MEDIEVAL STUDIES PROGRAM

The medieval studies program provides an interdisciplinary context for students who wish to study the European Middle Ages. Students normally concentrate on one of three fields: art history and archaeology, history and culture, or language and literature. They are also expected to do coursework in the other fields. In certain cases the program may also provide a framework for students wishing to cross the somewhat arbitrary temporal, topical, and geographical boundaries of medieval studies to consider such problems as the relationship between classical and medieval literature or art, or the broader history of the preindustrial European societies.

Students have a number of opportunities to experience medieval materials firsthand, including working with rare manuscripts in Special Collections, singing in the Collegium Musicum, or participating on an archaeological dig. The Medieval Studies Department brings distinguished visitors to campus each year to give public talks and to work one-on-one with students. Field trips to places such as the Cloisters Museum in New York City and to concerts in the nearby area foster a sense of community in addition to providing access to materials.

The skills typically acquired by medieval studies students—knowledge of European history, ability to analyze “foreign” texts, experience handling artifacts and manuscripts, and familiarity with Latin—provide good preparation for advanced degrees, whether in the humanities, law, or other professional schools.

FACULTY

Jane Alden
BA, Manchester University; MM, King’s College; PHD, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Associate Professor of Music; Associate Professor, Medieval Studies

Francesco Marco Aresu
MA, Indiana University Bloomington; MA, Stanford University; PHD, Harvard University
Assistant Professor of Italian; Assistant Professor, Medieval Studies

Michael Armstrong Roche
BA, Harvard University; MA, Harvard University; PHD, Harvard University
Associate Professor of Spanish; Associate Professor, Medieval Studies; Associate Professor, Latin American Studies

Cecilia Miller
BA, LeTourneau College; DPHIL, Oxford University; MPHIL, University of St Andrews
Professor of History; Co-Chair, College of Social Studies; Tutor, College of Social Studies; Professor, Medieval Studies; Professor, Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Ruth Nisse
BA, Columbia University; PHD, University of California, Berkeley
Professor of English; Associate Professor, Medieval Studies

Jeff Rider
BA, Yale University; MA, University of Chicago; PHD, University of Chicago
Professor of French; Professor, Medieval Studies

Gary Shaw
BA, McGill University; DPHIL, Oxford University
Professor of History; Associate Editor, History and Theory; Professor, Medieval Studies

Jesse Wayne Torgerson
BA, Biola University; MA, University of California, Berkeley; PHD, University of California, Berkeley
Assistant Professor of Letters; Assistant Professor, Medieval Studies; Assistant Professor, History

DEPARTMENTAL ADVISING EXPERTS

Clark Maines, Ruth Nisse, Jeff Rider, Gary Shaw

- Undergraduate Medieval Studies Major (catalog.wesleyan.edu/departments/mdst/ugrd-mdst)
- Undergraduate Medieval Studies Minor (catalog.wesleyan.edu/departments/mdst/ugrd-mdst-mn)

MNST125 Love, Sex, and Marriage in Renaissance Europe
This writing-intensive seminar will compare literary and artistic depictions of love, sex, and marriage during the Renaissance by authors and artists from England, Spain, France, Flanders, Germany, and Italy. We will read both male and female writers in genres ranging from poetry, the short story, and theater to the essay, the travel narrative, and the sermon. We will also examine other arts such as painting, sculpture, and the decorative arts (e.g., wedding chests). Questions we will explore include, but are not limited to, How were love and marriage related during the Renaissance? What role did sex, gender, and violence play in relationships between couples and within society? How do gender and genre affect the ways in which love, sex, and marriage are depicted? How did cultural differences influence writers’ and artists’ interpretations of love, sex, and marriage? And what about same-sex unions? Other topics will include virginity and celibacy, erotic literature, family and class structures, and divorce.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: FIST123, COL123, FGSS123
Prereq: None

