

Medieval Studies Program Undergraduate Courses

Listed below were the Medieval Studies Program course selections for the 2015-2016 academic year. If you have questions about what courses apply toward the major or the minor, please contact the department chair.

Autumn 2015

ARTH 17121. The Art of Leonardo da Vinci. C. Cohen (A)

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 (e.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.

ARTH 25105. Chichen Itza. C. Brittenham (A)

The Art and Architecture of Chichen Itza. This course investigates the visual culture of Chichen Itza, one of ancient Mesoamerica's most cosmopolitan cities. Thriving in the centuries after the collapse of the lowland Maya kingdoms, the city of Chichen Itza articulated a new political and cosmological vision of authority, drawing on traditions from all over Mesoamerica, past and present, to create an innovative visual synthesis. This course will investigate Chichen Itza's most famous architectural and sculptural

monuments in the light of new epigraphic and chronological discoveries, paying close attention to questions of innovation, repetition, and serial production.

CLCV 23712. Aquinas on God, Being, and Human Nature. S. Meredith (P/T)

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.

ENGL 15807. Medieval Nature: Philosophy, Eros, Politics. A. Millan (P/T)

For medieval writers, 'nature' was a site of desire, utopian longing, personal and political transformation, and, at times, repugnance and alienation. In this philosophically inflected course, we will trace medieval discourse on nature through a wide range of genres: short stories, medical treatises, travel narratives, and, above all, allegory.

******NOTE: ONLY FOR LONDON PROGRAM******

ENGL 20105. London Program: Chaucer, the Canterbury Tales. C. von Nolcken (L)

We will examine Chaucer's art as revealed in *The Canterbury Tales*. Although our main emphasis will be on reading the individual tales, we will also pay close attention to Chaucer's framing narrative of pilgrimage, and during the course we ourselves will journey to Canterbury. In addition to reading Chaucer's own text, we will consider some of his sources together with other medieval works providing relevant background, and we will use London to help us explore the Tales' setting in time and space. Students should visit neighborhoods Chaucer would have known, the National Gallery to view that supreme example of English Gothic painting, the Wilton Diptych, and Westminster Abbey to view the tombs and effigies of Chaucer's royal patrons as well as the tomb of Chaucer himself. Students need have no previous knowledge of Middle English.

HIST 21703. Byzantine Empire, 1025 to 1453. W. Kaegi (H)

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*, and the histories of Michael Psellos and Anna Comnena. Course grade will include a final examination and a ten-page paper.

HIST 22111. Mary and Mariology. R. Fulton Brown (P/T)

More than a saint but less than God, no figure of Christian devotion other than Jesus Christ has inspired as much piety or excited as much controversy as the Virgin Mother of

God. In this course, we will study the development of the Virgin Mary's image and cult from her descriptions in the Gospels through the modern papal definitions of Marian dogma so as to come to some understanding how and why this woman "about whom the Gospels say so little" has become a figure of such popular and theological significance. We will consider both the medieval flowering of her cult and its dismantling, transformation, transmission, and reinvention in the centuries since.

MUSI 26800. Sixteenth-Century Counterpoint. (A)

This course is an introduction to the theory, analysis, and composition of modal counterpoint using texts that uses examples by sixteenth-century theorists (i.e., Zarlino) and composers (i.e., Josquin, Lassus, Palestrina). Techniques include cantus firmus, canon, and modal mixture. Students read sources, analyze passages, and compose (and improvise) counterpoint in two to four parts.

Winter 2015

ARTH 14200. From Missionary Images to Image Explosion: Introduction to Medieval Art. A. Kumler (A)

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 (A)

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 course 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 18700. The Arts of Arabic and Persian Manuscripts. P. Berlekamp (A, M)

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 22611. The Politics of Luxury in the Middle Ages. A. Kumler (A, H)

This course explores conspicuous consumption, the love of costly things, the lure and power of precious materials, and the important role played by the arts in the definition of status, authority, influence, and pleasure in the Middle Ages. Investigating a series of episodes from the history of medieval luxury, we will explore how precious objects participated in western medieval theological conceptions of gifting as well as politically

charged "secular" practices of medieval gift-culture, and how the patronage of works of art served a variety of ideological and social aims, and we will scrutinize the implicit aesthetics and notions of value congealed in works of art and "ars." Not least, the course aims to interrogate how a changing politics of luxury contributed to changing conceptions of the status of the artwork and the artist over the course of the Middle Ages.

