

# Medieval Studies Program Undergraduate Courses

Listed below were the Medieval Studies Program course selections for the 2013-2014 academic year. If you have questions about what courses apply toward the major or the minor, please contact the department chair.

## Autumn 2013

### **ARTH 17800. Leonardo And Michelangelo.** C. Cohen. Autumn.

This course examines the art and personality of the two artists who are often considered the culminating figures of the Italian Renaissance with special attention to their identification as “High Renaissance” practitioners. We will try to understand the Florentine artistic and cultural context out of which these two near-contemporary, but very different, individuals emerged. Their careers will then be studied in the context of the other major centers in which they worked, especially Milan and Rome. We will concentrate on relatively few works, while taking 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 and theoretical. Readings are chosen with this diversity of approach in mind. Special attention will also be given to the writings and drawings of the artists as means of thinking about their creative methods and the complex issue of artistic intention.

### **ARTH 24619. Visual and Material Perspectives on the Silk Road.** J. Shi. Autumn.

Arts and materials are always on the road, transferring and transforming. This material movement, along with customs, ideas and beliefs, challenges modern national discourses of the history of art. As a superhighway of trade and of cultural exchange both on land and over sea, the Silk Road linked China and Japan to the Mediterranean World across Central Asia in ancient times. Following this famous road, this course explores how arts and materials move across space, from border to border, shaping and reshaping culture after culture over a long period of time. Focusing on the eastern part of the route that connects India, Central Asia, China, and Japan from antiquity to the medieval period, this course surveys a variety of artworks and visual materials not only in formal and iconographic terms but also in social, political, and particularly religious perspectives. Organized chronologically, geographically, and thematically, major works for study include cities, temples, caves, icons, relics, and tombs related to Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Nestorian Christianity, and Islamism that shaped the minds and lives of the people who spread along the route.

### **ENGL 14900. Old English.** C. von Nolcken. Autumn.

This course is designed to prepare students for further study in Old English language and literature. As such, our focus will be the acquisition of those linguistic skills needed

to encounter such Old English poems as *Beowulf*, *The Battle of Maldon*, and *The Wanderer* in their original language. In addition to these texts, we may also translate the prose *Life of Saint Edmund, King and Martyr* and such shorter poetic texts as the *Exeter Book riddles*. We will also survey Anglo-Saxon history and culture, taking into account the historical record, archeology, manuscript construction and illumination, and the growth of Anglo-Saxon studies as an academic discipline. This course serves as a prerequisite both for further Old English study at the University of Chicago and for participation in the Newberry Library's Winter Quarter Anglo-Saxon seminar.

**ENGL 15301. From the Annals of Wales to Monty Python and the Holy Grail: King Arthur in Legend and History.** C. von Nolcken. Autumn.

We will consider the historical origins of the Arthurian Legend and some of the ways in which it has subsequently been reshaped and used in Great Britain. We will concern ourselves first with how the legend was treated in the Middle Ages, most importantly by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the twelfth century and Thomas Malory in the fifteenth. Then we will turn to the extraordinary revival of interest in the legend that started with the Victorians and which has continued almost unabated to the present. In our discussions we will consider such matters as the various political uses that have been made of the legend as well as some of the reasons for its enduring popularity. We will end with a viewing of the 1975 film *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*.

**FREN 22000. Poésie et Récit au Moyen Âge.** D. Delogu. Autumn.

Ce cours examinera les capacités et les possibilités narratives de la poésie du Moyen Âge, ainsi que les rapports entre l'écriture lyrique et le récit. Nous nous concentrerons sur le dit narratif et les textes hybrides.

**FNDL 29300. Machiavelli: The Prince and Discourses.** N. Tarcov. Autumn.

This course is a reading and discussion of *The Prince* and the *Discourses on Livy*, supplemented by portions of Livy's *History of Rome*. Themes include the roles of princes, peoples, and elites; the merits of republics and principalities; the political roles of pagan and Christian religion and morality; war and empire; founding and reform; virtue, corruption, and fortune; the relevance of ancient history to modern experience; reading and writing; and theory and practice.

