Medieval Studies

Department Website: http://medieval.uchicago.edu

Program of Study

The undergraduate program in medieval studies offers an interdisciplinary major that allows students to explore the history, philosophy, theology, and cultural production of the Middle Ages in an integrated and nuanced fashion, through engagement with a diverse array of textual and material artifacts.

Program Requirements

Students interested in majoring in medieval studies must consult the program director as early as possible in order to design a program of study that meets the student’s intellectual interests and goals. Twelve courses are required, including at least two courses in history; two courses in language or literature; two courses in art, archeology, architecture, or music; two courses in philosophy or theology; one course in methods and materials; and at least two electives. Students should determine these courses in consultation with the program coordinator.

The program also requires all students to participate in a one-quarter reading and research course, usually in Autumn or Winter Quarter of their fourth year. This course is typically conducted as an independent study with the student’s BA paper advisor. The program requires completion of a BA paper of around 25 pages to be submitted by the sixth week of the quarter in which the student is graduating. All papers require a faculty director and a second reader.

Summary of Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two courses in history</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two courses in medieval language or literature *</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two courses in art, archeology, architecture, or music</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two courses in philosophy or theology</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two electives</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One course in methods and materials **</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One reading and research course</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA paper</td>
<td>000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Units</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Medieval language may include such courses as Old French, Old English, Occitan, or Medieval Latin. Students may also enroll in literature courses taught in the target language or in translation. Students who think they may wish to apply to graduate school in a field related to medieval studies are strongly advised to acquire reading competence in at least one medieval language.

** Students may take courses such as paleography, codicology, manuscript studies, or epigraphy, that will allow them to engage directly with medieval source materials and objects. Alternatively, students may enroll in a course like literary theory, aesthetics, or historiography that will help them develop their methodological orientation.

Grading

All courses must be taken for a quality grade.

Honors

Consideration for honors is individually arranged with the program coordinator. For candidacy, a student must have completed a BA paper of the highest quality, and have a GPA of at least 3.0 overall and at least 3.5 within the major.

Minor Program in Medieval Studies

The undergraduate program in medieval studies offers an interdisciplinary minor that allows students to explore the history, philosophy, theology, and cultural production of the Middle Ages in an integrated and nuanced fashion, through engagement with a diverse array of textual and material artifacts.

Students interested in the minor in medieval studies should consult the program director as early as possible in order to design a program of study that meets the student’s intellectual interests and goals. The minor requires six courses chosen from the College Catalog or the Medieval Studies website (https://medievalstudies.uchicago.edu/undergraduate-program/undergraduate-courses/), divided among subject areas as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One course in history</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One course in medieval language *</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One course in art, archeology, architecture, or music</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One course in philosophy or theology | 100
Two electives | 200
Total Units | 600

Medieval language may include such courses as Old French, Old English, Occitan, or Medieval Latin. Students may also enroll in literature courses taught in the target language or in translation. Students who think they may wish to apply to graduate school in a field related to medieval studies are strongly advised to acquire reading competence in at least one medieval language.

Students choose courses in consultation with the program director. Students must complete the Consent to Complete a Minor Program form (https://humanities-web.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/college-prod/s3fs-public/documents/Consent_Minor_Program.pdf), which requires the signature of the director of the undergraduate program in medieval studies. Students must submit a copy of the signed approval form to their College adviser by the deadline on the form.

Courses in the minor (1) may not be double counted with the student's major(s) or with other minors and (2) may not be counted toward general education requirements. Courses in the minor must be taken for a quality grade, and more than half of the requirements for the minor must be met by registering for courses bearing University of Chicago course numbers.

**MEDIEVAL STUDIES COURSES**

Students completing a major or minor in medieval studies may take courses from across the University. Course offerings may include those listed below. For an updated listing of courses being offered in a given quarter, please consult the Medieval Studies website (https://medievalstudies.uchicago.edu/undergraduate-program/undergraduate-courses/).

**MDVL 10030. Introduction to the Qur'an. 100 Units.**
The Qur'an's historical setting, thematic and literary features, major biblical figures, and foundational narratives of the Quran. Explorations of medieval exegetical literature on the Quran and its reception in the early (8th-10th century CE) and medieval periods (11th - 15th century CE) will feature heavily in this course. Readings consist primarily of English translations of the Quran alongside a running commentary, as well as secondary articles.

Instructor(s): Yousef Casewit Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): This course meets the HS or CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students. This course counts as a Gateway course for RLST majors/minors.
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 30030, ISLM 30030, RLST 11030

**MDVL 10101. Introduction to African Civilization I. 100 Units.**
Part one considers literary, oral, and archeological sources to investigate African societies and states from the early Iron Age through the emergence of the Atlantic World. We will study the empires of Ghana and Mali, the Swahili Coast, Great Zimbabwe, and medieval Ethiopia. We will also explore the expansion of Islam, the origins and effects of European contact, and the transatlantic trade in enslaved human beings.

Instructor(s): K. Hickerson & E. Osborn Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): ANTH 20701, CRES 20701, HIST 10101

**MDVL 10105. Introduction to Old Turkic I. 100 Units.**
An introductory course in the written language of the Orkhon Inscriptions, dating back to the 5th-8th Century Kök Türk State of Central Eurasia, and of related inscriptions from the Yenisei River area, Mongolia, Central Asia and Eastern Europe. The language of the inscriptions is considered to be the ancestor of the majority of Turkic languages spoken today, and uses a distinctive alphabet sometimes known as the Old Turkic Runiform Alphabet. The course covers a brief historic overview, basic grammar, reading selections from the inscriptions in the original and in translation, and familiarization with the alphabet itself. K. Arik, Autumn.

Instructor(s): K. Arik Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): One year of a Turkic language or the equivalent, and/or consent of the instructor
Equivalent Course(s): TURK 10105

**MDVL 11002. Problems in the Study of Gender and Sexuality: Medieval Masculinity. 100 Units.**
This course will introduce students to concepts of masculinity in the Middle Ages, especially in the period between approximately 1000 and 1500 CE. Special attention will be paid to medieval notions of honor and to the roles that knighthood, chivalry, and monasticism played in promoting (often contradictory) masculine ideals. The course has two main goals. First, to assess and discuss recent scholarly debates and arguments about medieval masculinity. Second, to read closely a variety of medieval sources—including Arthurian literature, chronicles of the Crusades, biographical texts, and monastic histories—in order to develop new perspectives on masculinity during the Middle Ages.

