In his book *The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (Bath, NY: R. L. Underhill, 1844), Washington Irving portrays the most learned scholars of Portugal as being uncertain of the shape of the earth. Their objections to Columbus “were excusable at the time, considering the imperfect state of knowledge. The rotundity of the earth,” Irving explains, “was as yet a matter of mere speculation.” (pp. 21-22)

Using primary sources, refute Irving. Give a clear outline of what all educated medievals knew about the size and shape of the earth, indicating one or two of the reasons they had for their beliefs. You may also make use of material from Butterfield and Lewis and the three links on Eratosthenes.

Your typed, double spaced essay, which should be approximately three pages long (1 inch margins, 12 point font, Times New Roman), is due at the beginning of class on Thursday, September 22, 2011. Staple this sheet to the front and (if and only if you can honestly do so) sign your name in the box below.

I certify that this essay is my own work and that I have neither sought nor received any help on it except what has been explicitly authorized by Dr. McGrew.