

# Medieval Europe & the World Outside

History 14  
Pomona College  
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## 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

### 2. Sept 10-15 : The Crusades & Prester John

- *Gesta Francorum*, ed. Rosalind Hill, pp. 1-101.
- Selected texts from *Prester John: The Legend and Its Sources*, ed. Brewer (Ashgate, 2015), pp. 29-96.

### 3. Sept 17-22 : The Mission to the Mongols, I

- 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

- *The Journey of William of Rubruck*, in Dawson, *Mission to Asia*, pp. 89-220.

5. Oct 1-6 : The Pax Mongolica, I: Trade and Diplomacy

- Marco Polo, *Travels* (Penguin), pp. 33-162.

6. Oct 8-13 : The *Pax Mongolica*, II: Diplomacy

- Marco Polo, *Travels* (Penguin), pp. 163-294.

## AFRICA

7. Oct 15-27 : The Conquest of the Canary Islands

- Bontier and Le Verrier, *The Canarian: Or, Book of the Conquest and Conversion of the Canarians in the year 1402*, by Messire Jean de Bethencourt (Hakluyt Society, 1872), pp. 1-220.

8. Oct 29-Nov 3 : The Portuguese in West Africa, I

- Zurara, *The Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea* (Hakluyt Society, 1896-99), pp. 1-172.

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

- Zurara, *The Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea* (Hakluyt Society, 1896-99), pp. 172-293.

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

- Dr. Chanca's Letter to the City of Seville (1496), *Christopher Columbus: The Four Voyages* (Penguin, 1969), pp. 129-157.

- 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.