

Deciphering Secrets: Unlocking the Manuscripts of Medieval Burgos



Cloister Stained Glass, Cathedral of Burgos © Roger L. Martinez-Davila 2015

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course delves into the medieval history of the city of Burgos, from its inception in 884 c.e. as the homeland of the Spanish Kingdom of Castile and Leon until the completion of the Spanish Reconquest in 1492. We will study complicated legendary heroes like Rodrigo Diaz de Vivar “The Cid”, both a champion of the Christian Reconquest and a friend of Islamic rulers, who lays buried in the Cathedral of Burgos.

Like the Cid, medieval Burgos presented two competing views for Spain’s future – one centered on overt Castilian supremacy and another more nuanced one that incorporated religious minorities, especially Jews and Jewish converts to Christianity (conversos), into every element of political, economic, and even religious life.

We investigate the disastrous impact of the Plague and how it led the death of King Alfonso XI and the ruinous civil war between the half-brothers, Pedro “The Cruel” and Enrique II of Trastamára. We will also appraise the collapse of the kingdom’s “Old Christian” nobility and the generation of new elite clans, some of whom hailed from Jewish ancestries. It was also the era of anti-Jewish pogroms, Christian fixations on “blood purity” and unsuccessful pleas for Christian harmony, and the last gasps of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim coexistence. We will virtually-tour the Cathedral of Burgos, the Museum of Burgos, and what remains of the city’s medieval neighborhoods and structures. We also will study and transcribe intriguing vellum and paper manuscripts from the cathedral and municipal archives so that we discover new facets of this history.

No knowledge of Spanish is needed to participate in the course or in our transcription efforts.

COURSE STAFF

Roger L. Martínez-Dávila



Presently, Dr. Martínez holds academic positions at the Universidad de Carlos III de Madrid (Spain) and the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs (USA). From Fall 2015 through Summer 2018, Dr. Martínez serves as a CONEX - Marie Curie Fellow. He earned his Ph.D. in May 2008 from the University of Texas at Austin and has investigated in over 40 archives and libraries. He is a scholar of medieval and early modern Spain, religious minorities and religious converts in Spain (in particular, Sephardic Jews and conversos), and their Spanish trans-Atlantic migration to Mexico and Bolivia.

At UC3M, Roger is advancing his project, Global Citizen Scholars: Energizing English and Spanish-Speaking Humanists to Advance Knowledge and Act (GCS – EESSPHAÑA). GCS, a 36-month initiative, is a global educational, research, and social engineering endeavor. It thrusts UC3M into the forefront of (1) reclaiming humanity's deep-seated cultural curiosity; (2) mobilizing technology to energize English & Spanish-speaking students (Global Citizen Scholars) to learn about and contribute to scholarly research on medieval/early modern Jewish, Christian, and Muslim cooperation and conflict; and (3) developing a new cooperative education-research model for the 21st century.

Websites:

Roger L. Martínez-Dávila

<http://www.rogerlouismartinez.com>

Deciphering Secrets Massive Open Online Courses

<http://www.decipheringsecrets.com>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: STAFF SUPPORT

Professor Martinez would also like to acknowledge the exceptional efforts of the online, technical, video production, and translation teams at UC3M. Although they would state their involvement in the production of this MOOC was minimal, they provided excellent counsel, advice, support, and assistance. We could not have built this MOOC in just four short months if it had not been for their Herculean efforts. Specifically, Roger thanks:

- Raul Aguilera
- Rosa Sánchez

- Carlos Corral
- Paco Cruz
- Nacho Díaz
- Miriam Tenreiro
- Magdalena de Salazar
- Raul Morales

