

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
Department of History

Semester II Year 1985

<u>COURSE NO.</u>	<u>COURSE TITLE</u>	<u>INSTRUCTOR</u>
572	Marriage, Family and Property in Medieval and Renaissance Europe	M. Maszaoui

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In recent years one of the most important themes of historical literature has been family composition and the institutional, cultural and psychological importance of the family unit for the formation of the personality. It has been said that "the extremes of familial organization, from the simplest to the most complex, may once have existed within the confines of the European continent." (Laslett and Wall, 1972). This course will attempt to examine this thesis through a detailed investigation of the dramatic changes that occurred in family life in medieval and Renaissance Europe. The seminar will focus upon the geographical, chronological and socio-economic variations in family patterns in European society from the Roman Empire through the sixteenth century. Attention will be given to the sources and approaches to family history (including the value of literary and artistic evidence), the legal and institutional framework, the size and composition of the household, the economic implications of marriage, property and kinship arrangements, and the social, psychological and emotional dimensions of experience within the domestic group (paternal authority, aging and the life-cycle, sexual behavior and taboos, attitudes toward women and children, sibling relations, and the status of servants, illegitimate offspring and orphans). The seminar is intended to provide an overview of the current state of research on the family in the early centuries of European history and a basis for comparison with modern family structures.

LECTURES

No formal lectures. Proseminar meets once weekly for discussion of assigned materials. Students will be expected to give occasional oral reports on outside reading.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS and EXAMINATIONS

NO examinations. Students will be asked to submit THREE brief papers (c. 5 pp. each) in the course of the semester.

GRADING SYSTEM

Grades based on class performance (oral reports and participation in discussion) plus short papers.

REQUIRED READINGS

Three paperback texts plus xerox materials. Students will be charged a small fee to cover cost of xeroxing.

* One is a Forum Offprint