

Medieval Times
Session 2, 2018-2019
Fridays, 9:00-10:45
Lori Peters, Instructor

Course Objective and Overview:

This course will provide an **overview** of many essential standards in the 7th grade CA social studies core curriculum (but is open to all grades). Participants will study the social, cultural, and technological changes that occurred in Europe, Africa and Asia between A.D. 500 and A.D. 1789, although the course will also include the events surrounding the split and fall of the Roman Empire, in the 3rd-5th centuries, and subsequent rise of Byzantium. Topics will also include the Dark Ages in England, feudalism, the rise of Islam and the Crusades, trade routes and empires in Africa (focus on Timbuktu). Each class has a different focus, with information being presented through video, discussion, reading, and note taking of BIG ideas. Participants should read proficiently at a 6th level; the pace of the class goes fast. Course culminates with an independent project.

Course Expectations:

- Read proficiently at a 6th grade level or above
- Arrive on time and be prepared to learn. **Note taking is expected.**
- This class will move quickly! Students should be willing to keep up with pace of the class as best they can. If not, it is highly recommended that ALL materials be reviewed again at home.
- Be open to ideas, discussion, and collaboration.
- Materials needed: Spiral notebook, folder, assignment notebook, and pencil/pen. Some independent reading will be assigned, and all materials should be brought to class. Optional: atlas for personal use, preferably with information regarding middle ages.

Important: There is a lot to cover in each class, and there will be little “down time”; many concepts will need further review and independent research to understand fully. This is a BIG idea class only. In-depth study of each lesson is not possible given the brevity of the course.

Pre-reading assignment on the Greeks and Romans, due first day of class.

10/26 Our introduction will focus on defining what the Middle Ages were (also referred to as the Dark Ages and Medieval Age) and where key developments were. We will start with the legacy and contributions of the great Roman Empire, and causes/effects of its expansion and decline (“Fall of Rome”). Students will understand who some of the barbarian tribes were, including the Visigoths who sacked Rome, and the subsequent chaos that ensued in Western Europe.

11/2 We will view sections of History Channel’s “The Dark Ages” (touching upon the rise of Christianity and Charlemagne, Constantinople, the Byzantine Empire, and the development of Catholicism, including Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic). We will connect Islamic teachings with Judaism and Christianity, and discuss the reason for the Crusades and the focal point of it all: Jerusalem.

11/9 Our focus today will be the Byzantine Empire, which lasted more than 1,000 years! We will connect how it was able to rise, as Rome in the west was falling, and how its relative distance from the west enabled Constantine the Great to build a new “Roman Empire”, followed by Justinian. Video “Engineering an Empire: the Byzantines” will focus on the aqueducts, fortified walls to protect the city, and the Hagia Sophia– all icons of a great civilization that enabled the meteoric rise of Christianity– from Constantinople to present day Istanbul.

11/16 What was Medieval Europe like? We will look at some key events and ideas, such as the development of the Papacy, the Magna Carta, habeas corpus, Crusades (again), the Bubonic Plague, and

“natural law.” Feudal relationships forged the basis for political order, and why the ‘Knights of the Round Table’ live in infamy.

11/23: NO CLASS, MID SESSION BREAK

11/30 We’ll read about the African trade routes during the Middle Ages (the “triangle”), starting with the Ghana and Mali empires. We’ll talk about the importance of the camel, when trading gold, salt, and food, as well as slaves, and describe the importance of written and oral traditions in the history and culture of Africa. Video on “Digging for the Truth: Timbuktu” will explore the rise of the great city in Mali during the 14th century. ***Students will receive information for their independent project, and have one week to select their topic.***

12/7 Our focus will be the Chinese dynasties, from Tang, Sung and Ming. We’ll look at how Buddhism and Confucianism shaped the development of society, and celebrate the many inventions of the Chinese during the Middle Ages, including the four core inventions that lead to pretty much everything else!

12/14 The Renaissance signaled an end to the Middle Age and the birth of modern time. Why? We’ll look at the big contributors to the Renaissance and close with a timeline of key “time-changers”: Reformation, Scientific Revolution, Age of Exploration, Age of Enlightenment, and the Age of Reason. What were the big ideas around each?

12/21 Share Medieval Times study projects. Parents are encouraged to attend.