Instructor(s): J. Lyon & A. Herlands
Note(s): Assignments: short paper(s)/alternative projects. GNSE 11002 counts as a Problems course in the Gender and Sexuality Studies major.
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 23516, GNSE 11002
MDVL 12000. Jewish Civilization I: Ancient Beginnings to Medieval Period. 100 Units.

Jewish Civilization is a three-quarter sequence that explores the development of Jewish culture and tradition from its ancient beginnings through its rabbinic and medieval transformations to its modern manifestations. Through investigation of primary texts-biblical, Talmudic, philosophical, mystical, historical, documentary, and literary-students will acquire a broad overview of Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness while reflecting in greater depth on major themes, ideas, and events in Jewish history. The autumn course will deal with antiquity through the Middle Ages. Its readings will include material from the Bible and writings from the second temple, Hellenistic, rabbinic, and medieval periods. All sections of this course will share a common core of readings; individual instructors will supplement with other materials. It is recommended, though not required, that students take the three unit Jewish Civilization courses in sequence. Students who register for the Autumn Quarter course will automatically be pre-registered for the winter segment. In the Spring Quarter students have the option of taking a third unit of Jewish Civilization, a course whose topics will vary (JWSC 1200X).

Instructor(s): Margaret Mitchell Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): JWSC 12000, NEHC 22010, RLST 22010

Note(s): This course meets the HS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students. This course counts like-minded others on the texts and the issues involved in their interpretation.

Prerequisite(s): Interest in this literature, and willingness to enter into conversation with like-minded and non-like-minded others on the texts and the issues involved in their interpretation.

MDVL 12001. Medieval History: Theories & Methods. 100 Units.

This course will introduce students to research methods and historical theories that are central to the field of medieval European history (500-1500 AD). The first section of the course is designed to give students a grounding in some of the most important historical narratives (political, social, economic, religious, intellectual, cultural) about the medieval period. Students will then spend the middle weeks of the quarter exploring the different types of original sources (written and non-written) that historians use to conduct research on the Middle Ages. This section of the course will include class time at the Regenstein Library’s Special Collections. In the final weeks, we will concentrate on some of the scholarly debates that have shaped the modern field of medieval history.

Instructor(s): J. Lyon Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): No prior knowledge of medieval European history is required; the course is open to all undergraduates. Grades will be determined on the basis of a midterm exam, two short papers, and classroom discussion.
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 12001

MDVL 12203. Italian Renaissance: Petrarch, Machiavelli, and the Wars of Popes and Kings. 100 Units.

Florence, Rome, and the Italian city-states in the age of plagues and cathedrals, Petrarch and Machiavelli, Medici and Borgia (1250-1600), with a focus on literature, philosophy, primary sources, the revival of antiquity, and the papacy’s entanglement with pan-European politics. We will examine humanism, patronage, politics, corruption, assassination, feuds, art, music, magic, censorship, education, science, heresy, and the roots of the Reformation. Writing assignments focus on higher level writing skills, with a creative writing component linked to our in-class role-played reenactment of a Renaissance papal election (LARP). First-year students and non-History majors welcome.

Instructor(s): A. Palmer Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Graduate students by consent only; register for the course as HIST 90000 Reading and Research: History.
Note(s): Assignments: short papers, alternative projects.
Equivalent Course(s): SIGN 26034, KNOW 12203, RLST 22203, HIST 12203, CLCV 22216, ITAL 16000, FNDL 22204

MDVL 12500. Introduction to the New Testament: Texts and Contexts of Interpretation. 100 Units.

An immersion in the texts of the New Testament with the following goals: 1. through careful reading to come to know well some representative pieces of this literature; 2. to gain useful knowledge of the historical, geographical, social, religious, cultural and political contexts of these texts and the events they relate; 3. to learn the major literary genres represented in the canon (“gospels,” “acts,” “letters,” and “apocalypses”) and strategies for reading them; 4. to comprehend the various theological visions and cultural worldviews to which these texts give expression; 5. to situate oneself and one’s prevailing questions about this material in the history of research, and to reflect on the goals, contexts and methods of interpretation; 6. to become intelligent and critical “consumers” of biblical scholarship as it appears in academic and popular media; 7. to raise questions for further study.

Instructor(s): Margaret Mitchell Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Interest in this literature, and willingness to enter into conversation with like-minded and non-like-minded others on the texts and the issues involved in their interpretation.
Note(s): This course meets the HS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students. This course counts as a Gateway course for RLST majors/minors.
Equivalent Course(s): JWSC 1200X, FNDL 28202, RLST 12000

MDVL 14200. Introduction to Medieval Art. 100 Units.

This course provides an introduction to art produced during the European Middle Ages. Beginning with the fusion of Christian and Imperial images under the Roman Empire and ending with the introduction of print in the fifteenth century, this course considers works of art across a variety of media (architecture, sculpture, painting, textiles, metalwork, stained glass) and in a range of historical and cultural contexts. We will address the complex social, religious, and political motivations that informed artistic production during the Middle Ages, and we will focus on the question of how images were seen and understood by medieval viewers. The course is organized chronologically and is structured around a set of broad thematic concerns such as the
relationship between art and power, changing theorizations of the image, the re-use of the past, the body in art, the relationship of the secular and the sacred, and the role of art in public and private devotion. Readings will include medieval sources in translation and selected works of modern scholarship.