**HIST 21703. Byzantine Empire, 1025 to 1453.** W. Kaegi. Autumn.

Internal and external problems and developments. Internal tensions on the eve of the arrival of the Seljuks. Eleventh-century economic growth. The Crusades. Achievements and deficiencies of Komnenian Byzantium. The Fourth Crusade and Byzantine successor states. Palaeologan political and cultural revival. Religious topics such as relations with the papacy, Bogomilism, and Hesychasm. Readings will include M. Angold, *The Byzantine Empire 1025-1204*; D. M. Nicol, *Last Centuries of Byzantium*; the histories

of Michael Psellos and Anna Comnena. Course grade will include a final examination and a 10-page paper.

**HIST 22002. Byzantine Military History.** W. Kaegi. Autumn.

Interpretation of major issues of institutional, operational, and strategic history between the fourth and fourteenth centuries. Readings include selections from Byzantine military manuals and historians, as well as recent historical assessments. Among topics are debates on the theme system and numbers. Final examination and short paper.

**HIST 42203. Kings, Culture, and the three religions of Medieval Spain.** D. Nirenberg. Autumn.

This course will focus on the contexts and conditions of religious pluralism in late medieval Iberia, including the period commonly associated with the collapse of that pluralism (from the massacre and forced conversion of Jews in 1391 to the conquest of Granada in 1492 and the forced conversions of Muslims shortly thereafter). We will draw on literary and arthistorical as well as historical sources and methodologies in order to explore the cultural, theological, and social work to which religious difference was put in "Spain of the three religions."

**ITAL 25500. Poesia lirica del '500.** A. Maggi. Autumn.

This course studies the complex Petrarchan and anti-Petrarchan poetic movement in sixteenth-century Italy. We will study in detail a number of major poetic figures, from Pietro Bembo, to Monsignor Della Casa, but also Michelangelo and Ludovico Ariosto. Special attention will be given to several women poets, such as Vittoria Colonna and Veronica Gambara. We will also study the technical aspects of Renaissance lyric poetry (verses, rhetorical devices, etc.) in its relationship with Petrarch's *Canzoniere*. We will also read some important self-commentaries that fundamental poets such as Torquato Tasso wrote about their own poetic compositions.

**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 20504. Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: Jewish Thought and Literature.** J. Stackert. Autumn.

The Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) is a complex anthology of disparate texts and reflects a diversity of religious, political, and historical perspectives from ancient Israel, Judah, and Yehud. Because this collection of texts continues to play an important role in modern religions, new meanings are often imposed upon it. In this course, we will attempt to read biblical texts apart from modern preconceptions about them. We will also contextualize their ideas and goals through comparison with texts from ancient Mesopotamia, Syro-Palestine, and Egypt. Such comparisons will demonstrate that the Hebrew Bible is fully part of the cultural milieu of the Ancient Near East. To accomplish these goals, we will read a significant portion of the Hebrew Bible in English, along with representative selections from secondary literature. We will also spend some time thinking about the nature of biblical interpretation.

**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.

**SPAN 21703. Introducción a las literaturas hispánicas: textos españoles clásicos.** F. de Armas. Autumn.

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.

**Winter 2014**

**ARTH 14200. From Missionary Images to Image Explosion: Introduction to Medieval Art.** A. Kumler. Winter.

This course explores the challenging world of medieval art. Beginning with the fourth-century fusion of Imperial and Christian images and ending with the advent of print, we trace how images and art-making took on new roles—and re-invented old ones—over the course of the Middle Ages. We consider architecture, sculpture, wall-painting, manuscript painting, stained glass, metalwork, and textiles in their historical contexts, questioning why medieval objects look the way they do and how they were seen and used by medieval viewers. Readings include medieval sources (in translation) and exemplary modern scholarship.

