

# **The Normans between Islam and Byzantium: Multicultural Encounters in the Mediterranean World (1000-1200) (HIST 31991)**

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This module offers an in-depth analysis of medieval multiculturalism by exploring the movement of Norman migrants, travellers and conquerors across multicultural frontiers within the medieval Mediterranean. Better known for ruling Normandy and England after 1066, the Normans also spread into Iberia, southern Italy and Sicily, North Africa and the eastern Mediterranean, and in doing so encountered the world of Islam and Byzantium. The Norman migrants established powerful states throughout the Mediterranean, especially the Crusading Principality of Antioch and the Kingdom of Sicily. The latter developed into a unique multicultural state inhabited by Muslims, Greeks and Latins, and governed by Norman Kings who dressed in Byzantine robes, resided in stunning Arab-Islamic palaces, promoted alleged crypto-Muslim eunuchs to positions of power, and commissioned magnificent multicultural monuments. This course then analyses the dynamics and impact of Norman movement within the Mediterranean world, and the range of multicultural encounters that occurred as a result.

## **Indicative seminar topics:**

- Norman identity: Mythmaking, Gender, and Othering
- Norman diaspora: southern Italy and Sicily in the eleventh century
- The Normans and the First Crusade
- Rogue State: the International Status of the Kingdom of Sicily
- Multicultural Monarchy I: Muslims in the Kingdom of Sicily
- Multicultural Monarchy II: Greek Christians in the Kingdom of Sicily
- The Trinacria Project: Art, Architecture and Knowledge
- The Kingdom of Africa
- Eastern Ambitions: The Principality of Antioch
- The Norman devotional landscape

**Assessment:**

1) Source Analysis	2, 000 words	40%
2) Research Essay	3, 000 words	60%

**Indicative Reading:**

- A. Metcalfe, *The Muslims of Medieval Italy* (2009).
- N. Hodgson, 'Normans and Competing Masculinities on Crusade', in K. Hurlock and P. Oldfield, *Crusading and Pilgrimage in the Norman World*, (2015), 195-213
- J. C. Birk, *Norman Kings of Sicily and the Rise of the Anti-Islamic Critique: Baptized Sultans* (2016)
- K. C. Britt, 'Roger II of Sicily: Rex, Basileus, and Khalif? Identity, Politics, and Propaganda in the Cappella Palatina', *Mediterranean Studies* 16 (2007), 21-45.
- E. L. Jordan, 'Women of Antioch: Political Culture and Powerful Women in the Latin East', in Heather J. Tanner (ed.), *Medieval Elite Women and the Exercise of Power, 1100-1400* (2019), pp. 225-46
- E. Albu, 'Probing the Passions of a Norman on Crusade: the Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 27 (2005), 1-15.
- J. Shepard, 'When Greek Meets Greek: Alexius Comnenus and Bohemond in 1097-1098', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 12 (1988), 185-277
- P. Oldfield, *Sanctity and Pilgrimage in Medieval Southern Italy, 1000-1200* (2014)
- J. Johns and N. Jamil, 'Signs of the Times: Arabic Signatures as a Measure of Acculturation in Norman Sicily', *Muqarnas* 21 (2004), pp.181-192

**Primary sources and dissertation topics:** Do not worry! There is an absolute abundance of available translations of primary sources for this topic (extracts from many will be provided in the course seminar book). These include chronicles, diaries, letters, poems, law-codes, travel-accounts, architecture, art-work and much more. There are also plenty of modern works which help us to understand these sources. As a result there are many sources and many topics related to this course on which it would be entirely feasible to base a dissertation.