Instructor(s): C. Boxer Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Students must attend first class to confirm enrollment. This course meets the general education requirement in the arts.
Equivalent Course(s): ARTH 14200

MDVL 15240. Medieval Death. 100 Units.
This course will examine late medieval representations of death and dying, considering it in terms of both a conceptual problematic and a practice, especially as it appears in the literature and art of fourteenth and fifteenth century England. In addition to reading poetic, theological, and philosophical texts from the medieval period, students will examine visual art, architecture, and other media to the end of asking questions about how people and cultures understand and prepare themselves for death. (Pre-1650)
Instructor(s): Jack Dragu Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): ENGL 15240

MDVL 16900. Ancient Mediterranean World III: Late Antiquity. 100 Units.
Part III examines late antiquity, a period of paradox. The later Roman emperors established the most intensive, pervasive state structures of the ancient Mediterranean, yet yielded their northern and western territories to Goths, Huns, Vandals, and, ultimately, their Middle Eastern core to the Arab Muslims. Imperial Christianity united the populations of the Roman Mediterranean in the service of one God, but simultaneously divided them into competing sectarian factions. A novel culture of Christian asceticism coexisted with the consolidation of an aristocratic ruling class notable for its insatiable appetite for gold. The course will address these apparent contradictions while charting the profound transformations of the cultures, societies, economies, and political orders of the Mediterranean from the conversion of Constantine to the rise of Islam.
Instructor(s): R. Payne Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Taking these courses in sequence is not required. This course meets the general education requirement in civilization studies.
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 16900, CLCV 20900

MDVL 20012. Ancient Empires II. 100 Units.
The Ottomans ruled in Anatolia, the Middle East, South East Europe and North Africa for over six hundred years. The objective of this course is to understand the society and culture of this bygone Empire whose legacy continues, in one way or another, in some twenty-five contemporary successor states from the Balkans to the Arabian Peninsula. The course is designed as an introduction to the Ottoman World with a focus on the cultural history of the Ottoman society. It explores identities and mentalities, customs and rituals, status of minorities, mystical orders and religious establishments, literacy and the use of the public sphere.
Instructor(s): Hakan Karateke Terms Offered: Autumn

Note(s): Taking these courses in sequence is not required. This course meets the general education requirement in civilization studies.
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 15603, CLCV 25800, NEHC 20012

MDVL 20201. Islamicate Civilization I: 600-950. 100 Units.
This course covers the rise and spread of Islam, the Islamic empire under the Umayyad and early Abbasid caliphs, and the emergence of regional Islamic states from Afghanistan and eastern Iran to North Africa and Spain. The main focus will be on political, economic and social history.
Instructor(s): Ahmed El Shamsy Terms Offered: Autumn. This course will not be offered for the 2021-2022 academic year.
Note(s): The Islamicate Civilization sequence does not fulfill the General Ed requirements
Equivalent Course(s): ISLM 30201, NEHC 20201, HIST 35621, RLST 20201, NEHC 30201, HIST 15611

MDVL 20202. Islamicate Civilization II: 950-1750. 100 Units.
This course, a continuation of Islamicate Civilization I, surveys intellectual, cultural, religious and political developments in the Islamic world from Andalusia to the South Asian sub-continent during the periods from ca. 950 to 1750. We trace the arrival and incorporation of the Steppe Peoples (Turks and Mongols) into the central Islamic lands; the splintering of the Abbasid Caliphate and the impact on political theory; the flowering of literature of Arabic, Turkic and Persian expression; the evolution of religious and legal scholarship and devotional life; transformations in the intellectual and philosophical traditions; the emergence of Shi`i states (Buyids and Fatimids); the Crusades and Mongol conquests; the Mamluks and Timurids, and the “gunpowder empires” of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Moghuls; the dynamics of gender and class relations; etc. This class partially fulfills the requirement for MA students in CMES, as well as for NELC majors and PhD students.
Instructor(s): Franklin Lewis Terms Offered: Winter. This course will not be offered for the 2021-2022 academic year.
Prerequisite(s): Islamicate Civilization I (NEHC 20201) or Islamic Thought & Literature-1 (NEHC 20601), or the equivalent
Note(s): The Islamicate Civilization sequence does not fulfill the General Ed requirements
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 15612, HIST 35622, NEHC 20202, ISLM 30202, RLST 20202, NEHC 30202
MDVL 20501. Islamic History and Society I: The Rise of Islam and the Caliphate. 100 Units.
This course covers the period from ca. 600 to 1100, including the rise and spread of Islam, the Islamic empire under the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs, and the emergence of regional Islamic states from Afghanistan and eastern Iran to North Africa and Spain.
Instructor(s): Ahmed El Shamsy Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 35704, RLST 20501, NEHC 30501, NEHC 20501, CMES 30501, ISLM 30500, HIST 25704

MDVL 20502. Islamic History and Society II: The Middle Period. 100 Units.
This course covers the period from ca. 1100 to 1750, including the arrival of the Steppe Peoples (Turks and Mongols), the Mongol successor states, and the Mamluks of Egypt and Syria. We also study the foundation of the great Islamic regional empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Moghuls.
Instructor(s): J. Woods Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Not open to first-year students
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 20502, CMES 30502, ISLM 30600, NEHC 30502, HIST 35804, HIST 25804

MDVL 20522. Archaeology of Islamic Syria-Palestine. 100 Units.
This course is an exploration of the cultural patterns in the Levant from the late Byzantine period down to modern times, a span of some 1500 years. While the subject matter is archaeological sites of this period in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel, the focus is on the role of medieval archaeology in amplifying the history of economic and social systems. It is this connective quality of Islamic archaeology that contributes to an understanding of the earlier history and archaeology of this region.
Instructor(s): D. Whitcomb Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Introductory course in archaeology
Equivalent Course(s): NEAA 20522, NEAA 30522

MDVL 20530. Introduction to Islamic Archaeology. 100 Units.
This course is intended as a survey of the regions of the Islamic world from Arabia to North Africa, from Central Asia to the Gulf. The aim will be a comparative stratigraphy for the archaeological periods of the last millennium. A primary focus will be the consideration of the historical archaeology of the Islamic lands, the interaction of history and archaeology, and the study of patterns of cultural interaction over this region, which may also amplify understanding of ancient archaeological periods in the Near East.
Instructor(s): D. Whitcomb Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): NEAA 30501, NEAA 20501