**ARTH 17205. Islamic Gardens in Landscape and Image.** P. Berlekamp. Winter.

Garden imagery is ubiquitous in the art and architecture of the Islamic world from the eighth century to the eighteenth, and from Spain to India. The poetic trope whereby a visually pleasing object or site is compared to the garden of paradise is equally ubiquitous. But does this imply any historical consistency in the significance of garden imagery, of actual gardens, or of the poetic trope? In this class we explore this question by examining both garden imagery and actual gardens from many different times and places in the Islamic world. How do their visual forms and cultural significance shift according to specific historical circumstances?

**ARTH 28002. Islamic Art and Architecture of the Medieval Perso-Turkic Courts.** P. Berlekamp. Winter.

This course considers art and architecture patronized by the Seljuk, Mongol, and Timurid courts from Anatolia to Central Asia from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries. While the princes of these courts were of Turkic and/or Mongol origin, they adopted many of the cultural and artistic expectations of Perso-Islamicate court life. Further, many objects and monuments patronized by these courts belong to artistic histories variously shared with non-Islamic powers from the Byzantine Empire to China. Questions of how modern scholars have approached and categorized the arts and architecture of these courts will receive particular attention. Each student will write a historiographic review essay with a research component.

**ARTH 23300. Early Renaissance Art in Florence.** C. Cohen. Winter.

**CMLT 24402. Early Novels: The Ethiopian Story, Parzifal, Old Arcadia.** T. Pavel and G. Most. Winter.

The course will introduce the students to the oldest sub-genres of the novel, the idealist story, the chivalric tale and the pastoral. It will emphasize the originality of these forms and discuss their interaction with the Spanish, French, and English novel.

**ENGL 15200. Beowulf.** C. von Nolcken. Winter.

This course will aim to help students read *Beowulf* while also acquainting them with some of the scholarly discussion that has accumulated around the poem. We will read the poem as edited in Klaeber's *Beowulf* (4th ed., Univ. of Toronto Press, 2008). Once students have defined their particular interests, we will choose which recent approaches to the poem to discuss in detail; we will, however, certainly view the poem both in itself and in relation to Anglo-Saxon history and culture in general.

**FNDL 28102. Machiavelli's Political Thought.** J. McCormick.  
Winter.

This course is devoted to the political writings of Niccol Machiavelli. Readings include *The Prince*, *Discourses on Livy's History of Rome*, selections from the *Florentine Histories*, and Machiavelli's proposal for reforming Florence's republic, "Discourses on Florentine Affairs." Topics include the relationship between the person and the polity; the compatibility of moral and political virtue; the utility of class conflict; the advantages of mixed institutions; the principles of self-government, deliberation, and participation; the meaning of liberty; and the question of military conquest.

**HCHR 30200. History of Christian Thought II.** W. Otten. Winter.

This is the second course in the History of Christian Thought sequence dealing with the period from Late Antiquity until the end of the Early Middle Ages, stretching roughly from 450 through 1350.

**HIST 23513. Augustine, The City of God.** D. Nirenberg and C. Ando.  
Winter.

**HIST 25613. Saints and Sinners: Christianity in the Ancient Near East.** R. Payne. Winter.

**LATN 25000. Augustine's Confessions.** P. White. Winter.

Substantial selections from books 1 through 9 of the *Confessions* are read in Latin (and all thirteen books in English), with particular attention to Augustine's style and thought. Further readings in English provide background about the historical and religious situation of the late fourth century AD.

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

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.

**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. O. Bashkin. 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).

**NEHC 20630. Introduction to Islamic Philosophy. P. Walker. Winter.**

This course offers an introduction to the terms and concepts current in Arabic philosophical writings in the classical period of Islamic thought (roughly 9<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century). It begins with the movement to translate Greek texts into Arabic and the debate among Muslims about the validity of philosophy versus revelation. From a close reading of key works (in English) by important philosophers such as al-Kind, al-Rz, al-Sijistn, al-Frb, Ibn Sn (Avicenna), al-Ghazzl, Ibn Bija, Ibn Tufayl, Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Suhraward, and Mull adr, a series of lectures will follow the career of philosophy in the Islamic world, first as a 'foreign' science and then, later, as selectively rejected but also substantially accepted as a natural component of sophisticated discourse.