ARTH 28002. Islamic Art and Architecture of the Medieval Perso-Turkic Courts (11th–15th Centuries). P. Berlekamp (A)

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.

CLCV 22115. Carolingian Renaissance. M. Allen (H)

The Carolingian Renaissance flowered thanks to the leadership of a new royal (AD 751) and then (from Christmas 800) imperial dynasty. Expansive political and cultural initiatives reshaped Europe into a distinct space, not least, though paradoxically, through its fragmentation after AD 843. We shall study the actors and trends at play, the important role of Classical models and Latin book culture, and consider the relevant sources in all their physical, textual, and imaginative variety.

CLCV 24215. Roman Art II: Late Antique and Early Christian Art and Architecture. P. Crowley (A)

This course offers an introductory survey of the art and architecture of the Roman world starting from the beginning of the second century AD, when the Empire reached its point of greatest expansion. It then proceeds through a period of relative peace and prosperity before witnessing the effects of a political, social, and economic "crisis" of the third century AD, the adoption of Christianity as the state religion, and the tremendous consequences of moving the capital from Rome to Constantinople. Throughout the course, we will consider how the built environments and artifacts produced by an incredible diversity of peoples and places can make visible larger trends of historical, political, and cultural change. What, we will begin and end by asking, is Roman about Roman art?

HIST 23516. Medieval Masculinity. J. Lyon (H)

This course will introduce students to concepts of masculinity in the Middle Ages, especially in the period between approximately 1,000 and 1,500 CE. Special attention will be paid to medieval notions of honor and to the roles that knighthood, chivalry, and monasticism played in promoting (often contradictory) masculine ideals. The course has two main goals. First, to assess and discuss recent scholarly debates and arguments about medieval masculinity. Second, to read closely a variety of medieval sources—including Arthurian literature, chronicles of the Crusades, biographical texts, and monastic histories—in order to develop new perspectives on masculinity during the Middle Ages.

NEAA 20521. Archaeology of Coptic and Islamic Egypt. D. Whitcomb (M)

This course is an exploration of the continuities of Egyptian culture after the Ptolemaic period down to modern times, a span of over 2000 years. Our emphasis is on the archaeology of Coptic and Islamic Egypt. The focus is on the role of medieval archaeology in amplifying the history of economic and social systems. It is this connective quality of archaeology that contributes to an understanding of Pharaonic culture and fills the gap between ancient and modern Egypt.

PHIL 23600. Medieval Philosophy. J. Stern (P/T)

This course involves a study of the development of philosophy in the West in the first thirteen centuries of the common era with focus on Neoplatonism. Early Christian philosophical, Islamic Kalam, Jewish philosophy, and Christian philosophical theology. Readings include works of Plotinus, Augustine, Al-Farabi, Avicenna, Maimonides, Averroes, and Thomas Aquinas.

PHIL 26000. History of Philosophy II: Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy. B. Callard (P/T)

A survey of the thought of some of the most important figures of this period, including Anselm, Aquinas, Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.

RLST 28310. Byzantium: Art, Religion, Culture I. K. Krause (A, H)

Part one of a two-quarter introductory seminar exploring works of art and architecture as primary sources for Byzantine civilization. Through the close investigation of artifacts of different media and techniques, students will gain insight into the artistic production of the Byzantine Empire from its foundation in the 4th century A.D. to the Ottoman conquest in 1453. We will employ different methodological approaches and resources that are relevant for the fruitful investigation of artifacts in their respective cultural setting. In order to fully assess the pivotal importance of the visual arts in Byzantine culture, we will address a wide array of topics, including art and ritual, patronage, the interrelation of art and text, classical heritage, art and theology, Iconoclasm, etc.

SPAN 21703. Introducción a las literaturas hispánicas: textos españoles clásicos. F. de Armas (L)

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.

Spring 2015

ARTH 16213. Andean Art and Architecture. C. Brittenham (A)

The civilizations of ancient Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador challenge many of our assumptions about the nature of art and society. In this course, we will study traditional Andean forms of art, such as textiles and landscape modification, as well as more familiar media, such as architecture and sculpture. Focusing on the art of the Chavín, Nazca, Moche, Tiwanaku, and Inca civilizations, among others, we will consider the interplay between naturalism and abstraction, imperial control and regional diversity, and the challenges of the Andean environment. In addition to a textbook, we will read scholarly articles addressing aspects of Andean art history. Students will have the opportunity to hone their research and writing skills through short writing assignments and a final research paper drawing on objects in Chicago's superb museum collections.