MNST128 Constantinople: From Rome to Istanbul
Constantinople was founded by a Roman Emperor Constantine the Great in 330. From there the story gets complicated. Should we account for Constantinople from a Western point of view and call it Roman? Or, should we label it by its Eastern religion and call it Christian? Or, should we see Constantinople’s true nature in a transnational Hellenic culture and call it Byzantine? Then, once we have chosen a story to explain the city’s nature, how should it end? With the pillaging fourth crusade in 1204, or the Ottoman sack in 1453, or is Constantinople yet alive in modern Istanbul? This course diverges from such narrative frameworks by accounting for Constantinople as, first and foremost, a city. Together we will explore the rich, unevenly distributed, textual and material relics of this medieval metropolis and contribute our finds to a collaborative digital database. Students will draw from this database to craft their own histories, applying both imagination and analysis into a believable and reliable story conveying the diversities and paradoxes of life in The City.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-COL
Identical With: HIST230, COL128
Prereq: None
MDST135 Medicine and Art: Viewing the Medieval Body
How did artists understand the body in the later Middle Ages, and how did this help to shape medical, spiritual, and philosophical views of what it meant to be human? What role did art play in the dissemination of scientific knowledge and religious thought, and were these views necessarily in conflict? This course will explore pre-modern depictions of the human body in works of art, scientific treatises, and visual ephemera produced and circulated in the pre-modern period (1150–1550). Topics to be addressed include the visual culture of life, death, and the afterlife; abnormal bodies: saints and monsters; the role of art in illness and healing; and medieval robotics and artificial bodies. Case studies will be drawn from European and Islamic works of art.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ART
Identical With: ARHA135
Prereq: None

MDST151 European Architecture to 1750
This course is an introduction to architecture and related visual art as an expression of premodern Western European civilizations, from ancient Greece through the early 18th century, including Roman, Early Christian, Byzantine, early medieval, Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque architecture, landscapes, and cities. The focus is on analysis of form in architecture and the allied arts. Emphasis is on relationships between style and patronage. In each era, how does architecture help to constitute its society’s identity? What is the relationship between style and ideology? How do architects respond to the works of earlier architects, either innovatively or imitatively? How do patrons respond to the works of their predecessors, either locally or distantly? How are works of architecture positioned within those structures of power that the works, in turn, help to define? How do monuments celebrate selected aspects of history and suppress others? How were the major buildings configured, spatially and materially? Emphasis will be on continuities and distinctions between works across time, seeing Western traditions as a totality over centuries. Lectures and readings convey different historiographic approaches to these issues.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ART
Identical With: ARHA151
Prereq: None

MDST203 Introduction to The Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)
The Hebrew Bible is one of the most influential texts in the world. From antiquity to the present, it has served as a source of philosophical, literary, and artistic reflection. It is a fascinating document, combining narrative, poetry, law, prophetic proclamations, and puzzling parables. What kind of book is the Hebrew Bible? Who wrote it and why? How do we approach such a text across the distance of time? Through a systematic reading from the very beginning, we will place the Bible in its historical context while giving special attention to the philosophical and literary questions it raises: Is obedience to authority always justified? Why do good people suffer unjustly? What gender is God? In answering these and other questions, you will gain an understanding of the ways contesting interpretations make authoritative claims.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RELI
Identical With: RELI201, CJST244
Prereq: None

MDST204 Medieval Europe
This introductory lecture course is a history of European politics, culture, and institutions from the end of the Roman Imperial era through 1520. Within a chronological framework we will focus on the creation of kingdoms and government; the growth and crises of papal-dominated Christianity; its crusades and its philosophy; the rise and role of the knight, lady, and aristocratic culture; masculinity and gender relations; the crises of the later Middle Ages, including the Black Death, heresy, mysticism, and war. These all contributed to the beginnings of the Renaissance and the Reformation, events that ended the medieval period. We will also at least glance at the borderlands of Europe, the edges of Islamic and Orthodox worlds.
The course will also provide students with basic introductory exposure to the ideas and methods of the digital humanities through course illustrations and discussions. This will probably include exercises in visualizing the past, exposure to geographic information systems (GIS) analysis, text-mining, and network analysis.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: ENGL207
Prereq: None

