Medieval Studies

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

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

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<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One course in history</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One course in medieval language or literature</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>One course in art, archeology, architecture, or music</td>
<td>100</td>
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</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): ISLM 30030, RLST 11030, NEHC 30030

**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 trans-Atlantic slave trade.
Instructor(s): K. Hickerson Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): CRES 20701, ANTH 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 Kük 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 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 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): James Robinson David Barak-Gorodetsky Bevin Blaber Terms Offered: Autumn
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 Research Center. In the final weeks, we will concentrate on some of the scholarly debates that have shaped the modern field of medieval history. Grades will be determined on the basis of a midterm exam, a final exam, two short papers, and classroom discussion.
Instructor(s): J. Lyon Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): No prior knowledge of medieval European history is required; the course is open to all undergraduates.
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). This is a History Department Gateway course. 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 (sect 53) Reading and Research: History.
Note(s): History Gateways are introductory courses meant to appeal to first- through third-year students who may not have done previous course work on the topic of the course; topics cover the globe and span the ages.
Equivalent Course(s): RLST 22203, HIST 12203, FNDL 22204, SIGN 26034, KNOW 12203, ITAL 16000, CLCV 22216

MDVL 12500. Introduction to the New Testament: Texts and Contexts. 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 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): BIBL 32500, RLST 12000, FNDL 28202

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 15320. Witnessing Medieval Evil: Literature, Art, and the Politics of Observation. 100 Units.

Seeing hell for oneself, watching the torture of a saint, looking at illustrations of violence: these profoundly terrible experiences, narrated and drawn, shaped the way medieval readers took in the world around them, its violence, its suffering, its preponderance of evils. But how exactly does literature allow readers to witness and process such horrors? How is the observation of violence transformed by art? What is unique about the medieval experience of these artistic and literary forms of mediation? What can they teach us about our own contemporary cultural encounters with the sights and stories of atrocity? By exploring questions like these, this course will consider the didactic, religious, and epistemological functions of witnessing in a variety of early medieval texts such as illustrated copies of Prudentius’s Psychomachia (in which the Virtues engage in a gruesome battle against the Vices), the Apocalypse of Paul (in which Paul sees hell and lives to tell about it), early medieval law codes, the Life of St. Margaret, the Old English Genesis, and the heroic poem Judith. These medieval texts will be read alongside thinkers like Giorgio Agamben, W.J.T. Mitchell, and Susan Sontag, whose work on images of atrocity in the modern world will both inform our critical examination of the Middle Ages while opening up the possibility for rethinking literature and art in relation to contemporary experiences of violence. (Fiction, Poetry, Pre-1650, Theory).

Instructor(s): Benjamin Saltzman Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): SIGN 26057, ENGL 15320, LLSO 25320

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 class itself 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: Autumn

Prerequisite(s): This sequence 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
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 20012, HIST 15603, CLCV 25800

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
Note(s): The Islamicate Civilization sequence does not fulfill the General Ed requirements
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 20201, HIST 35621, ISLM 30201, HIST 15611, NEHC 30201, Rlst 20201

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 fulfilling the requirement for MA students in CMES, as well as for NELC majors and PhD students.

Instructor(s): Franklin Lewis Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Islamicate Civilization I (NEHC 20201) or Islamic Thought & Literature I (NEHC 20601), or the equivalent
Note(s): The Islamicate Civilization sequence does not fulfill the General Ed requirements
Equivalent Course(s): Rlst 20202, ISLM 30202, HIST 15612, NEHC 30202, HIST 35622, NEHC 20202
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): ISLM 30500, NEHC 20501, CMES 30501, HIST 25704, NEHC 30501, RLST 20501, HIST 35704

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): HIST 35804, ISLM 30600, HIST 25804, CMES 30502, NEHC 30502, NEHC 20502

MDVL 20505. Pagans and Christians: Greek Background to Early Christianity. 100 Units.
This course will examine some of the ancient Greek roots of early Christianity. We will focus on affinities between Christianity and the classical tradition as well as ways in which the Christian faith may be considered radically different from it. Some of the more important issues that we will analyze are: "The spell of Homer." How the Homeric poems exerted immeasurable influence on the religious attitudes and practices of the Greeks. The theme of creation in Greek and Roman authors such as Hesiod and Ovid. The Orphic account of human origins. The early Christian theme of Christ as Creator/Savior. Greek, specifically Homeric conceptions of the afterlife. The response to the Homeric orientation in the form of the great mystery cults of Demeter, Dionysus, and Orpheus. The views of the philosophers (esp. Plato) of the immortality of the soul compared with the New Testament conception of resurrection of the body. Ancient Greek conceptions of sacrifice and the crucifixion of Christ as archetypal sacrifice. The attempted synthesis of Jewish and Greek philosophic thought by Philo of Alexandria and its importance for early Christianity.
Instructor(s): David Martinez Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): CLCV 26216, RLST 20505