MDVL 20601. Islamic Thought and Literature I. 100 Units.
This sequence explores the thought and literature of the Islamic world from the coming of Islam in the seventh century C.E. through the development and spread of its civilization in the medieval period and into the modern world. Including historical framework to establish chronology and geography, the course focuses on key aspects of Islamic intellectual history: scripture, law, theology, philosophy, literature, mysticism, political thought, historical writing, and archaeology. In addition to lectures and secondary background readings, students read and discuss samples of key primary texts, with a view to exploring Islamic civilization in the direct voices of the people who participated in creating it. All readings are in English translation. No prior background in the subject is required. This course sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies.
Instructor(s): Flowers, Adam Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): SOSC 22000, NEHC 20601, HIST 25610, RLST 20401

MDVL 20602. Islamic Thought and Literature II. 100 Units.
This course covers the period from ca. 950 to 1700, surveying works of literature, theology, philosophy, sufism, politics, history, etc., written in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, as well as the art, architecture and music of the Islamicate traditions. Through primary texts, secondary sources and lectures, we will trace the cultural, social, religious, political and institutional evolution through the period of the Fatimids, the Crusades, the Mongol invasions, and the "gunpowder empires" (Ottomans, Safavids, Moghuls).
Instructor(s): Ahmed El Shamsy Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): Taking these courses in sequence is recommended but not required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies.
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 25615, SOSC 22100, NEHC 20602, RLST 20402

MDVL 20605. Colloquium: Sources for the Study of Islamic History. 100 Units.
This course is designed to acquaint the student with the basic problems and concepts as well as the sources and methodology for the study of premodern Islamic history. Sources will be read in English translation and the tools acquired will be applied to specific research projects to be submitted as term papers.
Instructor(s): J. Woods Terms Offered: Winter
 Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 20605, ISLM 30605, NEHC 30605, HIST 26005, HIST 36005

MDVL 20902. Empires and Peoples: Ethnicity in Late Antiquity. 100 Units.
Late antiquity witnessed an unprecedented proliferation of peoples in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Vandals, Arabs, Goths, Huns, Franks, and Iranians, among numerous others, took shape as political communities within the Roman and Iranian empires or along their peripheries. Recent scholarship has undone the traditional image of these groups as previously undocumented communities of "barbarians" entering history.
Ethnic communities emerge from the literature as political constructions dependent on the very malleability of identities, on specific acts of textual and artistic production, on particular religious traditions, and, not least, on the imperial or postimperial regimes sustaining their claims to sovereignty. The colloquium will debate the origin, nature, and roles of ethno-political identities and communities comparatively across West Asia, from the Western Mediterranean to the Eurasian steppes, on the basis of recent contributions. As a historiographical colloquium, the course will address the contemporary cultural and political concerns—especially nationalism—that have often shaped historical accounts of ethnogenesis in the period as well as bio-historical approaches such as genetic history that sometimes sit uneasily with the recent advances of historians.

Instructor(s): J. Steinberg Terms Offered: Spring

Prerequisite(s): R. Payne Terms Offered: Spring

Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 21804, ITAL 32101, ITAL 22101

Note(s): Taught in English.

MDVL 21100. A Medieval Menagerie: Animal Spirituality in the Middle Ages. 100 Units.

In contemporary philosophy, ethics, and literature, a subject attracting more and more attention is animals—human animals, non-human animals, and the complex relation between these paradigmatic others. The aim of this course is to consider many of the same problems and questions raised in modern discourse from the perspective of ancient and medieval sources. Drawing from a diverse corpus of texts—Aristotelian, Neoplatonic, Hindu, Jewish, Christian, Muslim—the course will explore the richness of the medieval traditions of animal symbolism, and the complexity of medieval human beings’ understanding of themselves in relationship to their familiar and immanently present confreres in the world of nature.

Instructor(s): Noel Blanco Mourelle Terms Offered: Winter

Equivalent Course(s): SPAN 21703

Note(s): Taught in Spanish. This course is the equivalent of SPAN 21703.

Prerequisite(s): SPAN 20300 or consent of instructor.

MDVL 21330. Despair and Consolation: Emotion and Affect in Late-Medieval and Reformation Christianity. 100 Units.

The course surveys major texts in Christian thought and culture from the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries, and it focuses on how these authors understood despair—a central theme in the writings of many women and men, secular and religious—and how, if at all, despair may be remedied. We will think alongside these late-medieval and early-modern figures about the phenomenon of emotion, the relations between feeling and knowing, possible responses to (especially negative) affects, and how religious belief, practice, and experience shape and are shaped by emotional life. Major historical figures to be read include: Catherine of Siena, Jean Gerson, Christine de Pisan, Julian of Norwich, Heinrich Kramer, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Teresa of Ávila, and Michel de Montaigne. We will also read selected contemporary voices in affect theory and disability studies to hone our critical and analytical resources for interpreting the primary texts.

Instructor(s): M. Vanderpoel Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): RLIST 22406, ISLM 41100, RLVC 41100, HREL 41101, JWSC 26252, HIJD 31100

MDVL 21703. Introducción a las literaturas hispánicas: textos españoles clásicos. 100 Units.

This course involves careful reading and discussion of significant works from the Spanish Middle Ages, Renaissance, and the Golden Age, including Juan Manuel’s Conde Lucanor, Jorge Manrique’s Coplas, the anonymous Lazarillo de Tormes, and the theater of Calderón.

Prerequisite(s): SPAN 20300 or consent of instructor.

Note(s): Taught in Spanish.

Equivalent Course(s): SPAN 21703

MDVL 21705. Iberian Literatures and Cultures: Medieval and Early Modern. 100 Units.

This course explores Spanish language, literature, and culture focusing on premodern Iberian texts and artifacts. We will start by anonymous “Cantar de Mio Cid,” the first great vernacular epic in the Middle Ages, and we will end in María de Zayas’s “Novelas ejemplares,” one of the finest expressions of European early modern short story. Between these two literary works we will talk about music, painting, witchcraft, conversion, and the Inquisition as milestones of a five-century span. In this time Spanish consolidates as a written language, while numerous political and religious conflicts mark the struggle for hegemony in the Iberian Peninsula. In addition to enhancing your knowledge of Iberian cultural history and improving your close reading and critical thinking skills, this course is designed to continue building on your linguistic competence in Spanish.