MDST207 Chaucer and His World
In this course, we will read Chaucer’s fascinating dream-visions, The BOOK OF THE DUCHESS and THE HOUSE OF FAME and his best-known work, THE CANTERBURY TALES. We will also read selections from Chaucer’s sources and consider how he adapts these texts in his own literary works. Some of the topics we will explore are the various genres of Chaucer’s poetry (allegory, epic, romance, satire), medieval ideas about psychology and dreams, the ideology of chivalry, Chaucer’s reinvention of the classical world, and views of gender and sexuality. All readings will be in Middle English, so we will read slowly and carefully, with attention to the language.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL207
Prereq: None

MDST209 The Art and Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England, 400–1100
This course will consider the art, architecture, and archaeology of the British Isles from the withdrawal of the Roman legions in the fifth century to the end of the reign of Henry II in the 12th century. It will draw on material from church history to help understand the transition from paganism to Christianity and the struggle between Celtic and Roman Catholicism. It will draw on material from history and archaeology to help understand the complex relations between the waves of invading Saxons and the native English in the early medieval period, the Vikings in the late 9th and 10th centuries and the Norman invasion in 1066. Finally, the course will focus on the development of towns and on the place and role of both royal commissions and parish architecture in the life of those towns.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ART
Identical With: ARCP215, ARHA215
Prereq: None

MDST212 Wesleyan University Collegium Musicum
The Collegium Musicum is a performance ensemble dedicated to exploring and performing the diverse vocal and instrumental repertories of the medieval, Renaissance, and baroque periods of European music history. Emphasis is given to the study of musical style, performance practice, singing one-on-a-part, and excellence in performance. Various cultural aspects of the societies that produced the music under study are simultaneously explored; participants will
work with primary source materials, such as facsimiles of musical manuscripts, as well as literary and historical writings.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-MUSC
Identical With: MUSC438
Prereq: None

MDST213 Van Eyck to Velázquez: A New Look at Old Masters
This course investigates the art of Northern European and Iberian art in the early modern period (1400–1700). Artists thrived in the lands outside of Italy as art markets expanded, new genres arose to appeal to diversified audiences, and changes in religious belief and practices invigorated the market for devotional art. The establishment of overseas empires brought wealth and exotic goods to the continent while exposing artists to new ideas and new ways of picturing the world. Add to this technical innovations such as the development of oil painting and introduction of canvas supports, and the stage was set for the emergence of the great masters whose works we will encounter in this course—including Rogier van der Weyden, Jan van Eyck, Pedro Berruguete, Hieronymus Bosch, Albrecht Dürer, Pieter Bruegel, Rembrandt van Rijn, Diego Velázquez, Johannes Vermeer, and Francisco Zurbarán.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ART
Identical With: ARHA209
Prereq: None

MDST214 Introduction to the New Testament
The purpose of this course is to provide an introduction to those writings of the earliest Christians that came to be included in the New Testament. These writings will be examined critically with respect to their social-historical origin, religious content, and place within the development of early Christianities. Interpreting early Christian texts constitutes the most important task in the study of the New Testament. We will, therefore, focus on a close reading of the New Testament in light of historical situations and social contexts in the Greco-Roman world, having as one of the chief aims of the course the acquisition of critical skills in reading and understanding the New Testament. In the process, we will necessarily engage secondary scholarship and wider theoretical interests, thereby providing students with a general introduction to the academic study of religion.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RELI
Identical With: RELI212
Prereq: None

