of scholarship.

Groups may cooperate and share information, as historians do; but any assistance from others is to be acknowledged in footnotes in the final paper, and all papers are finally and essentially individual efforts. I will help regularly with meanings of legal and administrative terminology, or will point students to sources where meanings can be found. Questions may be sent to me by email or presented in person. Often I will need to see the language in which a term is embedded, rather than any isolated term.

We will hold a final group meeting to present and discuss the researched individuals and the insight their lives provide into medieval British history.

The Cast of Characters and Issues (which may be expanded. NB: spellings vary considerably)

--Diutatus Guillelmo, an Italian merchant-banker active in London

--Isabella de Fortibus, a great lady who, widowed, declines a second marriage and manages her estates

-Stephen de Fulburn, an English bishop running the government of Ireland (gasp, suspected of corruption)

--Aaron, son of Vives, a Jewish moneylender in London (up to the expulsion of Jews from England)

--Robert Lewer, a rebellious knight embroiled in the contentious politics of the court of Edward II

--Robert Godesfield, a quarrelsome and litigious moderate landowner in Lincolnshire (issues of law and violence)

--Sir John Fitzwalter, an English lord in East Anglia, active in early Hundred Years War (and crime)

NB-We will hold a final discussion of research figures in class on the last day of the term. Research papers are **due Friday May 14** (the date set for a "final exam" in this course).