**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.

**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.** V. Friedman. 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 2014

**ARTH 16709. Islamic Art and Architecture, 1100 to 1500.** P. Berlekamp. Spring.

This course surveys the art and architecture of the Islamic world from 1100 to 1500. In that period, political fragmentation into multiple principalities challenged a deeply rooted ideology of unity of the Islamic world. The course of the various principalities competed not only in politics but also in the patronage of architectural projects and of arts (e.g., textiles, ceramics, woodwork, arts of the book). While focusing on the central Islamic lands, we consider regional traditions from Spain to India and the importance for the arts of contacts with China and the West.

**ENGL 15500. Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales.** M. Miller. 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.

**CLCV 26713. Mythical History, Paradigmatic Figures: Caesar, Augustus, Charlemagne, Napoleon.** M. Lowrie and R. Morrissey. Spring.

What is the process by which some historical figures take on mythical proportions? This course examines four case studies of conquerors who attained sovereign power in times of war (conquest, civil war, revolution), who had a foundational role in empire-building, and who consciously strove to link themselves to the divine and transcendent. Their immense but ambiguous legacies persist to this day. Although each is distinct as a historical individual, taken together they merge to form a paradigm of the exceptional leader of epic proportions. Each models himself on exemplary predecessors: each invokes and reinvents myths of origin and projects himself as a model for the future. Basic themes entail mythic history, empire, the exceptional figure, modernity's fascination with antiquity, and the paradox of the imitability of the inimitable.

**HIST 21303. Byzantine Historians.** W. Kaegi. Spring.

Reading and Analysis of Byzantine Historians and Byzantine Historical Thought. Includes Procopius Michael Attaleiates, Michael Psellos, Anna Comnena, Niketas Choniates. Lectures and Discussion. Two take home essays.

**HIST 26005. Colloquium: Sources for the Study of Islamic History.** J. Woods. Spring.

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 pre-modern 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.

**HIST 29902. Tolkien: Medieval and Modern.** R. Fulton. Spring.

J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is one of the most popular works of imaginative literature of the twentieth century. This course seeks to understand its appeal by situating Tolkien's creation within the context of Tolkien's own work as both artist and scholar alongside its medieval sources and modern parallels. Themes to be addressed include the problem of genre and the uses of tradition; the nature of history and its relationship to place; the activity of creation and its relationship to language, beauty, evil, and power; the role of monsters in imagination and criticism; the twinned challenges of death and immortality, fate and free will; and the interaction between the world of "faerie" and religious belief.

**ITAL 24114. Dante, Petrarca and the Invention of Vertical Poetry.** L. Leonardi. Spring

After the break with canonical forms of verse and stanza, at least starting from the twentieth-century avant-garde, poetry was differentiated from prose essentially in its page layout. However the isolation of the verse on the line is not at all the norm in the medieval period, when the transmission of lyric texts was, similarly to prose, continuously written across the lines. Where, when and why did poetry take its modern, vertical form? Taught in Italian.

**ITAL 26014. Romance Philology: Method(s) of Textual Criticism.** L. Leonardi. Spring.

This course fulfills the methods requirement for Medieval Studies majors. The study of medieval manuscripts as objects (synchrony), rather than as witnesses of a textual tradition (diachrony) leads to a weakness of the philological approach faced with the fragmentation of medieval culture. If we do not want to follow the mainstream of contemporary cultural policies, seeing in manuscripts only their value as 'cultural heritage,' we should foster a methodological strategy that emphasizes anachronism as an achievement of modern historiography. A return to the text as an objective of philology that cannot be relinquished, and to the manuscript as its irreplaceable, instrumental object: this is the point this class would like to recover. And to do so it is necessary to call into question the preconception, as reassuring as it is misleading, of the 'historicity' of the single witness. Examples will be taken from the recent editions of the Sicilian poets, from *Fiore*, which has been attributed to Dante, and from the recent editions of the *Mort le roi Artu* and - to highlight the difference - from the edition of *Guiron le Courtois* in progress. Taught in English.

**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.