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): Ahmed El Shamsy Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): RLST 20401, NEHC 20601, SOSC 22000, HIST 25610

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): Franklin Lewis 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): SOSC 22100, HIST 25615, RLST 20402, NEHC 20602

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): HIST 26005, ISLM 30605, HIST 36005, NEHC 30605, NEHC 20605

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): R. Payne Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Open to advanced undergraduates and graduate students.
Equivalent Course(s): CICV 23718, CLAS 33718, LLSO 20902, HIST 20902, HIST 30902, NEHC 30802, NEHC 20802

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 relationship 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): James Robinson Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): HIJD 31100, HREL 41101, RLST 22406, JWSC 26252, RLVC 41100, ISLM 41100

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): HIST 22121, RLST 21330, GNSE 21330

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 21900. Dante’s Divine Comedy 1: Inferno. 100 Units.
This is the first part of a sequence focusing on Dante’s masterpiece. We examine Dante’s Inferno in its cultural (i.e., historical, artistic, philosophical, sociopolitical) context. In particular, we study Dante’s poem alongside other crucial Latin and vernacular texts of his age. They include selections from the Bible, Virgil’s Aeneid, Augustine’s Confessions, Ovid’s Metamorphoses, and the stilnovist and Siculo-Tuscan poets. Political turmoil, economic transformation, changing philosophical and theological paradigms, and social and religious conflict all converge in the making of the Inferno.
Instructor(s): J. Steinberg Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): Taught in English.
Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 27200, ITAL 31900, ITAL 21900

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): ITAL 22101, FNDL 21804, ITAL 32101

MDVL 22350. Speaking Truth to Power in Medieval Iberia. 100 Units.
In the multilingual and multireligious environment of the Iberian middle ages, poetry can express many things. And while literary history has granted a prestigious space to some of these things, such as love or spirituality, it has consistently neglected others, such as socio-political satire or vulgarity. This class will be paying attention to that other less talked-about poetry that gets into the political struggles of the period, that talks in profanities about profane things. In other words, the poetry that does not speak to the eternity of existence, but that gets its hands dirty with earthly matters. The poetry that savagely mocks and cuts through social conventions in a way that makes seem contemporary Twitter trolls benevolent in comparison. For this class we will be reading authors who wrote in Galician-Portuguese such as Joao Soares de Paiva or King Alfonso X, authors who wrote in Catalan such as Guillem de Bergueda or Ramon Vidal de Besalu, and authors who wrote in Spanish such as Juan Ruiz or Juan de Mena. Translations to Spanish will be provided or worked through class discussion.
Instructor(s): N. Blanco Mourelle Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): CATA 32350, PORT 32350, PORT 22350, SPAN 32350, SPAN 22350, CATA 22350

MDVL 23407. Comparative Kingship: Rulers in 12th-Century Europe. 100 Units.
The purpose of this course is to examine the different forms that kingship took in the Latin Christian kingdoms of Europe during the twelfth century. In the first half of the course, we will read and discuss a broad range of primary and secondary sources that will give us the opportunity to analyze critically kingship in England, France and Germany (the Holy Roman Empire). In the second half of the course, we will broaden our discussion to consider how other kingdoms in Europe-including Scotland, Norway, Denmark, Poland, Hungary, Sicily, Aragon and Castile-do and do not conform to more general models of 12th-century European kingship.
Instructor(s): J. Lyon Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 23407, HIST 33407

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 33510, FNDL 23902, HIST 23510

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 possess relevant language skills.
Instructor(s): M. Vanderpoel Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CMLT 23823, RLST 23823

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 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" (darśanas) 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 -- Mimāṃśa 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): RSLT 24202, DVPR 30302, SALC 30902, SALC 20902, HREL 30300

MDVL 25110. Maimonides and Hume on Religion. 100 Units.
This course will study in alternating 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): HIJD 45400, FNDL 24106, ISLM 45400, HREL 45401, JWSC 21107, RLVC 45400, RSLT 21107, NEHC 40470

MDVL 25809. Islamic and Jewish Political Philosophy. 100 Units.
In this course we will study the history of political philosophy in the medieval Islamic world. We begin by discussing the transmission of Greek philosophy into Arabic-Islamic culture, the debates that ensued over the value of philosophy versus prophecy, and the issue of esoteric writing. These preliminary topics provide necessary background and context for studying the tradition of political philosophy that developed under Islam and Judaism during the Middle Ages. Then, for the rest of the semester, students analyze key works by Muslim and Jewish thinkers who navigated the relationships between religion, politics, and philosophy. Along the way we discuss a number of major themes and topics, including (but not limited to) 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: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): JWSC 28809, RSLT 25809