MDST215 Politics and Piety in Early Christianities
The first four centuries of the Christian era will illustrate the lively twists and turns of social experimentation that set the stage for the emergence of the Christian religion. This course will be concerned with fundamental arenas of intellectual and social conflict, including constructions of Christian myths of apostolic origins and authority; the appropriation of the Jewish epic; the challenge of gnosticism; the domestication of Greek philosophy; interpretations of sexuality and gender; experiences of martyrdom and prosecution; theological reflections on human nature and society; and the ways Christians were seen by Romans. The objective will be to grasp the beginnings of the Christian religion as a human achievement of cultural consequence.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: RELI215, CCIV212
Prereq: None

MDST216 The Art and Architecture of Medieval Pilgrimage, 1100-1500
This course introduces students to the art and architecture of the later Middle Ages in Europe and the Mediterranean region as experienced by the travelers who traversed the great pilgrimage routes that crisscrossed the continent, from Canterbury to Compostela, Rome, and Jerusalem. Pilgrimage dramatically shaped the medieval landscape, leaving indelible marks on the natural and built environment. From great cathedrals to humble shrines, luxury goods to cheap souvenirs, lavish illuminated manuscripts to rough traveler’s guides, the visual culture of medieval pilgrimage will be explored from a variety of perspectives and placed into an appropriate social, cultural, and historical context. Comparative discussions of pilgrimage in Judaism, Islam, and secular culture will feature alongside the cultural traditions of European Christianity.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ART
Identical With: ARHA214
Prereq: None

MDST217 Lost Renaissances: Art & Architecture of Medieval Italy and the Mediterranean
This course traces the multiple though now largely forgotten renaissances, or flourishings of cultural and artistic activity fueled largely by the recuperation of the classical past, in Medieval Italy and across the Mediterranean world. We will examine works of art and architecture of Italian centers including Rome, Sicily, Venice, Pisa, Padua, Siena, and Florence. With an emphasis on the art of intercultural relations in the medieval Mediterranean, we will explore and discuss how the intensive interactions of Roman (pre-Christian), Islamic, and Jewish communities during the medieval period, ca. 300–1300, were essentially shaped by works of art.

Together, we will debate the relevancy of present-day ideas in art and politics for understanding past cultures and compare them with present cultural and political contexts. Students will engage with and critically assess the notion of the “Middle Ages” and its many manifestations in the context of the Mediterranean world. We will explore the meaning of pilgrimage in a variety of contexts, including its sacred and secular dimensions, and its role as a means of social and cultural expression. We will consider the visual culture of pilgrimage in a variety of contexts, including its sacred and secular dimensions, and its role as a means of social and cultural expression. We will explore the meaning of pilgrimage in a variety of contexts, including its sacred and secular dimensions, and its role as a means of social and cultural expression.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ART
Identical With: ARHA212
Prereq: None

MDST221 Allegory and Devotion in Medieval and Renaissance Music
This course investigates the mystical and visionary aspects of religious music alongside the secular development of the vernacular love lyric. We explore the tensions between individual and communal practices, authorship and artistry, power and politics, and the multiple social functions of music-making. Students learn about the musical legacy from Ancient Greece, tracing its influence through the Middle Ages to the end of the Renaissance. We cover the music of worship, romance, public ceremony, and private entertainment, observing the shifting balance between innovation and tradition. We study the relationship of notational systems to memory, become familiar with cultures that are remote from ours, and gain a historical respect for difference. By engaging with the deep past, you acquire skills not only to appreciate the musical creativity of a
MDST224 Medieval Drama: Read It and Be in It

It was and still is revolutionary theater! This course will examine early English drama in its many forms, from the civic mystery cycles of the 15th century to the morality plays Mankind and Everyman. We will cover topics including the role of drama in defining communal identities, dramatic interpretations of gender, and the responses of drama to contemporary social and religious controversies. Most readings will be in modernized and annotated Middle English, so we will pay close attention to language.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ITAL224, COL224, FIST224
Prereq: None

MDST225 European Intellectual History to the Renaissance

This class will examine some of the major texts in Western thought from ancient Greece to the Renaissance. Emphasis will be placed on close reading and analysis of the texts.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST215
Prereq: None

