

RESEARCH CLINIC

General information

Supervisor:	Peter Houben
Title of clinic:	Agricultural productivity of a medieval rural community.
Number of students:	One.
Major (<i>if applicable and approved by the Major Convener</i>):	EES, GED, HD
(Pre)requisites (<i>if applicable</i>):	Earth System Science GIS skills

Research context

The early Middle Ages of central Europe featured an unrivaled agricultural revolution boosting crop yields, and eventually providing the basis for medieval population growth and economic rise. While modern combine harvesters even record yield 'on the fly', we still know little about the quantitative agricultural productivity of a rural medieval community. A lot of historical information is available (types of crops and produces, farming system, grazing, hunting, forest use), however, quantitative estimates have rarely been proposed. This research clinic is for a student with a strong interest in the history of the Middle Ages of central Europe, strong enough to combine a reading-heavy review with an application of the found quantitative estimates in a GIS to model crop yield for a model community.

Students' tasks and activities

Please specify the tasks and activities, timeline, the learning aims and how they are assessed, i.e. what the deliverables will be.

(A) Review paper: Medieval farming (crops, techniques, field systems) (4000 words; 8 weeks, ASMT: 60%)

(B) Data implementation and evaluation (GIS), work protocols, maps, report; by the end of b4, ASMT: 40%)

Note: As a student you should have an explorative personality that enables you to develop and justify an own approach. You need to be keen on carefully evaluating sources(!) and working with numbers, and be curious about the outcome of unprecedented calculations. Also, you should experience fun when mapping the information in a GIS.

If you're one of those who prefers courses with upmost detailed syllabi and 30 pages long descriptions on where to click on what button for a 5% assignment, stay away.