

# Medieval Studies Program Undergraduate Courses

Listed below were the Medieval Studies Program course selections for the 2012-2013 academic year. If you have questions about what courses apply toward the major or the minor, please contact the department chair.

## Autumn 2012

### **ENGL 15805. Medieval Vernacular Literature in the British Isles.** M. Murrin. Autumn.

This course will cover the Celtic tradition, Old and Middle English, Anglo-Norman French, and a late text from Scotland. Texts will include: from Old English, *Beowulf*; from Irish, *The Battle of Moytura* (a battle between gods and giants), the *Tain*, and two of the *immrana* or voyages, those concerning Bran Son of Ferbal and Mael Duin (the latter being the likely source for the Voyage of St. Brendan, which had such an effect on old speculations about the Atlantic); from Anglo-Norman French, the *Lays of Marie de France*; from Welsh, the *Four Branches from the Mabinogion*; from Middle English, selections from *The Canterbury Tales* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*; and from Scotland, Dunbar, who fittingly closes the course, since he wrote in English at a time when the Tudors tried to suppress Celtic writing in Wales. A paper will be required and perhaps an oral examination.

### **HIST 21703. Byzantine Empire, 330 to 610.** W. Kaegi. Autumn.

A lecture course, with limited discussion, of the formation of early Byzantine government, society, and culture. Although a survey of event and changes, including external relations, many of the latest scholarly controversies will also receive scrutiny. There will be some discussion of relevant archaeology and topography. No prerequisite. Readings will include some primary sources in translation and examples of modern scholarly interpretations. Final examination and a short paper.

### **HIST 25209. Medicine, Magic, and Science in Ancient and Medieval Europe.** E. Jeck. Autumn.

### **HIST 25701. North Africa, Late Antiquity–Islam.** W. Kaegi. Autumn.

Examination of topics in continuity and change from the third through ninth centuries CE, including changes in Roman, Vandalic, Byzantine, and early Islamic Africa. Topics include the waning of paganism and the respective spread and waning of Christianity, the dynamics of the seventh-century Muslim conquest and Byzantine collapse. Transformation of late antique North Africa into a component of Islamic civilization. Topography and issues of the autochthonous populations will receive some analysis. Most of the required reading will be on reserve, for there is no standard textbook.

Readings in translated primary sources as well as the latest modern scholarship. Final examination and 10 page course paper.

**ITAL 22101. Dante's "Divine Comedy" 3: Paradiso.** J. Steinberg. Autumn.

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*.

**ITAL 27100. The Birth of "Modern Man": Petrarch, Alberti, Valla.** R. Rubini. Autumn.

This course accounts for the emergence of the "modern" individual in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italy. It does so through a close reading of three major works by some of the most innovative thinkers of their epoch(s): Francesco Petrarca's collection, *Letters on Familiar Matters*, where the author originally struggles with notions of identity and authorship; Leon Battista Alberti's dialogue, *The Family in Renaissance Florence*, which anticipates notions of modern economy or capitalism; and Lorenzo Valla's newly translated (for the first time in any modern language) philosophical treatise, *Dialectical Disputations*, an attempt at conceiving a "new logic" against medieval scholasticism. We will debate their relevance in our day and age.

**LATN 23400. Boethius: Consolation of Philosophy.** P. White. Autumn.

*The Consolation of Philosophy*, which Boethius wrote in prison after a life of study and public service, offers a view on Roman politics and culture after Rome ceased to be an imperial capital. *The Consolation* is also a poignant testament from a man divided between Christianity and philosophy. About 70 pages of the text are read in Latin, and all of it in English. Secondary readings provide historical and religious context for the early sixth century AD.

**LATN 24712. Latin Epigraphy.** C. Ando. Autumn

An introduction to the reading and editing of inscriptions in Latin and their use in historical study. We will give special attention to public documents of Italy, Spain and North Africa in stone and bronze, and to the history of the epigraphic habit within imperial and colonial political cultures.