MDST226 The Cosmos of Dante’s Comedy

This course provides an in-depth introduction to Dante Alighieri’s 14th-century masterpiece as a point of entry to the history of Western literature, philosophy, and science. The core of the course consists of an intensive study of Dante’s encyclopedic poem in relation to the culture and history of Medieval Europe. Major topics include: representations of the afterlife; the soul’s relation to the divine; concepts of modernity and antiquity in the Middle Ages; notions of authorship and authority during the 13th and 14th centuries; vernacular poetics and the medieval genre system; the culture and materiality of manuscripts in the Middle Ages; gender and genre in Dante and the 12th- to 14th-century lyric; intertextuality and imitation; classical and medieval language theory; the role of the classics in the Middle Ages; Dante’s concepts of governance; myth and theology in Dante’s Christian poetics; and the reception to Dante’s work from the 14th-century to present. The course combines a close analysis of Dante’s literary strategies with exercises in critical writing and in multimedia translation and adaptation, aimed at prompting critical reflection on the ways in which present cultural practices are built upon the practices of the past. This course is conducted in English; no previous knowledge of Italian is required.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: ITAL226, FIST226, RELI218, COL234
Prereq: None

MDST227 Heroes, Lovers, and Swindlers: Medieval and Renaissance Spanish Literature and History

This course is designed to develop students’ ability to make informed and creative sense of four fascinating, complex, and influential medieval and Renaissance Spanish texts in their multiple (literary, historical) contexts: the "national" epic EL CID (12th–13th century); the bawdy and highly theatrical prose dialogue known as LA CELESTINA (1499); the anonymous LAZARILLO (1554), the first picaresque novel; and María de Zayas’s proto-feminist novella THE WAGES OF VICE (1647). Through these and selected historical readings, the course is also intended to provide students with a basic knowledge of Spanish culture (in its plurality) from the 11th through the 17th centuries, the texture of everyday life, and the larger movements of long-term historical change. We will draw on literature and history to imagine the world of chivalry and crusade in medieval Spain of "the three religions of the book" (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam); of mercantile values, courtly love, and prostitution in the Renaissance city; of social injustice and religious hypocrisy in imperial Spain; and of the exacerbated gender and caste tensions that followed from the political crises of the 1640s. We will reflect on the interplay of literature and history in our efforts to come to grips with a past both familiar and strange; address the crossing of linguistic, artistic, ethnic, religious, caste, and gender boundaries that has long been a conspicuous feature of Spanish society; and consider what texts and lives of the past might still have to say to us today. No prior historical or
MDST234 Days and Knights of the Round Table
This course will study the evolution of the Arthurian legend from its origins in sixth-century Britain to its development in the 12th-century romances of Chrétien de Troyes. The course will look at the way the various developments of the legend were rooted in specific historical circumstances and yet contributed to the elaboration of a rich and complex narrative that has been appropriated in different ways by each succeeding period of Western European culture.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: FREN330, FREN220
Prereq: None

MDST235 Days and Knights of the Round Table
This course will study the evolution of the Arthurian legend from its origins in sixth-century Britain to its fullest development in the 12th-century French Lancelot-Grail cycle. The course will look at the way the various developments of the legend were rooted in specific historical circumstances and yet contributed to the elaboration of a rich and complex narrative that has been appropriated in different ways by each succeeding period of Western European culture.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: FREN334
Prereq: None

MDST236 Early Medieval Art: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in the Mediterranean, 300–1200
This course explores the art and culture of the Mediterranean region from late antiquity through the 12th century. Case studies of four dynamic cities—Islamic Córdoba, Byzantine Istanbul, Christian Ravenna, and multifaith Jerusalem—will guide our understanding of this pivotal period. Attention will be given to the balance between secular and sacred art and architecture, debates over figural and nonfigural imagery, and relations between majority and minority cultures around the Mediterranean basin. Topics for discussion include iconoclasm and the triumph of the image, imperial ambitions and the shaping of the landscape, and the circulation of luxury goods as a tool of cultural transformation.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ART
Identical With: ARHA211
Prereq: None