COURSE INFORMATION

Course About Page:	https://docs.google.com/a/uc3m.es/document/d/1hda715IYAUSXWWcSzFtzLA_3EBUo8fyQ4kcMHUO-14/edit?usp=sharing
University:	Universidad Carlos III de Madrid and edX.org
Course Number:	HGA.2x
Brief Description:	We explore the medieval city of Burgos (Spain) and assess its history of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religious and cultural coexistence.
Learning Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garner knowledge and assess the history of medieval Spanish intercultural coexistence in the city of Burgos and the Kingdom of Castile and Leon • Explore the world of medieval manuscripts and texts held in the archives of the Cathedral of Burgos and the City of Burgos • Learn the craft of medieval paleography, or reading authentic handwritten manuscripts • Transcribe medieval manuscripts and contribute to new scholar knowledge
Evaluation and Levels of Distinction	<p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 History Quizzes (40% of Total) • 5 Paleography Skill Quizzes (40% of Total) • 2 Independent Paleography Projects (20% of Total) <p>Passing Grade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60%
Start Date:	14 June 2016
Course Length:	7 weeks (or 7 classes)
Estimated Effort:	2 to 3 hours per week
Prerequisites:	None
Language:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Content: English ● Videos: English ● Transcripts: English

Course Level:	● Introductory - No prerequisites; an individual with some to all of a secondary school degree could complete
Certificate Type and Price:	● Free Certificate: \$0 USD
Course Staff:	Roger L. Martínez-Dávila Professor and CONEX - Marie Curie Fellow at the Instituto de Historiografía Julio Caro Baroja, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid

COLLABORATING ENTITIES

We are thankful to the following public, private, nonprofit, educational, and cultural organizations that participating in the course. Without their collaboration, we could not offer this comprehensive class to you.

- [Connecting Excellence to Universidad Carlos III de Madrid \(CONEX\) - Maria Curie Actions \(European Commission\)](#)
- [Universidad Carlos III de Madrid - Instituto Historiografía Julio Caro Baroja](#)
- [Diócesis de Burgos](#)
- [Ayuntamiento de Burgos](#)
- [Museo de Burgos \(Junta de Castilla y León\)](#)
- [Centro Sefarad Israel \(Ministerio de Educación, Cultura, y Deportes\)](#)
- [Casa Árabe \(Ministerio de Educación, Cultura, y Deportes\) \(*pending*\)](#)
- [Fulbright España](#)
- [Conversion, Overlapping Religiosities, Polemics and Interactions: Early Modern Iberia and Beyond \(at CSIC\)](#)
- [Power and Institutions in Medieval Christendom and Islam \(at CSIC\)](#)
- [Revealing Cooperation and Conflict Project](#)

Deciphering Secrets: Unlocking the Manuscripts of Medieval Burgos (Spain)

SYLLABUS

Class 1: Course Introduction and An Abbreviated History

14 June - 20 June 2016

Overview

We start with an abbreviated history of Spain and the Castilian world. In addition to a collection of required short videos, there are also important required online readings, and short required quiz of all of these materials. Our guest lecture, Dr. Jaime Alvar, will speak about how Spain was deeply impacted by Roman civilization. Lastly, I am also asking to view and participate in some optional activities as well -- I like to hear your voices in our community-building exercise (a weekly question I present to you).

- Introductory Video: Why your participation is important in this course?
- Introductory Video: Why study the history of Burgos?

Required Lectures

- Video 1: Spain's Long-Standing Relationship with Jews and Muslims
- Video 2: Highlights of the Castilian Kingdom (800 to 1300 CE)
- Video 3: Highlights on El Cid: Legend and Reality
- Video 4: Origins of the Jewish and Muslim Communities of Burgos
- Virtual Field Trip: The Museo de Burgos.
 - This is our first of several trip to the museum to view a number of artifacts. This week we learn about the museum, its activities, and the first of several objects in its collection.
 - Video 5: Welcome to the Museo de Burgos (Spain)
 - Video 6: The Museo de Burgos and Its Activities
 - Video 7: The Museo de Burgos - Urn of St. Dominic (1165 - 1170 CE)
 - Video 8: The Museo de Burgos - The Virgin of the Battles (1225 - 1235 CE)
- Video 9: The Romanization of Spain
 - Guest Lecture: Jaime Alvar Ezquerra, Director, Instituto Historiografía Julio Caro Baroja (UC3M)

Required Readings

- An Abbreviated History: The Origins of Spain
- Civilizations in Conflict?: The Complications of the Reconquista