**LATN 25200. Medieval Latin.** M. Allen. Autumn.

The course traces developments and continuities in Latin literature from the late-fourth century to the tenth. We examine new Christian literary idioms, such as hymnody, hagiography, and the theological essay, as well as reinterpretations of classical forms of poetry, epistle, biography, and historical writing. We consider the peculiarities of medieval Latin. Attention will be paid to how and where literature was cultivated.

**LATN 26000. Latin Paleography (at the Newberry Library).** M. Allen. Autumn.

The course will emphasize the development of Latin handwriting, primarily as book scripts, from its origins to the waning of the Carolingian minuscule, ca. A.D. 1100. By mastering the foundational types of writing, the students will develop skills for reading all Latin-based scripts, including those used for vernacular languages and the subsequent Gothics and their derivatives down to the sixteenth century.

**MUSI 27100. Topics in the History of Western Music.** STAFF. Autumn.

This course begins with the earliest notated music and considers monophonic liturgical chant and the development of sacred and secular vocal polyphony through the sixteenth century.

**NEHC 20411–20412–20413. Medieval Jewish History I, II, III.** N. Golb. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

This sequence does NOT meet the general education requirement in civilization studies. This three-quarter sequence deals with the history of the Jews over a wide geographical and historical range. First-quarter work is concerned with the rise of early rabbinic Judaism and development of the Jewish communities in Palestine and the Eastern and Western diasporas during the first several centuries CE. Topics include the legal status of the Jews in the Roman world, the rise of rabbinic Judaism, the rabbinic literature of Palestine in that context, the spread of rabbinic Judaism, the rise and decline of competing centers of Jewish hegemony, the introduction of Hebrew language and culture beyond the confines of their original home, and the impact of the birth of Islam on the political and cultural status of the Jews. An attempt is made to evaluate the main characteristics of Jewish belief and social concepts in the formative periods of Judaism as it developed beyond its original geographical boundaries. Second-quarter work is concerned with the Jews under Islam, both in Eastern and Western Caliphates. Third-quarter work is concerned with the Jews of Western Europe from the eleventh through the fifteenth centuries.

**NEHC 20501. Islamic History and Society I: The Rise of Islam and the Caliphate.** F. Donner. Autumn.

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.

**NEHC 20601. Islamic Thought and Literature I.** T. Qutbuddin. Autumn.

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.

**NEHC 20750. Rumi's Masnavi and the Persian Sufi Tradition.** F. Lewis. Autumn.

The Masnavi of Mowlana Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207-1273) is perhaps the most widely read and commented upon poem from Bosnia to Bengal, and Rumi has been hailed by

more than one modern scholar as the "greatest mystical poet" of Islam, or even the world. This course centers around a close-reading in English of the six books of his "Spiritual Couplets." Through discussion and lectures we will consider the narrative techniques and sources of the tales, the morals drawn from them, the organizational structure of the whole, and the literary achievement of the Masnavi, viewing the text as a lens on to Rumi's theology, Persian Sufism and his place within the mystical tradition.

## Winter 2013

### **ARTH 17015. Blood, Sweat, and Tears: The Sacred Image in Byzantium.** H. Badamo. Winter.

During the Middle Ages, icons—sacred images—played a pivotal role in the devotional practice of Byzantium, the eastern Christian empire that had its capital in Constantinople from 324–1453. "Windows to heaven," sacred images provided access to the divine. Despite their spiritual function, icons also drew attention to their materiality by erupting into life – bleeding, weeping, and attacking foes. In this course, we will combine the study of Byzantine images with Byzantine primary sources (in translation) to explore a range of topics related to the icon, including medieval image theory, iconoclasm, visuality, enshrinement, the copy, and materiality. Our investigation of Byzantine images will be enhanced through comparison with responses to the image in Islam, Judaism, and the Christian west.