Instructor(s): J. Steinberg Terms Offered: Winter

Prerequisite(s): SPAN 20300 or consent of instructor.

Note(s): Taught in Spanish. This course is the equivalent of SPAN 21703.

Equivalent Course(s): SPAN 21705

MDVL 22101. Dante’s Divine Comedy III: Paradiso. 100 Units.

An in-depth study of the third cantica of Dante’s masterpiece, considered the most difficult but in many ways also the most innovative. Read alongside his scientific treatise the Convivio and his political manifesto the Monarchia.

Instructor(s): J. Steinberg Terms Offered: Spring

Prerequisite(s): Completion of the previous courses in the sequence not required, but students should familiarize themselves with the Inferno and the Purgatorio before the first day of class.

Note(s): Taught in English.

Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 21804, ITAL 32101, ITAL 22101
MDVL 22123. Natural Law in the Hist of Scholastic Political Thought: Aquinas, Vitoria, Suárez, Hooker, Grotius. 100 Units.
The concept of natural law has played a central role in the history of Western political thought, and it has often been deployed in political argumentation at pivotal moments in human history, from the discovery of the New World and the American founding to the Nuremberg trials and the Civil Rights Movement. Though the doctrine has antecedents in Greek and Roman philosophers, including Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, it received its classic articulation in the writings of the Scholastic thinkers of the Middle Ages and early modern period. In this seminar, we will read key primary source texts in the development of natural law theory in the Scholastic age from five of the Scholastic tradition’s seminal thinkers: Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), Francisco de Vitoria (1483-1546), Francisco Suárez (1548-1617), Richard Hooker (1554-1600), and Hugo Grotius (1583-1645). In reading their works, we will consider the theories of natural law they construct as well as the implications of their respective theories for political debates concerning such questions as Spanish treatment of Native Americans, religious toleration, the foundations of international law, and the origins of political authority. We will also consider questions of continuity and discontinuity between the authors and the ways in which their works reflect the historical contexts in which they were written. Throughout, we will focus on close reading and careful exegesis of the primary source texts.
Instructor(s): S. Waldorf Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 22123, RLST 27123, HMRT 22123

MDVL 22203. The Holy Roman Empire, 800-1500. 100 Units.
During the first seven centuries of its existence the Holy Roman Empire emerged as one of the most politically and culturally heterogeneous states in all of Europe. A vast expanse of central Europe that is today divided among more than a dozen nations was ruled, at least in theory, by the emperors during the central and late Middle Ages. The purpose of this course is to trace some of the major developments in imperial history between 800 (Charlemagne’s coronation as emperor) and the early sixteenth century. Topics will include the changing nature of imperial authority from the Carolingians to the Habsburgs, the Church’s and the nobility’s establishment of quasi-independent lordships inside imperial territory, papal-imperial relations, and the eastward expansion of the empire.
Instructor(s): J. Lyon Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): Assignments: short paper(s) and a final exam.
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 32203, HIST 22203

MDVL 22407. Medieval England. 100 Units.
How merry was “Olde England”? This course is intended as an introduction to the history of England from the withdrawal of the Roman legions in the early fifth century to the defeat of Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field in AD 1485. Sources will include chronicles, biographies, laws, charters, spiritual and political treatises, romances and parodies. Themes will include the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity, the Viking and Norman invasions, the development of the monarchy and parliament, monastic, peasant, and town life, the role of literacy and education in the development of a peculiarly “English” society, and the place of devotion, art, and architecture in medieval English culture.
Instructor(s): R. Fulton Brown Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): Assignments: in-class presentation and a long paper.
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 22407, HIST 32407

MDVL 23422. Mourning and Commemoration in Pre-Modern French Literature. 100 Units.
This is an introductory-level course that will interrogate how experiences of death and mortality were understood and described by literary works in the pre-modern era. Be they environmental, political, or medical, the crises we face today are by no means unique to the 21st century. As distanced as we may feel from plague, crusades, and unceasing warfare, a closer look forces us to rethink what has really changed in 500 years, while offering us a deeper understanding of practices and representations from the past. The shared human anxieties related to temporal and corporeal finality and the unknown will inform a critical reading of French literary works that take on death and mortality, including texts by Eustache Deschamps, François Villon, Michel de Montaigne, and Christine de Pizan.
Instructor(s): Kirsten Lopez Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): FREN 20500 or 20503.
Note(s): Introductory-level course. Taught in English with readings in French.
Equivalent Course(s): FREN 23422

MDVL 23510. The Arts of Language in the Middle Ages: The Trivium. 100 Units.
Throughout the Middle Ages, formal education began with the study of language: grammar, including the study of literature as well as the practical mastery of the mechanics of language (here, Latin); logic or dialectic, whether narrowly defined as the art of constructing arguments or, more generally, as metaphysics, including the philosophy of mind; and rhetoric, or the art of speaking well, whether to praise or to persuade. In this course, we will be following this medieval curriculum insofar as we are able through some of its primary texts, many only recently translated, so as to come to a better appreciation of the way in which the study of these arts affected the development of medieval European intellectual and artistic culture.
Instructor(s): R. Fulton Brown Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 33310, HIST 23510, FNDL 23902
MDVL 23518. Colloquium: How to Be Good. 100 Units.
Medieval Christians understood virtue as both a habit and a gift of grace. In this course, we will test this understanding by comparison with the definitions of virtue found in three complementary traditions: Greek, Jewish, and Confucian. Readings will be taken from the New Testament, Thomas Aquinas, Aristotle, Plato, the Torah, the Talmud, and the Analects. Our purpose will be to discover how each of these systems of training the soul works, along with their similarities and differences.
Instructor(s): R. Fulton Brown Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 33518, FNDL 23518, HIST 23518