- How Religion Influenced Spain – Deciding “Who” was “Who”? Friend or Foe?
- Self-Perceptions: Spanish Christians, Jews, and Muslims
- Ascent of the Castilians: The Kingdom of Castile (800-1300) and the City of Burgos
- Legend and Confounding Realities: Rodrigo Diaz de Vivar “The Cid”
- The Jewish Community (Juderia) of Burgos (800 to 1300)
- The Muslim Community (Moreria) of Burgos (800 to 1300)

Required Assignments

- Short Quiz 1: A multiple-choice quiz covering this week's lectures and readings.

Optional Community Building

- This Week's Question(s) of the Week: What is confounding? What part of medieval Spain's history of religious and cultural cooperation and conflict is most confounding to you? Why is this the case and can you share one photographic, video, or textual example from the Internet? Join us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram!

Optional Videos Interviews

- There are no optional videos this week.

Class 2: Tragedy and Opportunity in the 14th Century

21 June - 27 June 2016

Overview

We evaluate the the 14th century in Castilla -- in particular -- the impact of plague, civil war, and anti-Jewish sentiment and violence. Also, this week I would like you to hear about the great "contemporary" efforts to promote coexistence in Spain -- we will visit Centro Sefarad Israel (Madrid).

Required Lectures

- Video 1: Plague, Crisis, and Civil War in the 14th Century
- Video 2: Anti-Jewish Pogroms (1390 to 1420)
- Video 3: The New Nobility: Arrival of the Conversos
- Virtual Field Trip: The Museo de Burgos
 - Video 4: The Museo de Burgos - Jewish Artifacts, Part 1
 - Video 5: The Museo de Burgos - Jewish Artifacts, Part 2
- Virtual Field Trip: The Medieval City and Cathedral of Burgos
 - Video 6: The Medieval City and Cathedral of Burgos (*Note: This video is not a lecture, but one with images and music. Minimal labeling is used to ensure your unimpeded enjoyment of the environment.*)

Required Readings

- Tragedy and Opportunity in the Late 14th and Early 15th Century

- Civil War in Castile: Pedro “The Cruel” and Enrique II de Trastamara
- Anti-Jewish Pogroms (1390s - 1420s CE)
- Extinction in Valencia and Salamanca
- Sevilla in Severe Distress
- Segregation in Murcia
- Survival in Astorga, Cea, and León
- Restrictions in Ávila
- Jews and Conversos Intermixing in Córdoba and Toledo
- An Example of a Jewish Neighborhood in Plasencia
- Burgos: A Population in Distress
- The Santa Maria Family: Predatory Converts or Protectors of Jews
- The New Nobility: Arrival of the Conversos (Jewish Converts to Christianity)

Required Assignments

- Short Quiz 2: A multiple-choice quiz covering this week's lectures and readings.

Optional Community Building

- This Week's Question(s) of the Week: How and why do massive events like disease pandemics, migrations and flows of people, and climatic and weather changes impact cultures and societies? Why is this the case and can you share one photographic, video, or textual example that can be found on the Internet?

Optional Video Interviews

- Meet our colleagues at the Centro Sefarad Israel (CSI-Madrid) - Interview #1

CSI-Madrid is a joint effort of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Autonomous Community of Madrid, and Madrid City Council. Established in 2006, it is a Spanish public institution dedicated to deepen the study of the legacy of Sephardic culture as an integral and living part of Spanish culture. It fosters greater knowledge of Jewish culture within Spanish society and promotes the development of the ties of friendship and cooperation between Spanish society and Israeli society.

Optional Video Interview - A Visit with Centro Sefarad Israel. Meet our colleagues at Centro Sefarad Israel in Madrid, Spain. A visit with Sra. Esther Bendahan, Directora del Instituto de Estudios Judíos, and Sra. Sonia Sánchez, Directora del Instituto de Estudios Israelíes.