MDVL 26002. Philosophical Petrarchism. 100 Units.
This course is a close reading of Petrarch's Latin corpus. Readings include the Coronation Oration, The Secret, and selections from Remedies for Fortune Fair and Foul, On Illustrious Men, On Religious Leisure, and The Life of Solitude. Special attention is devoted to Petrarch's letter collections (Letters on Familiar Matters, Letters of Old Age, Book without a Name, etc.) and his invectives. The aim of the course is to familiarize the student with the new and complete Petrarch that emerged in 2004 on the occasion of the 700th anniversary of his birth. Discussion will focus on Petrarch's self-consciousness as the "father of humanism," his relationship to Dante, autobiographism, dialogical inquiry, anti-scholasticism, patriotism, and Petrarch's "civic" reception in the Quattrocento as well as on a comparative evaluation of the nineteenth-century Petrarchs of Alfred Mézières, Georg Voigt, and Francesco De Sanctis.
Instructor(s): R. Rubini
Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): Taught in English.
Equivalent Course(s): ITAL 36002, FNDL 25802, ITAL 26002

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, Aryaśūra, 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, HREL 34300, RSLT 26250, DVPR 34300, RLVC 34300

MDVL 26260. Padavali: Vernacular poetics in eastern South Asia (ca. 14th-18th AD) 100 Units.
Padavali (vernacular lyric poetry) is one of the threads that tied together the cultural region of eastern India from Tripura to Bihar, and from Assam to Odisha. In this course, we will study the making of this tradition rooted in the courtly poems of Vidyapati (ca. 1370-1460, Mithila) and follow its spread in Nepal, Assam, Bengal,
and Odisha. We will discuss the very close relation between form and content in this poetic tradition that was closely connected with music. We will also study the expressive use of a complex prosodic system that was never described in the form of treatises and the many debates around the trans-regional aspects of Brajabuli as an artificial vernacular poetic idiom. Moreover, we will compare padavali literature with other premodern traditions from Medieval Europe, especially Old Occitan troubadour poetry and lyric poetry in Andalusian Arabic. This comparative approach is motivated by the many parallels one can observe between Medieval southern Europe and eastern South Asia, starting with the conscious crafting of lyric vernacular traditions in multilingual contexts against the background of classical literary cultures.

Instructor(s): Thibaut d’Hubert Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Two years of Bengali, or Hindi, or Sanskrit (with some basic knowledge of Middle Indic [Prakrit/ Apabhramsha]).
Equivalent Course(s): SALC 26250, BANG 46250, BANG 26250, SALC 46250

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—at 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): SALC 26614, CLAS 36620, HIST 36614, SALC 36614, NEHC 26614, HIST 26614, NEHC 36614, CLCV 26620

MDVL 27020. Christianity and Islam in the Western Mediterranean World during the Late Middle Ages. 100 Units.
El curso analizará los contactos mantenedos 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 pirático-corsarios 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 vehicularen 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): RLST 27020, CATA 37020, CATA 27020, SPAN 27020, SPAN 37020

MDVL 28013. Love, Desire, and Sexuality in Islamic Texts and Contexts. 100 Units.
This class examines key texts in Islamic societies that together comprise a set of cultural narratives through which ideas about love, desire, and sexuality circulated. Throughout the course, we will engage with these broad themes by exploring the subjects of erotic and familial love; gender, sexuality, and the body; Orientalism and the politics of reading desire cross-culturally; and the enduring tensions between the particular and the universal in discourses of and about love, the passions and their vicissitudes in the histories of religion. Islam provides the historical framework through which we can assess shared and differentiated ideas about this important human phenomenon, from the Hellenism of late antiquity to contemporary media of South Asia. We will encounter various ways of understanding love in primary sources that range from the Qur’an and pre-Islamic poetry; to mystics and philosophers such as Ibn al’Arabī and Ibn Sinā (Avicenna); to the narratives of Rūmī’s Masnāvī and Nīnāmī’s Laylī o Majnūn; to the popular tales of the A Thousand and One Nights and the framing of Islamic cultural narratives in Bollywood cinema and American popular culture. This course draws on the perspectives of Religious Studies, Medieval Studies, Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, and Comparative Literature, 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, RLST 28013, GNSE 23135

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 38405, ENGL 28405

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: Winter
Prerequisite(s): P/Q: This course is open to all undergraduate students who are interested in the course topic.
You certainly do not need to be an adherent of the Christian faith to take this course. However, a basic familiarity
with some of the foundational texts of Christianity (esp. the Bible) and its main (Biblical) protagonists is not a
disadvantage.
Equivalent Course(s): RLST 28705, ARTH 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
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 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 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