### **ARTH 18700. The Arts of Arabic and Persian Manuscripts.** P. Berlekamp. Winter.

This undergraduate art in context course focuses on Islamic arts of the book from the eleventh through sixteenth centuries. We will pay particular attention to relationships between painting, calligraphy, and illumination; problems of copying and originality; challenges posed by manuscripts that have been altered by successive generations of users; multiple levels of text-image relationships; and identify special considerations related to the manuscript format. Throughout the seminar we will consider points of congruence and divergence between how such issues were theorized in (translated) primary texts contemporaneous to the manuscripts being studied, and how they are theorized today.

### **ARTH 22409. Late Antique Treasures.** C. Nielson. Winter.

Taking advantage of the opportunity afforded by the Art Institute's special exhibition of hallmarks of Late Roman and Early Byzantine art (ca. 300–600 C.E.) from the British Museum, this class will consider what treasured objects from Late Antiquity meant in their original contexts, and what they mean today in the context of the world's encyclopedic museums. We will first examine in detail works of art produced in luxurious media, primarily ivory and silver, as we discuss the various contexts in which they were seen and used—both in wealthy households and/or at important ecclesiastic sites. In so doing, we will focus on several general themes, including the continued popularity of classical imagery among the well-educated, aristocratic classes; the theater and spectacle of dining; and the ultimate emergence of a new, "Byzantine"

aesthetic. Finally, we will conclude by looking at the ancient practice of burying treasure hoards, and the impact of their discovery on modern archaeology and museum practices. This course, to be taught at the Art Institute by one of the curators, represents a unique opportunity for students to gain experience with medieval sources.

**EALC 19001. Introduction to Classical Japanese.** R. Jackson. Winter.

Introduction to the grammar and style of premodern Japanese through a variety of literary texts. Emphasis will be placed on extensive grammatical analysis and translation. Work with original manuscripts will also be introduced as the course progresses.

**EALC 22501. Political and Intellectual History of China, A.D. 100–700.**

H. Goodman. Winter.

Dynastic failures to maintain both court and local control after about 150 AD: Local leading families during E. Han and Three Kingdoms periods, Political pressures from non-Chinese states to the north and northwest, elite concerns that led to personal and factional power: management of political legitimation; reading, editing, and pedagogy; antiquarianism and collecting that led to reevaluations of history. Voices of interiority and selfhood: Poetic voices of entertainment and independence among leading personalities, Other voices of counter-culture and cultural hierarchies. Factions and dynastic turnover in the Jin and the South Dynasties (265–525 AD): Cultural and religious trends of this time: political implications, Social organization in northern China in this period. The nature of our sources: Collections and transmissions of texts, Texts from discovered tombs, Other sources. The Tang Dynasty as a New Military Type, 600–750 AD: Organization of the Tang state, Tang China and the wider world. Trends in Tang-era thought: Belles lettres as social and career process, statecraft, institutions. Overview of major changes from late-Han to Tang.

**EALC 23902. Self-Cultivation and the Way in Traditional Chinese Thought.** P. Copp. Winter.

In this course we will explore three distinct but interrelated modes of self-cultivation and the contemplative life from premodern China: those exemplified by the *Laozi*, and in particular by those artists and philosophers who drew upon the text; by the Chan tradition in Tang and Song Buddhism; and by the Song Neo-Confucian philosopher and exegete Zhu Xi (1130–1200). We will read classic texts in these modes (and a few modern ones too) closely, attuning ourselves as best we can to their original contexts, and we will brood together on how we might use them in our own contemplative lives. Central to the course will be careful consideration of the different understandings of the Way (Dao) found in our texts, and how these different ways structured conceptions of the ideal human life.

**ENGL 15600. Medieval English Literature.** M. Miller. Winter.

This course examines the relations among psychology, ethics, and social theory in fourteenth-century English literature. We pay particular attention to three central preoccupations of the period: sex, the human body, and the ambition of ethical

perfection. Readings are drawn from Chaucer, Langland, the Gawain-poet, Gower, penitential literature, and saints' lives. There are also some supplementary readings in the social history of late medieval England.

**FNDL 20700. Aquinas on God, Being, and Human Nature.** S. Meredith. Winter.

This course considers sections from Saint Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*. Among the topics considered are God's existence; the relationship between God and Being; and human nature.