MDST237 Art of Love: Expressions of Eros in Early Modern Italy
Medieval and Renaissance authors believed that God had created the universe "with love," and therefore they considered the role of love in nearly every facet of their lives. Writers, philosophers, and theologians debated what role love played in the relationships between the human and divine, physical and metaphysical, individual and society, and sex and compassion, as well as what role love played in the creation of art itself. In this course, students will examine notions of love and sex in relationship to a variety of cosmological, literary, and existential early-modern issues. Students will first be introduced to the origins of erotic literature—for example, the Bible, Latin elegy, and medieval social codes of behavior. Students will then read selections of the Italian lyric tradition, as well as works by Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, the so-called "Three Crowns" of vernacular eloquence. Finally, students will study the Neoplatonic-inspired erotic literature and art of the Renaissance.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: ITAL234
Prereq: None

MDST238 Mystics and Militants: Medieval Women Writers
In this class we will read a wide range of works written by European women between ca. 1100–1400, including courtly, devotional, and polemical texts. The course will explore ideologies of gender in the Middle Ages and examine the ways in which our authors confronted the misogynist discourses of their eras with learning and imagination. We will consider such topics as constructions of sexuality and the body, "courtly love," mystical religious experience, heresies, humanism, and utopian realms. In short, we will read works by women who created their own forms of authority and in doing so, both influenced and defied the authorities of their time.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL232, FGSS224
&mdash; and reviled. It is a book about the life-enhancing (and endangering)
and Moorish novels; the novella; verse forms; drama; and even the ways
literary genre of its time: chivalric, pastoral, picaresque, sentimental, adventure,
QUIXOTE also reimagines virtually every fashionable, popular, and disreputable
novel and fountainhead of one of the great modern myths of individualism. DON
Cervantes is known chiefly for DON QUIXOTE, often described as the first modern
MDST254 Cervantes
Prereq:
Identical With:
Gen Ed Area:
Credits:
Grading:
Offering:

This course primarily deals with the political, intellectual, and social history of the
16th century. Special emphasis will be placed on the unique cultural forms
from the 12th to the 16th centuries as well as modern historical works about
this period. We will also view a couple of historical films in order to develop our
visual imagination.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: COL327, SPAN236
Prereq: None

MDST257 Knights, Fools, and Lovers: An Introduction to Medieval and
Renaissance French Culture
The study of history and past literature provides intellectual, psychological
and emotional resources that make one more resilient in adapting to new
circumstances, enable one to see new possibilities of being-in-the-world, and
provide new capacities for self-understanding. A knowledge of the European
past, moreover, can be an advantage for people seeking to study, live, or work in
Europe. This course will help students develop those resources and knowledge
through a study of medieval chivalry, the Renaissance carnival, and medieval
and Renaissance poetry. We will read both literary and historical works written
from the 12th to the 16th centuries as well as modern historical works about
this period. We will also view a couple of historical films in order to develop our
visual imagination.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: FREN230
Prereq: None

MDST257 Romans and Christians: The World of Late Antiquity
The emperor Diocletian’s administrative and financial reforms, closely followed
by the conversion of Constantine to Christianity, mark a watershed in the
history of the late Roman Empire. From AD 284 (accession of Diocletian) until
the establishment of the Germanic successor kingdoms (roughly in the sixth
century)—the period known as late antiquity—the Roman West presents a
fascinating picture of cultural change. In this course we will study the period
(fourth to sixth century) from three different perspectives: the conversion
of Romans to Christians and of Christians to “Romans”; the material world
of late antiquity—especially the changes to the city of Rome—and the art,
arquitecture, and literature of the period; and the rise of the cult of the saints
and of monasticism and the lives of the holy men and women. The course
will conclude with an epilogue pursuing these themes in Ostrogothic Italy and
Merovingian Gaul.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CLAS
Identical With: CCIV275, HIST250, RELI274
Prereq: None