MDVL 23809. Pain, Truth, and Justice. 100 Units.
Why should the truth hurt? Does pain guarantee the truth told? Is pain the price of exposure to the truth? Does that make punishment just? In this course, we will take a historical and philosophical approach to examine the relations between pain, truth, and justice. In the premodern period, we will draw from Genesis, Sophocles' Oedipus, Augustine, Tertullian, martyrdom accounts, and public penance in medieval Christianity. To study the theme in the early modern nation-state spectacles of punishment, colonial contexts, and contemporary scenes of justice, we will turn to the writings of Foucault, Fanon, and others. Over the course of the historical and philosophical examinations, we will trace the themes of body, affect, and performance; truth, law, and ritual; power, religion, and the nation-state. In the end, we will turn a critical eye to contemporary cultural discourses and representations of pain, truth, and justice in the arts, law, literature, philosophy, and politics. No prerequisites.
Instructor(s): Maureen Kelly Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): RLST 23809, GNSE 23809, CLCV 23809

MDVL 23823. Melancholy: Readings in Medieval Christian Literature. 100 Units.
The idea of melancholy, a persistent affective orientation toward sadness and/or despair, is ubiquitous in Christian writings from the Middle Ages. This course considers the nature and function of melancholy and possible remedies in Christian discourses, and in so doing it provides a survey of medieval Christian literature. Readings may be drawn from authors such as Boethius, Alan of Lille, Jean de Meun, Marguerite Porete, Dante, and Christine de Pizan. Special attention will be given to the role of literary form in Christian writing, competing accounts of despair and hope, and the relationship of Christianity to non-Christian discourses. There are no language prerequisites, though reading groups may be formed if sufficient students posses relevant language skills.
Instructor(s): M. Vanderpoel Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): RLST 23823, CMLT 23823

MDVL 24202. Indian Philosophy II: The Classical Traditions. 100 Units.
This course follows the first module on Indian philosophy by exploring the debates between several classical “schools” or “viewpoints” (darsanas) of Indian philosophy. In addition to expanding upon the methods of systematized reasoning inaugurated by the Nyāya and Buddhist epistemological traditions, particular attention will be given to systems of scriptural hermeneutics -- Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta -- and their consequences for the philosophy of language, theories of cognitive error, and even poetics.
Instructor(s): Anand Venkatkrishnan, Andrew Ollett Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): HREL 30300, SALC 30902, SALC 20902, RLST 24202, DVPR 30302

MDVL 24275. Chinese Buddhist Omnicentrism: Tiantai and Huayan. 100 Units.
In this course we will read and analyze the key texts (in English translation) of the two great classical “sinifying” Chinese Buddhist theoretical schools of the Sui, Tang, and Song dynasties: Tiantai and Huayan, with special attention to what is arguably their biggest shared innovation: the development of the classical Mahāyāna Buddhist idea of Emptiness (śūnyata) into the “omnicentric” idea that each entity, precisely through its emptiness, is in some sense present in all times and places, is eternal and omnipresent--and the controversies arising from the different justifications and implications advanced by the two schools for this shared doctrine. Readings will include the works of Zhiyi, Zhanran, and Zhili from the Tiantai school, and Dushun, Zhiyan, Chengguan, and Zongmi. Some basic background in Buddhist thought is recommended. Readings will be in English, but an optional reading group working with the original classical texts will likely also be convened.
Instructor(s): Brook Ziporyn Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): This course meets the HS or CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): EALC 44275, EALC 24275, RLST 24275, DVPR 44275

MDVL 24550. Major Trends in Islamic Mysticism. 100 Units.
This course examines Islamic mysticism, commonly known as Sufism, through an exploration of English translations of some of the greatest masterpieces of Sufi literature in Arabic and Persian. The goal is to gain first-hand knowledge of a broad spectrum of literary expressions of Islamic spirituality in their historical context, and to understand exactly what Sufis say, and how they say it. Each of the units will comprise lectures and close readings of excerpts from the text in Arabic/Persian and English translation. The average reading load per unit is 100 pages.
Instructor(s): Yousef Casewit Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): No Arabic required. This course meets the HS or CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): GLST 24550, ISLM 32419, SIGN 26068, RLST 24550
MDVL 25000. Literary Criticism before Theory: Auerbach's Mimesis. 100 Units.
This course is an introduction to Erich Auerbach's Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature, often hailed as the masterpiece of twentieth-century literary criticism, through a historical contextualization that recovers the theoretical, ethical, and existential underpinnings of so-called Romance Philology, as purveyed by Auerbach, the influential Dante scholar Karl Vossler (1872-1949), the medievalist Ernst Robert Curtius (1886-1956); and, especially, Leo Spitzer (1887-1960), the author of innumerable seminal essays in the French, Italian, and Spanish literary traditions. We will home in on these scholars' quarrelsome sodality among themselves and others (e.g., Benedetto Croce, Martin Heidegger, Arthur Lovejoy, and Georges Poulet) by reviewing some of the discipline-defining debates, such as debates about canonical authors (including, Dante, Cervantes, and Proust) and the (dis)advantages of periodization in textual interpretation (Middle Ages, Renaissance, Baroque). We will also take stock of this generation's shared reliance on 18th- and 19th-century sources and methodologies (Giambattista Vico and German Hermeneutics, among others) and their remarkable foreknowledge of the many turns literary analysis would take at a time when textual concerns and/or close readings gave way to a more theoretical outlook.
Instructor(s): Rocco Rubini Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): Taught in English.
Equivalent Course(s): RLLT 35000, GRMN 35000, GRMN 25000, KNOW 25001, KNOW 35001, RLLT 25000

MDVL 25102. Reading Augustine's Confessions. 100 Units.
This course will carry out a close reading of Augustine’s Confessions. We will study the work not only as a spiritual autobiography—a common approach—but also as a philosophical argument against various alternatives to Christian faith and practice in the late fourth century. With this bifocal approach in place, we’ll examine how Confessions interrogates the quality of human love, fear, hatred, and regret; moral responsibilities to ourselves and others; the (anxious) awareness that we are limited in body and time; and how to craft an honest narrative of self-understanding. We will ask, Is religion a source of psychic health, or an obstacle to it? What sorts of problems is religion meant to cure? What problems do religious beliefs create? How does religion bear on the self’s loves, its past, its mortality, its doubts? Along the way we’ll ask whether it is possible to want to do evil, whether it is possible to love or grieve too much, what it means to be a friend—and how Augustine’s answers to these questions presuppose a wider account of the order of the cosmos.
Instructor(s): Richard B. Miller Terms Offered: Spring. FNDL agreed to let RLST be parent of this new course
Equivalent Course(s): RLST 25102, FNDL 27002