**MUSI 12100. Music in Western Civilization I: To 1750.** A. Robertson. Winter.

This two-quarter sequence explores musical works of broad cultural significance in Western civilization. We study pieces not only from the standpoint of musical style but also through the lenses of politics, intellectual history, economics, gender, cultural studies, and so on. Readings are taken both from our music textbook and from the writings of a number of figures such as St. Benedict of Nursia and Martin Luther. In addition to lectures, students discuss important issues in the readings and participate in music listening exercises in smaller sections.

**NEHC 20002. Jewish History and Society II.** STAFF. Winter.

This section of the course concentrates on the medieval period of Jewish History and Society.

**NEHC 20502 Islamic History and Society II: The Middle Period.** J. Woods. Winter.

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.

**NEHC 20602. Islamic Thought and Literature II.** F. Lewis. Winter.

This course covers the period from ca. 950 to 1700. We survey such works as literature, theology, philosophy, sufism, politics, and history that were written in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. We also consider the art, architecture, and music of the Islamicate traditions. Through primary texts, secondary sources, and lectures, we 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, Mughals).

**PERS 30324-30325. Masnavi of Rumi I and II.** F. Lewis. Winter, Spring.

The *Masnavi* of Mowlânâ Jalâl al-Din Rumi (1207–1273) constitutes the single most influential text in the Persian mystical tradition, read in the original from Bosnia to Bengal. This course will consider the literary background and achievement of the text; its poetic representation of Qur'an, hadith and mystical theosophy; its reception,

commentary and translation history; and above all the structure and meaning of the poem. The first quarter will survey a select anthology of individual stories and themes in the Masnavi; while the second quarter will focus on a thorough-reading of at least one of the six books of this 25,000-line poem.

**PHIL 26000. History of Philosophy II: Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy.** M. Kremer. Winter.

This course is an introduction to some of the major thinkers and movements in the philosophy of the medieval and early modern periods. This course will aim at providing a broad overview, with special attention to developments in metaphysics, epistemology and the philosophy of mind. Figures discussed will include Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Descartes, Leibniz, Locke and Hume.

**PHIL 26100. The Philosophical Interpretation of Scripture in the Middle Ages: The Problems of Evil and the Book of Job.** J. Stern. Winter.

An important genre of philosophical writing during the Middle Ages was the commentary, both commentaries on canonical philosophical works (e.g., Aristotle) and on Scripture. This course is an introduction to medieval philosophical exegesis of Scripture, concentrating on the Book of Job and the philosophical problems of evil and suffering. Authors will include Saadia, Maimonides, and Aquinas, and readings will include both their commentaries on Job and their systematic philosophical discussions of the problems of evil.

**RLST 21801. Religion and Society in the Middle Ages.** L. Pick. Winter.

This course examines some of the roles played by religion within medieval society. We consider topics such as the conversion of Europe to Christianity, monasticism, the cult of saints, the rise of the papacy, and the rise of heresy and religious dissent. We study medieval religious ideals as well as the institutions created to perpetuate those ideals. Weighing the experience of the individual and the group. We read autobiographies, saints' lives, chronicles, miracle collections, papal documents, among other kinds of sources.

**SLAV 22000. Old Church Slavonic.** Y. Gorbachov. Winter.

This course introduces the language of the oldest Slavic texts. It begins with a brief historical overview of the relationship of Old Church Slavonic to Common Slavic and the other Slavic languages. This is followed by a short outline of Old Church Slavonic inflectional morphology. The remainder of the course is spent in the reading and grammatical analysis of original texts. Texts in Cyrillic or Cyrillic transcription of the original Glagolitic.

**Spring 2013**

**ARTH 14505. The Global Middle Ages: Visual and Intercultural Encounters.** H. Badamo. Spring.

Focusing on the art and architecture of the Mediterranean and Middle East, this course examines how the mobility of objects, people, and social practices remapped cultural boundaries. We will investigate cultures of contact through topics such as cultural cross-dressing, gift exchange, visual translation, and the reuse of objects. By combining case studies of artifacts with critical readings of comparative and theoretical work drawn from a variety of academic disciplines, we will also consider how work on modern cultures can inform interpretations of cultural production and experience before the modern "global age."