MDST295 Love, War, and a Few Monsters: An Introduction to Medieval
Literature
This course engages with a selection of French and English literature from ca.
1200 to 1400, with an emphasis on the popular genres of romance and epic.
Our authors and works will include Marie de France’s and Béroul’s poems of
power of books and reading and the interplay of fiction and history and truths
and lies. Cervantes’ art remains fresh and unsettling, sparing no one and nothing,
including the author and his work. Distinguished by its commitment to the
serious business of humor, make-believe, and play, the novel is at once a literary
tour de force and a fascinating lens through which to examine the political,
social, religious, and intellectual debates of its moment. Characteristic themes
include social reality as artifact or fiction, the paradoxical character of truths, the
irreducible diversity of taste and perception, the call for consent in politics and
love, and personal identity (including gender) as a heroic quest. In this course,
we will read, discuss, and write about DON QUIXOTE, along with a sampling of
critical, philosophical, literary, and artistic responses it has inspired.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: ARHA216
Prereq: None

MDST225 The Invention of Fiction: Giovanni Boccaccio’s Decameron
In this course we read and discuss Giovanni Boccaccio’s Decameron (ca.
1353), a collection of 100 short stories traded by an “honest brigade” of 10
Florentine men and women. They tell each other these stories while sheltered
in a secluded villa as the plague of 1348 rages in Florence. We study the
Decameron as both a product and an interpretation of the world Boccaccio
inhabited. We examine the Decameron’s tales and narrative frame as a point
of entry into the cultural and social environment of medieval Italy. We look at
its scurrilous, amusing, and provocative innuendos as traces of erotic, religious,
ethnic, and cultural questions. We investigate the sexual exuberance of many
of Boccaccio’s tales and the tension between “high” and “low” culture. We
consider the development of mercantilism and literacy in early-modern Europe
and its emerging virtues of wit and self-reliance. We review the dynamics
of composition and reception in manuscript culture and the book’s adaptation
into different media, from illuminations to film. And by impersonating the
10 Florentines, we will reenact their pastime of telling stories and appreciate
Boccaccio’s remarkably modern sensibility and unsurpassed art of writing fiction.
This course is conducted in Italian.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ART
Identical With: ITAL235, COL255
Prereq: None

MDST251 Islamic Civilization: The Classical Age
This course surveys the historical development of Islamic civilization from the
time of the Prophet Muhammad to the rise of the “gunpowder empires” of the
16th century. Special emphasis will be placed on the unique cultural forms
this civilization developed and the emergence of Islam as a world religion. This
course primarily deals with the political, intellectual, and social history of the
Muslim peoples of the Middle East and only secondarily with Islam as a system of
religious belief.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST231
Prereq: None

MDST254 Cervantes
Cervantes is known chiefly for DON QUIXOTE, often described as the first modern
novel and fountainhead of one of the great modern myths of individualism. DON
QUIXOTE also reimagines virtually every fashionable, popular, and disreputable
literary genre of its time: chivalric, pastoral, picaresque, sentimental, adventure,
and Moorish novels; the novella; verse forms; drama; and even the ways
these kinds of literary entertainment were circulated and consumed, debated,
celebrated, and reviled. It is a book about the life-enhancing (and endangering)
magical and doomed love; contacts between Christians, Muslims, and Jews in the
Song of Roland and the Song of the Cid; and finally Chaucer's masterpiece The
Canterbury Tales. The topics that we will examine include the politics of chivalry
and crusading, medieval views of gender and sexuality, religious controversies,
and representations of the world beyond Europe.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL293
Prereq: None

MDST302 The Arthurian Legend on Film
This course will serve both as an introduction to the Arthurian legend and to
its cinematic representation since the 1940s. Medieval texts will be paired with films that are "based" -- more or less closely -- on them. We will
consider the ways in which these stories are told in literature and in film and the
differences between them. We will also consider the ways in which the legend
was used to address both medieval and modern preoccupations.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: FIST300
Prereq: None

MDST304 Medieval Archaeology
This course will serve as an introduction to the archaeology of medieval Europe.
Emphasis will be on methods and theory and on recent trends in the field.