MDVL 25110. Maimonides and Hume on Religion. 100 Units.
This course will study in alternation chapters from Maimonides’ Guide of the Perplexed and David Hume’s Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, two major philosophical works whose literary forms are at least as important as their contents. Topics will include human knowledge of the existence and nature of God, anthropomorphism and idolatry, religious language, and the problem of evil. Time permitting, we shall also read other short works by these two authors on related themes. (B) (III)
Instructor(s): J. Stern Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): RLST 25110, PHIL 35110, JWSC 26100, PHIL 25110, HIJD 35200, FNDL 25110

MDVL 25400. Readings in Maimonides’ Guide of the Perplexed. 100 Units.
A careful study of select passages in Maimonides’ Guide of the Perplexed, focusing on the method of the work and its major philosophical-theological themes, including: divine attributes, creation vs. eternity, prophecy, the problem of evil and divine providence, law and ethics, the final aim of human existence.
Instructor(s): James Robinson Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): ISLM 45400, JWSC 21107, HREL 45401, FNDL 24106, RLVC 45400, NEHC 40470, RLST 21107, HIJD 45400

MDVL 25809. Islamic and Jewish Political Philosophy. 100 Units.
What can we learn about political philosophy from reading Muslim and Jewish thinkers? The flowering of political philosophy in the medieval Islamic world provides a mirror for examining our own assumptions about religion, politics, and philosophy. In this course, students read major works by Muslim and Jewish thinkers who debated whether and how to apply philosophical ideas to the political life of a community governed by divine laws. We will begin by discussing the transmission of Greek philosophy into Arabic-Islamic culture, the debates that ensued over the status of “foreign wisdom,” and the issue of esoteric writing. These preliminary topics provide necessary background for studying the tradition of political philosophy that developed under Islam and Judaism in the Middle Ages. Major themes include approaches to divine law, the figure of the philosopher-prophet, logic and language, scriptural interpretation, the place of the philosopher in society, and the nature of human perfection.
Instructor(s): Yonatan Shemesh Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): No prerequisites
Equivalent Course(s): RLST 25809, JWSC 28809

MDVL 26250. Buddhist Poetry in India. 100 Units.
The substantial Buddhist contribution to Indian poetry is of interest for what it teaches us of both Buddhism and the broad development of Indian literature. The present course will focus upon three phases in this history, with attention to what changes of language and literary genre tell us of the transformations of Indian religious culture from the last centuries B.C.E. to about the year 1000. Readings (all in translation) will include the Therīgāthā, a
collection of verses written in Pali and the most ancient Indian example of women’s literature, selections from the work of the great Sanskrit poets Aśvaghoṣa, Āryaśūra, and Mātṛceta, and the mystical songs, in the Apabhraṃśa language, of the Buddhist tantric saints.

Instructor(s): Matthew Kapstein Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): General knowledge of Buddhism is desirable.
Note(s): This course meets the HS or LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): SALC 34300, RLST 26250, RLVC 34300, HIREL 34300, DVPR 34300

MDVL 26614. Making the Monsoon: The Ancient Indian Ocean. 100 Units.
The course will explore the human adaptation to a climatic phenomenon and its transformative impacts on the littoral societies of the Indian Ocean, circa 1000 BCE-1000 CE. Monsoon means season, a time and space in which favorable winds made possible the efficient, rapid crossing of thousands of miles of ocean. Its discovery—att different times in different places—resulted in communication and commerce across vast distances at speeds more commonly associated with the industrial than the preindustrial era, as merchants, sailors, religious specialists, and scholars made monsoon crossings. The course will consider the participation of Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, South Asian, and East African actors in the making of monsoon worlds and their relations to the Indian Ocean societies they encountered; the course is based on literary and archaeological sources, with attention to recent comparative historiography on oceanic, climatic, and global histories.

Instructor(s): R. Payne Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 36614, NEHC 36614, NEHC 26614, SALC 36614, SALC 26614, CLCV 26620, HIST 26614, CLAS 36620

MDVL 27020. Christianity and Islam in the Western Mediterranean World during the Late Middle Ages. 100 Units.
El curso analizará los contactos mantenidos entre mundo cristiano y mundo islámico en el Mediterráneo bajomedieval, tomando la Corona de Aragón y sus ricas fuentes documentales como observatorio privilegiado. Las particularidades de la Corona de Aragón se compararán con las de otros estados cristianos del Occidente mediterráneo que mantuvieron relaciones sostenidas con los musulmanes. Tras la definición de la naturaleza y de las especificidades de los contactos político-diplomáticos, mercantiles y pirácticos entre Cristiandad e Islam, las clases se focalizarán en la identificación y caracterización de colectivos y personas que actuaron como mediadores lingüísticos y culturales entre ambas realidades. Se determinarán las circunstancias y motivos que permitieron que agentes diplomáticos, mercaderes, mercenarios, piratas-corsarios o cautivos-esclavos vehicularan los contactos. Y se analizarán y compararán las distintas tipologías documentales que son plasmación de todos esos intercambios y contactos culturales y humanos.