ARTH 25707. Art and Death in Pre-Modern China. W. Lin (A)

What the heck does art have to do with death? Most obviously, this course examines artifacts manufactured and used specifically for mortuary purposes in pre-modern China. It investigates how art is defined through the context and space of the dead and what significance art had when produced and when it functions as such. Less obviously, this course will also study how and why art was ever produced in relation to death, asking: In what ways does art express, convey, or discourse on abstract notions and ideas of death, and can we come to an understanding of a visual and material culture, or cultures, of death in pre-modern China from such a study? Finally, what is the mortality of art itself in the context of Chinese art history?

ARTH 26302. Iconoclasm and Animation. J. Elsner (A, M)

This course will explore the fantasies of the animation of images both ancient and early Christian, both secular and sacred. The theme of animation will serve as the backdrop to examining the phenomenon of iconoclasm as an assault on the image from pre-Christian antiquity via Byzantium to the Protestant Reformation. The course will tackle both texts and images, the archaeological context of image-assault, and the conceptual (indeed theological) contexts within which such assault was both justified and condemned.

ENGL 15806. Early Medieval Literature in Multicultural Britain. C. von Nolcken (L)

We will read (in modern English translation) early medieval works composed in the several languages then current in the British Isles. Texts will include: from Old English, *Beowulf*, the *Battle of Maldon*, and selections from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*; from Old Norse, *Egil's Saga*, and selections from Eddic poetry; from Anglo-Norman French, the *Song of Roland* and selections from Geffrei Gaimar's *History of the English*;

from Old Irish, selections from the *Táin*, and *Bricriu's Feast*; from Welsh, "Culhwch and Olwen"; and from Latin, selections from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* and from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*. Students will write a term paper, and there will be a final examination.

HIST 12100. War in the Middle Ages. R. Fulton Brown (H)

In modern popular culture, the Middle Ages are often imaginatively synonymous with war: knights in shining armor, Vikings in their longships, Robin Hood with his longbow and "merry men." This lecture-discussion course seeks to complicate this image by examining warfare as a central fact of European civilized life. Problems to be addressed include the technology and economics of warfare, the sociology of warfare, major phases in the development of European warfare from the Carolingians through the Hundred Years' War, and the literary, legal, religious, and psychological significance of war for the development of European civilization.

NEAA 10630. Islamic Art and Architecture, 1100 to 1500. C. Berlekamp (A)

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.

NEHC 26016. The Medieval Persian Romance: Gorgani's Vis and Ramin. C. Cross (L)

This class is an inquiry into the medieval romance genre through the close and comparative reading of one of its oldest extant representatives, Gorgâni's *Vis & Râmin* (c. 1050). With roots that go back to Late Antiquity, this romance is a valuable interlocutor between the Greek novel and the Ovidian erotic tradition, Arabic love theory and poetics, and well-known European romances like *Tristan*, *Lancelot*, and *Cligès*: a sustained exploration of psychological turmoil and moral indecision, and a vivid dramatization of the many contradictions inherent in erotic theory, most starkly by the lovers' faithful adultery. By reading *Vis & Râmin* alongside some of its generic neighbors (*Kallirrhoe*, *Leukippe*, *Tristan*, *Cligès*), as well as the love-theories of writers like Plato, Ovid, Avicenna, Jâhiz, Ibn Hazm, and Andreas Cappellanus, we will map out the various kinds of literary work the romance is called upon to do, and investigate the myriad and shifting conceptions of romantic love as performance, subjectivity, and moral practice. An optional section introducing selections from the original text in Persian will be available if there is sufficient student interest.

RLST 28311. Byzantium: Art, Religion, Culture II. K. Krause (A, H)

Part two of a two-quarter introductory seminar exploring works of art and architecture as primary sources for Byzantine civilization. Through the close investigation of artifacts of different media and techniques, students will gain insight into the artistic production of the Byzantine Empire from its foundation in the 4th century A.D. to the Ottoman conquest in 1453. We will employ different methodological approaches and resources that are relevant for the fruitful investigation of artifacts in their respective cultural setting. In order to fully assess the pivotal importance of the visual arts in Byzantine culture, we will address a wide array of topics, including art and ritual, patronage, the interrelation of art and text, classical heritage, art and theology, Iconoclasm, etc.