Class 3: Complicated Lives: Jews, Old Christians, and Conversos (1400-1492 CE)

28 June - 4 July 2016

Overview

We finish our history lessons on the 1400s and the complicated lives of Jews, Old Christians, and conversos (Jewish converts to Christianity). Our guest lecturer this week, Ms. Kim Sweetwood, one of my recent students to complete her Master of History at the University of Colorado, presents a compelling biography of Teresa de Cartagena, a 15th century conversa and deaf author. We conclude with a delightful interview with author, Esther Bendahan, who is a director at Centro Sefarad Israel.

Required Lectures

- Video 1: Moving from Judaism to Catholicism: Re-Appraising the Santa Marias
- Video 2: Cultural Backlash: Blood Purity Statutes and Intolerance
- Video 3: Unity Under Queen Isabel I and King Fernando II
- Virtual Field Trip: The Museo de Burgos
 - Video 4: The Museo de Burgos - Muslim Artifacts Become Christian
 - Video 5: The Museo de Burgos - Christian Funerary Statues
- Videos 6 and 7: Deafness in Medieval Spain
 - Guest Lecture: Kim Sweetwood, M.A. History, University of Colorado-Colorado Springs

Required Readings

- Moving from Judaism to Catholicism: Re-Appraising the Santa Marias
- The Impact of the Nazi Regimen on Evaluating Spanish Jewish History
- Suspicions: The Problematic Existence of Conversos
- A New Community
- Governance of the Cathedral in the 15th Century
- Conversos in the Church: In Burgos and Plasencia
- Cultural Backlash: Blood Purity Statutes and Intolerance
- Unity: Ferdinand and Isabel
- Deafness in Medieval Spain: Experienced Through the Struggles and Authorship of Teresa de Cartagena, an Extraordinary Deaf Woman of the Fifteenth Century

Required Assignments

- Short Quiz 3: A multiple-choice quiz covering this week's lectures and readings.

Optional Community Building

- This Week's Question(s) of the Week: What is dangerous? Why is the mixing of cultures and religions considered dangerous or transgressive for some communities?

Why is this the case and can you share one photographic, video, or textual example that can be found on the Internet? Join us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram!

Optional Video Interviews

- Meet our colleague, Sra. Esther Bendahan, at the Centro Sefarad Israel (CSI-Madrid) - Interview #2

CSI-Madrid is a joint effort of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Autonomous Community of Madrid, and Madrid City Council. Established in 2006, it is a Spanish public institution dedicated to deepen the study of the legacy of Sephardic culture as an integral and living part of Spanish culture. It fosters greater knowledge of Jewish culture within Spanish society and promotes the development of the ties of friendship and cooperation between Spanish society and Israeli society.

Optional Video Interview - A Visit with Sra. Esther Bendahan. We chat with Sra. Bendahan regarding her Sephardic literary works, such as *Tratado del alma gemela*, winner of the XXII Premio de Narrativa Gonzalo Torrente Ballester.

Class 4: Repositories of Fates and Futures and Introductory Paleography

5 July - 11 July 2016

Overview

We conduct an on-site exploration of the archives and medieval manuscripts of the City of Burgos. We also begin the process of learning how to read old handwriting (paleography). Our guest lecturer this week, Dr. Diego Navarro Bonilla, will give us an introductory lecture on the beautiful world of Spanish calligraphy. We are also fortunate to share with you the work of Fulbright España, a collaborative Spanish-American program that promotes cross-cultural education exchanges.

Required Lectures

- Video 1: Overview of the Archives and Manuscripts of the City of Burgos
- Video 2: Introductory Spanish Paleography: Letters (Consonants)
- Video 3: Introductory Spanish Paleography: Letters (Vowels)
- Video 4: Introductory Spanish Paleography: Numbers (Written and Numeric)
- Video 5: Introductory Spanish Paleography: Abbreviations
- Video 6: Introductory Spanish Paleography: Marginalia
- Virtual Field Trip: Archivo Municipal de Burgos
 - Video 8: Deciphering Manuscript HI-158 "Privilegio de Alfonso VI"
 - Video 9: Deciphering Manuscript SJ-01-01 "Alfonso VI concede al Monasterio"
- Video 10: Spanish Calligraphy