**ARTH 17121. The Art of Leonardo da Vinci.** C. Cohen. Spring.

The central focus of this course will be on the small, damaged and disputed body of paintings that Leonardo has left to us, the wealth of his drawings that help us make sense of that problematic heritage and provide the most direct route into his creative thinking, and the hundreds of pages of text in the form of notes in mirror-image handwriting that comment on art and so many other subjects. Our structure will be roughly chronological, including his late fifteenth-century Florentine artistic and social context (e.g., artists such as Verrocchio, Pollaiuolo, Ghirlandaio and Botticelli), his two long periods in Milan as a court artist, his triumphant return to Florence and rivalry with the young Michelangelo, his brief and unsatisfying stay in papal Rome, and the little known, mythic final years in France. Among the themes that will be critically examined are: Leonardo's role in the creation of what is still grandiosely called the High Renaissance; the value and problematic aspects of thinking of him as the quintessential artist-scientist; the significance of the fact that he has been a figure of such obsessive art-historical and broader cultural significance for over 500 years (ie.g., readings by Vasari, Freud, and the innumerable artists who have interpreted and mimicked his work); and the ways in which recent scientific and digital imaging have shed surprising amounts of new light on his art. Through the concentrated art-historical material studied, the course will take seriously the attempt to introduce students with little or no background in art history to some of the major avenues for interpretation in this field, including formal, stylistic, iconographical, psychological, social, feminist, theoretical and reception. Readings are chosen with this diversity of approach in mind.

**ENGL 15500. Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales.** C. von Nolcken. Spring.

We examine Chaucer's art as revealed in selections from *The Canterbury Tales*. Our primary emphasis is on a close reading of individual tales, although we also pay attention to Chaucer's sources and to other medieval works providing relevant background.

**FREN 24100. Nature and the Natural in the Middle Ages.** D. Delogu. Spring.

This course will consider medieval representations and understandings of nature and the natural in its many guises – theological, legal, allegorical, scientific, political, sexual – in order to see how the human comes to define itself in relation to the created world.

**HIST 24401. History of the Fatimid Caliphate.** P. Walker. Spring.

**HIST 11900. Early Monasticism.** L. Pick. Spring.

This course examines early monasticism from its origins among the desert fathers of the Greek and Syriac East to its development in the Latin West, especially in Italy and Spain, concluding with the Carolingian reformation of monasticism in the ninth century. We will examine such themes as monastic rules, monastic hagiography, women in monasticism, ideas of virginity, and the economics of monasticism.

**ITAL 23101. Dante and His Rivals.** J. Steinberg. Spring.

This course examines Dante's complicated relationship with other contemporary and near-contemporary lyric poets. In particular, we examine Dante's texts as part of a dense web of contending vernacular discourses instead of as the final word or *telos* of our studies. For this reason, special emphasis is given to the sonnet form as a ritualized genre in which poetic communities are formed and contending philosophical, political, and sociological visions of society are constructed and deconstructed. The role of books and manuscript culture is especially important as we try to understand the material production and reception of the emergent vernacular literature, and its role and function in late medieval urban Italy.

