IN THIS COURSE, we will explore the long history of travel and cross-cultural encounter in the Mediterranean basin, from the earliest days of Christian pilgrimage in the fourth century to the heyday of the Grand Tour in the eighteenth. After discussing possible frameworks within which we might understand the Mediterranean—as a collection of micro-regions, a boundary between cultures, or a transmission belt connecting them—we will focus on the experiences of individual travelers across some fifteen centuries, from Late Antiquity through the Enlightenment.

As we read the accounts and images left behind by Christian, Muslim, and Jewish travelers—whether pilgrims, merchants, diplomats, artists, or tourists—we will have the opportunity to ask not only what makes each of them unique, but also what (if anything) unites them across time, space, religious tradition, and genre. Was the premodern Mediterranean a single cultural unit, or a tense collection of hostile peoples and traditions? In what contexts did people of different faiths and traditions interact, and what was the result? How did travelers attempt to reconcile their expectations of far-off lands with their actual experiences once they arrived? What connotations did travel and curiosity hold in different premodern cultures? Did they change over time? Is it possible to recognize the formation of distinctive ideas of ‘East’ and ‘West’ in these centuries, as Edward Saïd argued, or is the picture more complex—one composed of what Natalie Zemon Davis has called ‘braided histories’? We will also raise broader methodological questions of interest to all historians, including the pleasures and pitfalls of working with ‘eyewitness’ accounts, and the challenges inherent in using modern translations of premodern sources.

In order to raise these questions, we will examine a large number of primary sources in varied media, ranging from pilgrimage accounts to paintings. Most of our reading will be in modern translations, but we will also visit Firestone Library to see original editions of some materials. Our discussions of a judicious amount of secondary literature will help to give you context to arrive at your own conclusions about the evolution of the Mediterranean world. By the end of the course, you will be prepared to write a 25–35 page paper based on original research into a topic of your choice.

Schedule of Readings and Course Meetings

Unit I. The Rhythms of the Mediterranean

Sep. 17 Course Introduction

Sep. 22  The Environmental Mediterranean


Sep. 24  ‘Histoire totale’


Sep. 29  A Corrupting Sea?


Oct. 1  How Historians Debate


**ASSIGNMENT:** Bring to class a 1-page description of 1 or 2 potential paper topics. We will use these to plan the library session for the following week.

Oct. 6  The Pirenne Thesis


Oct. 8  Fieldtrip to Firestone

Meet History librarian Elizabeth Bennett in Firestone 2-6-F for a session on research techniques and resources.

**Unit 2. Pilgrimage and Tourism**

Oct. 13  Christian Pilgrims


Oct. 15  Christian Pilgrimage Accounts as an Historical Genre


Oct. 20  Jewish Travelers and the Cairo Geniza

Oct. 22  
Benjamin of Tudela


Oct. 27  
Two Muslim Tourists


Oct. 29  
The Rihla as a Genre


Nov. 3 & 5  
*Fall Recess*

Nov. 10  
The Marvelous East


Nov. 12  
What to do with John of Mandeville?


Nov. 17  
Theorizing Travel and Tourism


Nov. 19  
Update on Student Projects

**ASSIGNMENT:** Bring to class (1) a 3-page summary of the current state of your research project and (2) an annotated bibliography of at least 10 items relevant to your research. We will divide into groups of three for a peer workshop.

Nov. 24  
Leo Africanus

**Unit 3: Early Modern Exchanges**

Nov. 26  Biography as History


Dec. 1  Antiquarian Tourists


Dec. 3  Thanksgiving Recess

Dec. 8  Art and Artists on the Move


Dec. 10  Visual Sources / Public Speaking

In class we’ll examine a selection of visual sources and talk about your upcoming presentations.

**ASSIGNMENT:** Bring to class a draft of your final paper. It need not be polished, but it should be sufficiently thorough and cogent that I can respond with useful comments.

Unit 4. Your Turn

Dec. 15  Student Presentations

Dec. 17  Student Presentations

Jan. 5  The final Junior Paper is due by 5:00 PM to Ms. Etta Recke in 129 Dickinson.

Assignments and Expectations

This course will result in two separate grades: one based on your effort and progress in the seminar, and one based exclusively on the final draft of the junior paper. While it is, therefore, theoretically possible to receive a high mark for the junior paper without
participating at a high level in the seminar (and vice versa), in practice the two grades are typically closely related—that is to say, it is very difficult to produce an excellent junior paper without steady and enthusiastic progress through the seminar.

The final grade for the junior paper will be determined in line with the History Department’s grading rubric, available at http://www.princeton.edu/history/undergraduate/grading_practices/. The seminar grade will be determined as follows:

Attendance and participation (30%): This course is primarily discussion-based. Therefore, attendance and informed participation are essential to your success in the course, and comprise the single largest component of the seminar grade.

Prospectus (10%): While the brief prospectus that you submit in class on 1 October is just a working document, and need not necessarily correspond to your final paper topic, it is crucial that you show yourself to be thinking seriously about a possible topic early in the term.

Project summary/bibliography (20%): Again, the project summary and annotated bibliography that you submit in class on 19 November need not represent your final conclusions; nor should it be a propaganda statement about how well you are doing! Rather, it should be an honest assessment of your work-in-progress, and it will be graded largely on how articulate and helpful it is in generating feedback rather than on how far along your research seems to be.

Rough draft (20%): The rough draft of your final paper, due in class on 10 December, is a crucial step in shaping your final paper, since it is the best opportunity to test your thoughts on me as an enthusiastic advisor rather than as an objective grader.

Presentation (20%): The oral presentation that you make on your work-in-progress on 15 or 17 December is important not only as an exercise in public speaking; it is also your primary opportunity to receive peer feedback on your project prior to submission of the final paper in January.