- Guest Lecture: Dr. Diego Navarro Bonilla (UC3M Professor)

Required Readings

- Introductory Paleography Lesson Part I:
 - Letters (Consonants)
 - Letters (Vowels)
 - Numbers (Written and Numeric)
 - Abbreviations
 - Marginalia

Required Assignments

- Paleography Quiz 1 - Letters and Numbers
- Paleography Quiz 2 - Abbreviations

Optional Community Building

- This Week's Question(s) of the Week: What is most challenging? What is the most challenging letter, number, or abbreviation you encountered in paleography class this week? Can you find and share other photographic examples of this case? Join us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram!

Optional Video Interviews

- Meet our colleagues at Fulbright España - Interview #1

The Fulbright Program, which includes Fulbright España, "is a collaborative program of competitive, merit-based grants for international educational exchange for students, scholars, teachers, professionals, scientists and artists, founded by United States Senator J. William Fulbright in 1946. Under the Fulbright Program, competitively selected U.S. citizens may become eligible for scholarships to study, conduct research, or exercise their talents abroad; and citizens of other countries may qualify to do the same in the United States. The program was established to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries through the exchange of persons, knowledge, and skills."

Optional Video Interview - A Visit with Director Alberto López San Miguel and Spanish Program Officer Guy Vanover.

Class 5: Intermediate Paleography

12 July - 18 July 2016

Overview

We conduct an on-site exploration of the archives and medieval manuscripts of the Cathedral of Burgos. More importantly we continue our process of learning how to read old

handwriting (paleography) at the intermediate and advanced levels. Specifically, you will learn how to employ “SILReST”, our strategy for conquering the most challenging manuscripts. Lastly, we meet three young people from the United States who are making positive contributions to Spain through Fulbright España.

Required Lectures

- Video 1: Overview of the Archives and Manuscripts of the Cathedral of Burgos
- Video 2: Intermediate Spanish Paleography: Formats and Structures of Manuscripts
- Video 3: Intermediate Spanish Paleography: Letters (Consonants)
- Video 4: Intermediate Spanish Paleography: Letters (Vowels)
- Video 5: Advanced Spanish Paleography: Essential Transcription Strategies - SILReST (sill-rëst)
- Video 6: Advanced Spanish Paleography: Essential Strategy #1 - Scan the document
- Video 7: Advanced Spanish Paleography: Essential Strategy #2 - Identify easy letters
- Video 8: Advanced Spanish Paleography: Essential Strategy #3 - Locate common words
- Video 9: Advanced Spanish Paleography: Essential Strategy #4 - Recognize abbreviations
- Video 10: Advanced Spanish Paleography: Essential Strategy #5 - Search for cognates
- Video 11: Advanced Spanish Paleography: Essential Strategy #6 - Type your transcription
- Virtual Field Trip: Archivo de la Catedral de Burgos
 - Video 12: Treasures of the Archivo de la Catedral de Burgos

Required Readings

- Intermediate Paleography Lesson Part II:
 - Formats and Structures of Manuscripts
 - Intermediate Letters (Consonants)
 - Intermediate Letters (Vowels)
- Advanced Paleography Lesson Part III:
 - Essential Transcription Strategies - SILReST)
 - Strategy #1 - Scan the document
 - Strategy #2 - Identify easy letters
 - Strategy #3 - Locate common words
 - Strategy #4 - Recognize abbreviations
 - Strategy #5 - Search for cognates
 - Strategy #6 - Type your transcription

Required Assignments

- Paleography Quiz 3 - Intermediate Letters, Numbers, Abbreviations, and Marginalia
- Paleography Quiz 4 - Advanced Transcription

- Paleography Quiz 5 - Advanced Transcription

Optional Community Building

- This Week's Question(s) of the Week: What is a paleographic example of a letter, number, abbreviation, or word that you could not solve this week? Can you find and share other photographic examples of this case? Join us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram!