**MUSI 26512. Singing Songs: Music, Poetry, and Pop Culture circa 1000-1550.** M. Caldwell. Spring.

Modern jongleurs Tom Waits and Bob Dylan may seem far removed from the troubadours and trouvères of the Middle Ages; similarly, the preponderance of "greatest hits" records appear to have little in common with the great chansonniers, collections of songs, from the Renaissance. Although many centuries separate the songs that infiltrate our lives today from the songs of antiquity through to the sixteenth century, the very concept of "song" as we understand it now began to be formed, reformed, developed, and expanded in early and pre-modern Europe. Beginning with Biblical conceptions of song, this course examines song in its diverse contexts through a variety of lenses—text, music, history, ritual, and reception. Looking closely at a selection of song traditions from Western Europe, this course offers students an interdisciplinary perspective on song that draws together through discussion and close musico-poetic analysis the interrelated areas of music, poetry, analysis, popular culture, religion, and history. Although this course does not assume any familiarity with musical notation or music history, by the end of the course students will have a strong grasp on the larger concept of song and its historical position up to the sixteenth century. While the subject matter of this course is specific, namely early and pre-modern song, the larger ideas explored in the seminar have a broad relevance to the humanities and to the continued production of song into the twenty-first century. From song as a form of personal expression, communication, and religious worship, to song as functional, practical, and as a musico-poetic genre, this course introduces students to the concept of locating one type of artistic creation within history, culture, and society. Students will be able to take the larger theoretical and analytical ideas explored in this class and apply them to other genres of song and poetry, while the research skills developed through the class

activities, assignments, and papers will be useful for any research in the humanities and social sciences.

**NEHC 20005. Archaeology of the Ancient Near East V: Islamic Period.**  
D. Whitcomb. Spring.

This survey of the regions of the Middle East presents the urban systems of each region. The focus is a comparative stratigraphy of the archaeological evidence and the contribution of this material towards an understanding of Islamic history and ancient archaeological periods in the Near East.

**PERS 30324-30325. Masnavi of Rumi I and II.** F. Lewis. Winter, Spring.

The Masnavi of Mowlânâ Jalâl al-Din Rumi (1207–1273) constitutes the single most influential text in the Persian mystical tradition, read in the original from Bosnia to Bengal. This course will consider the literary background and achievement of the text; its poetic representation of Qur'an, hadith and mystical theosophy; its reception, commentary and translation history; and above all the structure and meaning of the poem. The first quarter will survey a select anthology of individual stories and themes in the Masnavi; while the second quarter will focus on a thorough-reading of at least one of the six books of this 25,000-line poem.

**PORT 22500. The Travels of Fernão Mendes Pinto.** M. Tamen. Spring.

Most people think that pirates have no scientific interests, and that business people lack literary inclinations. They also think that the sciences and the arts are powerful antidote to dubious trading practices. The Portuguese writer Fernão Mendes Pinto (c.1509-1583), however, was a committed pirate, a traveler in Asia and Africa, a dubious tradesman, an inept secret agent, an amateur anthropologist and, not least, a very great writer. The course will discuss his only book, *Peregrinação* (published posthumously in 1614). The book will be read in Rebecca Catz's English translation. No knowledge of Portuguese is required. Students are expected to have read the whole work by week 3.

**RLST 23605. Aquinas on God, Being, and Human Nature.** S. Meredith. Spring.

This course considers sections from Saint Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*. Among the topics considered are God's existence; the relationship between God and Being; and human nature.

**RLST 24713. Augustine's Confessions.** C. Wild. Spring.

Augustine's *Confessions* recount not only his own conversion(s), but seek to facilitate a conversion in his readers and, thereby, inaugurate a new form of meditative reading. Like Cicero's *Hortensius*, the text which prompted his long return to God, they thus belong to a genre of discourse known as protreptic in antiquity and designed to turn the reader towards the pursuit of wisdom. Of course, the *Confessions* as a confession participate in a number of other genres, and, thus, our analysis will have to take into account its generic complexity in order to understand how seeks to be read.

**SCTH 37103. Love, Law and Exile: The Philosopher and Society in Medieval Islam.** D. Nirenberg and L. Capezzone. Spring

Graduate course, open to undergraduates. Are philosophy and love dangerous for society? Both these areas of Medieval Islamic culture sometimes represented themselves as states of exile or solitude relative to the societies that produced them. The purpose of the course will be to juxtapose these conditions and to explore some of their common concerns: as challenges to normative social conventions, as quests for a recognition founded on an ethics, and as expressions of the desire to provide a self-authorizing account of themselves capable of legitimating their existence in society.