FLR 410/510: The Medieval Feast in Theory and Practice

People often study only one aspect of the Middle Ages at a time: the literature alone, or the people, or the food, or the entertainment. In this course we’ll study the breadth of late medieval life, centered on a particular occasion in a particular time and place: a feast held at Barley Hall, in York, England, in 1483. We’ll look at the images, literature and meaning of medieval feasts, incorporating other aspects of medieval life such as clothing and entertainment, thinking about all these aspects from the point of view of anthropology, history, and cultural analysis, and culminating in an actual reenactment of the feast.

Required texts:
Barley Hall (guidebook; to be bought in class)
Bridget Ann Henisch, Fast and Feast: Food in Medieval Society (at Duck Store)

Recommended:
Raffaela Sarti, Europe at Home. Not ordered for Duck Store; available used at Amazon.com and Half.com for $2.95+. The assigned excerpts will be on Blackboard, but you may want to buy this very interesting book to read and refer to.
All other texts will be on Blackboard or available in class.

Note that participation in the final feast is required, and there will be an additional monetary charge (to be determined by the class) for the feast. The date and time of the feast will also be determined by the class.

Learning Outcomes for this Course
• Identify, explain and analyze food behavior in the Middle Ages, especially in comparison with modern food practices
• Identify, explain and analyze common cultural practices of the late Middle Ages and early modern period, especially as regards domestic matters
• Reflect on and analyze modern expressions of medieval culture

Grading:

Undergraduates:
Option A: Short papers
Preparation and participation: 20%
Midterm and final quizzes: 10% each
Average of 3 short assignments: 30%
Capstone paper (10 pages): 30%

Option B: Longer project
Preparation and participation: 20%
Midterm and final quizzes: 10% each
Average of 3 short assignments: 20%
Long project (15-20+ pages): 50%

Graduates:
Same as option B above

Note that all work done from this class should be original and your own (apart from group projects as assigned). Plagiarism/academic dishonesty will result in an F for the course. For more on plagiarism and academic dishonesty, please see http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index.html.

If you have a documented disability, you’re invited to see me about how we can arrange for you to receive accommodations for this class. If you think you may need to receive official documentation for a disability, check with the Accessible Education Center at aec.uoregon.edu.

Schedule:

Week 1: **Thinking About Food**
March
M 30: Introduction to food and feasting; outline of the course
April
W 1: Thinking and unthinking the Food Rules
Read before class: “Food Rules in the United States” (on Blackboard)

Week 2: **Medieval Feasting**
M 6: Feasting detective work: the basics of the medieval feast
(an art-historical detective exercise)
Reading: Nichola Fletcher, “The Golden Age: Medieval Feasting”
(from Charlemagne’s Tablecloth) (on Blackboard)
W 8: Fasting and Feasting: the concepts. Capstone paper and longer paper assignments handed out.
Reading: Nichola Fletcher, “The Renaissance: Evolution of European Banquets”
(from Charlemagne’s Tablecloth)
Caroline Walker Bynum, “Fast, Feast, and Flesh: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women” (both on Blackboard)

Week 3: **Medieval Food, Medieval York, and Barley Hall**

Week 4: **Life in a Medieval Household**
M 20: The development of the house in the Middle Ages. Sewing assignment handed out. Reading: Raffaella Sarti, ch. IV, “The Home” (from Europe at Home), (on Blackboard).
W 22: Cooking and eating: cauldrons, cutlery, and more
Reading: from Bee Wilson, Consider the Fork (on Blackboard)
Week 5: **Medieval Food and Meals**
M  27: Theories and practicalities of medieval food. Cooking & eating assignment passed out.
   Reading: Raffaella Sarti, ch. V, “Food” (*Europe at Home* pp. 148-78),
   Nichola Fletcher, “The Feast of St Antony: Pigs — The Peasant’s Feast” (from
   Charlemagne’s Tablecloth) (both on Blackboard)
W  29: What to eat and how to make a feast. **Midterm quiz**
   Reading: Henisch, *Fast and Feast*, ch. 5, “Methods and Menus,” ch. 7, “Feasts”

Week 6: **The Hands-On Middle Ages**
May
M  4: Sewing & reading day. Written component of sewing assignment due. *Bring your
   sewing project to class to work on.*
W  6: Eating day. *Bring your medieval dish to eat during class.* Written component of
   cooking assignment due.

Week 7: **Medieval Entertainment**
M  11: Medieval entertainment and celebrations
   Reading: from Ronald Hutton, *Stations of the Sun: A History of the Ritual Year in
   Britain* (on Blackboard)
W  13: *This class will not meet today. Instead, do something medieval!*

Week 8: **Feast planning**
M  18: Reports from the Clothing and Entertainment Groups; in-class planning
W  20: Report from the Marshall and Food Groups; in-class planning

Week 9: **Authentic and Inauthentic Feasts**
M  25: Discussion of *The Boke of Nurture* and medieval account books
   Reading: excerpts from *The Boke of Nurture* (on Blackboard)
W  27: “Medieval Times” and Movies: Spot-the-Anachronism Day
   *No reading.*

Week 10: **The Oregon Feast**
June
M  1: Feast logistics: in-class exercise. *Bring your “power analysis” to class.*

There is no final exam in this class. Longer projects and graduate papers are due Tuesday,
June 9, at 5 pm, by e-mail to mjbayles@uoregon.edu.