Description

The crusades and the Spanish reconquista opened the door to a deeper Medieval European experience of Asia and Africa, one that extended beyond where those two continents touched the Mediterranean. They actually also laid the groundwork for the European expansion into the Americas that began with Columbus' expeditions. This course will focus on firsthand accounts of those medieval European soldiers, sailors, chaplains, missionaries, and merchants who found themselves in such uncharted territory. We will use these primary sources to reconstruct medieval European perceptions of non-Europeans in an effort to appreciate the formative role that such “imagining” of the other played in the construction of European identity.

Schedule

1. Sept 3-8: The Geographical Legacy of the Ancient World
   - Genesis 1-10
   - Alexander's Letter to Aristotle about India
   - Pliny, Natural History, book 7.
   - Isidore of Seville, Etymologies 14

ASIA


   - John of Plano Carpini, History of the Mongols, in Dawson, Mission to Asia, pp. 2-72.
4. Sept 24-29: The Mission to the Mongols, II

5. Oct 1-6: The Pax Mongolica, I: Trade and Diplomacy
   • Marco Polo, *Travels* (Penguin), pp. 33-162.


AFRICA


9. Nov 5-10: The Portuguese in West Africa, II

10. Nov 12-17: The Portuguese in Africa and India
    • Vasco da Gama, *Journal of the First Voyage*

AMERICA

11. Nov 19-24: Columbus in the New World, I
    • Columbus, *Diario* (Oklahoma), pp. 15-403 (alternate pages).

12. Nov 26-Dec 1: Columbus in the New World, II
• Columbus, “Narrative of the Third Voyage” (1500), *The Four Voyages*, pp. 206-226.
• Columbus, Letter to the King and Queen of Spain (1503), *The Four Voyages*, pp. 283-304.