Optional Video Interviews

- Meet our colleagues at Fulbright España - Interview #2

The Fulbright Program, which includes Fulbright España, "is a collaborative program of competitive, merit-based grants for international educational exchange for students, scholars, teachers, professionals, scientists and artists, founded by United States Senator J. William Fulbright in 1946. Under the Fulbright Program, competitively selected U.S. citizens may become eligible for scholarships to study, conduct research, or exercise their talents abroad; and citizens of other countries may qualify to do the same in the United States. The program was established to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries through the exchange of persons, knowledge, and skills."

Optional Video Interview - A visit with three student recipients of Fulbright fellowships.

Class 6: The Global Team at Work: Transcription & Interpretation Project #1

19 July - 25 July 2016

Overview

We begin our work as Global Citizen Scholars as we work collectively to transcribe our first collection of medieval manuscripts pertaining to Jewish, Christian, and Muslim life in Burgos. We will use discussion forums to facilitate our work in teams. This week we also extend our history lessons via an interview with the "Power and Institutions in Medieval Christendom and Islam" research group at the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (Madrid, Spain). Lastly, we showcase the work of Casa Árabe, an official Spanish governmental institution, working to promote cross-cultural Spanish-Islamic relations.

Required Lectures

- Video 1: Overview of Transcription Project #1
- Video 2: How to Record and Submit Your Transcription

- Video 3: How to Participate in Discussion Forums
- Video 4: A Brief Overview of Our Collection of Manuscripts for Project #1
- Video 5: Power and Institutions in Medieval Christendom and Islam at CSIC
 - Guest Lecture: Dr. Ana Rodríguez and Ms. Laura Rodríguez

Required Readings

- Transcription Project #1 - Assignment Guidelines

Required Assignments

- Transcription Project #1

Optional Community Building

- This Week's Question(s) of the Week: Share an image of one word or short phrase you transcribed this week. Choose an example that excited, frustrated, or made you proud. Join us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram!

Optional Video Interviews

- An Interview with General Director Pedro Villena of Casa Árabe

Casa Árabe is a Spanish public consortium headed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. It is operated as a strategic center for Spain's relations with the Arab world, a meeting point where different role-players and institutions, both private and public, from the worlds of business, education, academia, politics and culture can dialogue, interact, establish lines of cooperation and undertake joint projects.

Class 7: The Global Team at Work: Transcription & Interpretation Project #2, Course Conclusion, and Future Opportunities

26 July - 1 August 2016

Overview

We finish our work as Global Citizen Scholars as we work collectively to transcribe another collection of medieval manuscripts pertaining to Jewish, Christian, and Muslim life in Burgos. We will use discussion forums to facilitate our work in teams. This week we also extend our history lessons via an interview with the "Conversion, Overlapping Religiosities, Polemics and Interactions: Early Modern Iberia and Beyond" research group at the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (Madrid, Spain). Lastly, we showcase the investigative work of Daniel Gil-Benumeña and his study of Islamic Madrid, which was published in concert with Casa Árabe.

Required Lectures

- Video 1: Overview of Transcription Project #2
- Video 2: A Brief Overview of Our Collection of Manuscripts for Project #1
- Video 3: Keep Trying! This is Hard Work!
- Video 4: What Learned and Some Preliminary Findings from Our Manuscripts
- Video 5: Continue With Our Series of Deciphering Secrets Massive Open Online Courses
- Video 6: Conversion, Overlapping Religiosities, Polemics and Interactions: Early Modern Iberia and Beyond at CSIC
 - Guest Lecture: Dr. Mercedes García-Arenal Rodríguez

Required Readings

- Transcription Project #2 - Assignment Guidelines

Required Assignments

- Transcription Project #2

Optional Community Building

- This Week's Question(s) of the Week: Share an image of one word or short phrase you transcribed this week. Choose an example that excited, frustrated, or made you proud. Join us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram!

Optional Video Interviews

- An Interview with Daniel Gil-Benumea, author of *De Maýrit a Madrid: Madrid y los árabes del siglo IX al siglo XXI* (Lunwerg/Casa Árabe, 2012 y 2015)