# Medieval Studies

**Department Website:** [http://medieval.uchicago.edu](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>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two courses in art, archeology, architecture, or music</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two courses in philosophy or theology</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<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><strong>Total Units</strong></td>
<td><strong>1200</strong></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.

**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 program website ([medieval.uchicago.edu/baCourses.shtml](http://medieval.uchicago.edu/baCourses.shtml)), divided among subject areas as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One course in art, archeology, architecture, or music</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One course in philosophy or theology</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two electives</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Units</strong></td>
<td><strong>600</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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.
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 an approval form for the minor program (available on the program website, at medieval.uchicago.edu/minor_consent_form.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 medieval.uchicago.edu/baCourses.shtml.

**ARTH 16709. Islamic Art & Architecture, 1100-1500. 100 Units.**

This course surveys the art and architecture of the Islamic world from 1100-1500. In that period, political fragmentation into multiple principalities challenged a deeply rooted ideology of unity of the Islamic world. The courts of the various principalities competed not only in politics, but also in the patronage of architectural projects and of arts such as textiles, ceramics, woodwork, and the arts of the book. While focusing on the central Islamic lands, we will consider regional traditions from Spain to India and the importance for the arts of contacts with China and the West. This course is part of the College Course Cluster program: Urban Design.

Instructor(s): P. Berlekamp Terms Offered: Autumn

Note(s): This course meets the general education requirement in the arts.

Equivalent Course(s): NEAA 10630, NEHC 16709

**FREN 21700. Le Roman De La Rose. 100 Units.**

The mid-thirteenth-century Roman de la Rose was arguably the single most influential vernacular text of the (French) Middle Ages. A sprawling, encyclopedic summa composed by two separate authors writing some forty years apart, whether taken as a source of inspiration or an object of condemnation, the Roman de la Rose became an obligatory point of reference for generations of authors. Over the course of the quarter, we will read the conjoined text, each student focusing their reading through a critical optic of their choice (e.g., gender studies, animal studies, ethics and philosophy, reception studies, manuscript studies, etc.). Students will select and read ancillary texts to enrich their understanding of the Rose, and will collaborate with one another to chart a rich and diverse set of interpretive paths through this complex work.

Equivalent Course(s): FREN 31700, GNSE 27300, FNDL 21700

**FREN 23217. Merveilleux et vraisemblable du moyen âge au XVIIe siècle. 100 Units.**

What if I told you that the real was imaginary and the imaginary was real? This course will explore the concepts of the marvelous, the imaginary, and the real through a selection of French literature from the Middle Ages to the 17th century. The Middle Ages are often perceived as a rigid feudal society. Yet, fairies abound in stories, people shape-shift, and objects magically transform under our eyes. In the 16th century truth appears to harden through advances in science, mathematics, and art. But simultaneously religious schisms, the discovery of the New World, and political anarchy shake the notion of the world's stable limits to the core. The 17th century is known for Descartes' rationalism and classical regularity. But even here there is the unexpected, the surprising je ne sais quoi and overwhelming ineffable. Through the literature of each era, we will see how reality often mixes with the marvelous and everything is not always as it seems.

Instructor(s): E. Van Dyke Terms Offered: Spring

Prerequisite(s): FREN 20500

Note(s): Taught in French.

**HIST 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. Students will have the opportunity to do a research paper or craft a project of their choice based on the themes of the course.

Instructor(s): R. Fulton Brown Terms Offered: Spring

Equivalent Course(s): HIST 32407
ITAL 23900. Marsilio Ficino's "On Love" 100 Units.
This course is first of all a close reading of Marsilio Ficino's seminal book On Love (first Latin edition De amore 1484; Ficino's own Italian translation 1544). Ficino's philosophical masterpiece is the foundation of the Renaissance view of love from a Neo-Platonic perspective. It is impossible to overemphasize its influence on European culture. On Love is not just a radically new interpretation of Plato's Symposium. It is the book through which sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe read the love experience. Our course will analyze its multiple classical sources and its spiritual connotations. During our close reading of Ficino's text, we will show how European writers and philosophers appropriated specific parts of this Renaissance masterpiece. In particular, we will read extensive excerpts from some important love treatises, such as Castiglione's The Courtier (Il cortigiano), Leone Ebreo's Dialogues on Love, Tullia d'Aragona's On the Infinity of Love, but also selections from a variety of European poets, such as Michelangelo's canzoniere, Maurice Scève's Délie, and Fray Luis de León's Poesía.
Instructor(s): A. Maggi Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): Course taught in English.
Equivalent Course(s): ITAL 33900, REMS 33900, CMLT 26701, CMLT 36701, FNDL 21103

ITAL 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 inventives. 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.
Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 25802, ITAL 36002

ITAL 26401. Torquato Tasso. 100 Units.
This course investigates the entire corpus of Torquato Tasso, the major Italian poet of the second half of the sixteenth century. We read in detail the Jerusalemme Liberata and Aminta, his two most famous works, in the context of their specific literary genre. We then spend some time examining the intricacies of his vast collection of lyric poetry, including passages from his poem "Il mondo creato." We also consider some of his dialogues in prose that address essential issues of Renaissance culture, such as the theories of love, emblematic expression, and the meaning of friendship.
Equivalent Course(s): ITAL 36401, FNDL 26401

NEAA 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: Autumn
Prerequisites: Introductory course in archaeology
Equivalent Course(s): NEAA 30522

NEHC 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): Orit Bashkin Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): MDVL 20501, HIST 35704, RLST 20501, ISLM 30500, HIST 25704, NEHC 30501, CMES 30501

NEHC 20601. Islamic Thought and Literature I. 100 Units.
This course covers the period from ca. 600 to 950, concentrating on the career of the Prophet Muhammad; Qur'an and Hadith; the Caliphate: the development of Islamic legal, theological, philosophical, and mystical discourses; sectarian movements; and Arabic literature.
Instructor(s): T. Qutbuddin Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 25610, NEHC 30601, SOSC 22000, RLST 20401, MDVL 20601, HIST 35610, ISLM 30601, CMES 30601

NEHC 20840. Radical Islamic Pieties: 1200 to 1600. 100 Units.
Some knowledge of primary languages (i.e., Arabic, French, German, Greek, Latin, Persian, Spanish, Turkish) helpful. This course examines responses to the Mongol destruction of the Abbasid caliphate in 1258 and the background to formation of regional Muslim empires. Topics include the opening of confessional boundaries; Ibn Arabi, Ibn Taymiyya, and Ibn Khaldun; the development of alternative spiritualities, mysticism, and messianism in the fifteenth century; and transconfessionalism, antinomianism, and the articulation of sacral sovereignties in the sixteenth century. All work in English. This course is offered in alternate years.
Instructor(s): C. Fleischer Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisites: Consent of instructor
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 25901, HIST 35901, RLST 20840, NEHC 30840
SPAN 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.
Instructor(s): F. de Armas Terms Offered: Autumn Winter
Prerequisite(s): SPAN 20300 or consent of instructor
Font Notice
This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

- Times was used instead of Trajan.
- Times was used instead of Palatino.

The editor may contact Leepfrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.