

HIS 390
Medieval Spain

Satisfies: SBS+

Thematic Categories: “Arts, Ideas & Culture,”
“Empires, Violence & Global Connections,” “Race, Religion, Gender & Sexualities”

Tu/Th, 12:30 – 1:50 PM

Professor Mohamad Ballan

Medieval Spain was home to diverse peoples and cultures who established prosperous communities and kingdoms which shaped its history and culture between 500 and 1500. While being marked by extraordinary linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity, medieval Spain was also characterized by a constant struggle between Muslim and Christian kingdoms for territorial and political hegemony. This course explores these two historical processes, providing insight into the various historical factors and developments that shaped the delicate coexistence between Jews, Christians and Muslims in Spain, while grappling with the important role played by violence, religious persecution, and expulsion in the unravelling of this multicultural society. Through a critical engagement with scholarly debates and a close reading of primary sources (in English translation) from Spain between roughly 500 and 1500, this course examines the major political, cultural, intellectual and social transformations across medieval Spain. Major themes to be covered include borderlands and frontiers; social and political institutions; women and gender; literary and cultural efflorescence; networks of learning; cross-cultural contact; kingship and sovereignty; diplomacy and trade; military organization and warrior culture; conversion and acculturation; military organization; diplomacy and trade; intellectual culture and the transmission of knowledge; toleration and persecution; history and memory.