Instructor(s): R. Salicrú i Lluch
Note(s): Taught in Spanish.
Equivalent Course(s): SPAN 37020, CATÁ 37020, CATÁ 27020, RLST 27020, SPAN 27020

MDVL 28013. Love, Desire, and Sexuality in Islamic Texts and Contexts. 100 Units.
What separates love from lust? How do our erotic desires and sexual practices intersect with our beliefs? This interdisciplinary class explores these questions in conversation with foundational thinkers from the Islamic tradition alongside insights from feminist and queer theory. We will delve into questions on the relationship between romantic, familial, and divine love; gender, sexuality, and the body; and Orientalism and the politics of reading desire cross-culturally. Exploring a diverse set of primary sources that range from the Qur’an to Rūmī’s Masnāvī to contemporary Bollywood, we will encounter different representations of love, desire, and sexuality in religious and philosophical discourses, literary representations, and visual media. We will examine not only how these representations reflect different historical norms, but also how and to what extent texts and images can inform or impact the norms of their contexts as well. No prerequisite knowledge of the topics or time periods discussed is needed, and students will have the opportunity over the course of the class to develop a project that relates our content to their own interests.

Instructor(s): Allison Kanner-Botan Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): This course counts as a Concepts course for GNSE majors.
Equivalent Course(s): CMLT 28013, SALC 28013, NEHC 29018, GNSE 23135, RLST 28013

MDVL 28404. Introduction to Old English. 100 Units.
Moððe word fræt.” These are the first words of a riddle that students will learn how to read in this course. As the first part of the Medieval Research Series, this course introduces students to the Old English language, the literary history of early medieval England, and current research tools and scholarship in the field of Old English. In studying the language, we will explore its diverse and exciting body of literature, including poems of heroic violence and lament, laws, medical recipes, and humorously obscene riddles. Successful completion of the course will give students a rich sense not only of the earliest period of English literary culture, but also of the structure of the English language as it is written and spoken today. (Pre-1650; Med/Ren) This course is the first in a two quarter Medieval Research sequence. No prior experience with Old or Middle English is required. The second course in the Medieval Research sequence (Beowulf) will be offered in the Spring Quarter.

Instructor(s): Benjamin Saltzman Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): ENGL 28404, ENGL 38404
MDVL 28405. Old English Riddles (Med. Research Sequence II) 100 Units.
In this course, we will read and translate all of the Exeter Book Riddles from Old English, attending closely to issues of language, paleography, textual cruxes, and of course-interpretation. In an effort to understand these riddles within a broader early medieval tradition of enigmatic poetry, we will also read several Old English charms as well as Anglo-Latin riddles in translation. Emphasis will also be placed on the history of scholarship on early medieval riddles, and over the course of the term, each student will produce a piece original scholarly research that engages with a riddle or set of riddles and the critical tradition. (Pre-1650, Poetry); (Med/Ren).
Instructor(s): Benjamin Saltzman Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): This course is the second in a two-quarter Medieval Research Sequence and prior knowledge of Old English will be required.
Equivalent Course(s): ENGL 28405, ENGL 38405

MDVL 28705. Christian Iconography. 100 Units.
In Christian culture, visual images have for many centuries played a pivotal role in ritual, devotion, intellectual thought, and religious instruction. The most important aims of this course are that students understand images convey meaning in very unique ways and learn how to decode their visual messages. The study of iconography encompasses a variety of methods used to identify the subject matter of a pictorial image, describe its contents, and analyze its discursive strategies in view of its original cultural context. We will cover some of the most important themes visualized in the arts of Christianity by analyzing imagery spanning different periods, geographical regions, pictorial media, and artistic techniques. While special emphasis is placed on the intersections of art and literature, we will also examine pictorial themes that are independent of a specific textual basis. Alongside the study of Christian iconography, this course will address broader issues of visual inquiry, such as patronage, viewer response, emotions, and gender roles. In this course, students will acquire a ‘visual literacy’ that will enable them to explore all kinds of works of art fruitfully as primary sources in their own right.
Instructor(s): Karin Krause Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): ARTH 28705, RLST 28705

MDVL 29104. Antisemitism and Islamophobia, Historically and Today. 100 Units.
How are antisemitism and Islamophobia linked together? Are they two different modes of oppression and discrimination or are they part of a similar phenomenon? Moreover, are they religious, racial, or ethnic forms of discrimination? Throughout this course, we will complicate the media narrative that sees Jews and Arabs as perpetual enemies through a historical and philosophical exploration into the origins and development of Orientalism, Islamophobia, and antisemitism. Students will think historically about the construction of race, ethnicity, and religion, and the discriminatory modes by which these are employed; and they will use that knowledge to think critically about current depictions of anti-Jewish and anti-Islamic violence. In the first part of the course, we will consider the historical and conceptual underpinnings of antisemitism and Islamophobia. We will look to 14th and 15th century Spain in order to better understand how and where they originated; we will then track their development through modernity, paying close attention to how these discourses changed and evolved over time; finally, we will look at the impact of the Holocaust and the rise of the State of Israel and consider current iterations of Islamophobia and antisemitism in Europe and America today.
Instructor(s): Mendel Kranz Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): JWSC 29104, RLST 29104, HIST 26009

MDVL 29902. Tolkien: Medieval and Modern. 100 Units.
J. R. R. Tolkien’s “The Lord of the Rings” is one of the most popular works of imaginative literature of the twentieth century. This course seeks to understand its appeal by situating Tolkien’s creation within the context of Tolkien’s own work as both artist and scholar alongside its medieval sources and modern parallels. Themes to be addressed include the problem of genre and the uses of tradition; the nature of history and its relationship to place; the activity of creation and its relationship to language, beauty, evil, and power; the role of monsters in imagination and criticism; the twinned challenges of death and immortality, fate and free will; and the interaction between the world of “faerie” and religious belief.
Instructor(s): R. Fulton Brown Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Students must have read "The Lord of the Rings" prior to first day of class.
Note(s): Friday discussion sections are optional. Assignments: Short and long papers.
Equivalent Course(s): RLST 22400, HIST 29902, FNDL 24901

MDVL 35418. Figura, Persona, Vox: Prosopopoeia in the Middle Ages. 100 Units.
This course considers fictional persons, tropes of anthropomorphism and vivification, and personification allegory as these operate in the theory and practice of medieval imaginative writing. In addition, it places practices of prosopopoeia within ongoing scholarly conversations about lyric voice, literary character, affect, the ontology of fiction, and the relation of speech to writing. (Med/Ren)
Instructor(s): Julie Orlemanski Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): ENGL 35418