Life and Death in the Late Middle Ages

In this French manuscript illumination from 1465, armored knights kill peasants while they work in the fields or take refuge in a castle. Aristocratic violence was a common feature of late medieval life, although nobles would generally not have bothered to put on their armor to harass villagers. (From *Cas de Nobles Hommes et Femmes*, 1465/ Musée Condé, Chantilly, France/Bridgeman Images)

CHAPTER PREVIEW

Prelude to Disaster

How did climate change shape the late Middle Ages?

The Black Death

How did the plague reshape European society?

The Hundred Years' War

What were the causes, course, and consequences of the Hundred Years' War?

Challenges to the Church

Why did the church come under increasing criticism?

Social Unrest in a Changing Society

What explains the social unrest of the late Middle Ages?