Material will be drawn mainly from North European secular and ecclesiastical
sites. Students interested in participating in the Wesleyan summer archaeological
program in France are strongly urged to take this course.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ART
Identical With: ARC304, CCIV304, ARHA218
Prereq: None

MDST305 God After the Death of God: Postmodern Echoes of Premodern
Thought
The proclamation is well known: Nietzsche's madman cries throughout the
marketplace that "God himself is dead, and we have killed him." This message
has appeared on magazine covers, T-shirts, and coffee mugs--but what, exactly,
does it mean? Which "God" is it that "we" have killed, and how? Even more
puzzling, how is it that Christian thought is not entirely disabled by this claim?
This advanced seminar will explore various post-Nietzschean attempts to come
to terms with the eclipse of the very source of traditional Christian thinking and
will track the ways in which these strategies resonate with premodern, mystical
theologies.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RELI
Identical With: RELI304
Prereq: None

MDST308 Medievals on the Move: Pilgrimage, Jihad, Crusade, and Apocalypse
Medieval people moved: they traded and sent emissaries; they invaded and
migrated; they wandered, begged, and ascended the heavens; they went on crusade, jihad, and pilgrimage. This course will first analyze the most consistently
preserved sources on medieval movement: accounts of pious travel "for God's
sake and not for pleasure." We will then contextualize such accounts with two
other types of movement: the physical journeys of traders, diplomats, and
warriors, as well as the interiorized journeys of the prophet, the mystic, and
the storyteller. By encompassing this variety we will be able to pursue a larger
question: Can patterns of exchange across the physical and cultural barriers of
geography, language, religion, and governance reveal a more global medieval
world than we usually envision?

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-COL
Identical With: COL308, HIST303
Prereq: None

MDST310 Muslims, Jews, and Christians: Getting Along in Medieval Spain
For eight centuries, Muslims, Jews, and Christians lived side by side as neighbors
on the Iberian Peninsula in a carefully negotiated state of coexistence known as
"convivencia." While much of the written record is full of enmity, religious
pomem, and mutual suspicion, the artistic record tells another version, of lives
lived in close proximity giving rise to shared cultural practices, artistic tastes, and
long interludes of mutual well-being.

This seminar will explore the works produced by the pluralistic societies of
medieval Iberia from the perspectives of art, architecture, history, archaeology,
literature, and music. As we study renowned monuments such as the synagogues
of Toledo, the Alhambra, and the Way of St. James, we will learn to decode
elements such as dress and home décor, food and hygiene, and gardening and
agriculture, to expand our picture of culture and lived experience. Finally, we
will ask why "convivencia" ultimately failed, and how the medieval Iberian
experience can enlighten our own uneasy attempts at building a multicultural,
multi-confessional society.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ART
Identical With: ARHA310
Prereq: None

MDST315 Debate and Destruction: Jews and Christians in the Middle Ages
This course will consider relations between the Jewish minority and their
Christian neighbors in England before the Jews' expulsion in 1290. We will also
look at how the Jews are depicted in subsequent Christian writing. We will read
texts originally written in Hebrew, French, and Latin (all in translation) as well
as English, giving us a sense of the conversations that took place between two
groups that were both inextricably bound together and set apart by centuries of
conflict and persecution. Among the issues we will explore are the popularity
of Jewish-Christian debate as a literary form, the Crusades, gender roles and gender
fluidity, Jewish and Christian apocalyptic programs, and the curious afterlife of
Jews in Middle English literature..

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL351, RELI351, CJST351
Prereq: None

MDST353 Race, Ethnicity, and Religion in Medieval Literature
Why do white supremacists celebrate the European Middle Ages as a lost era of
racial and religious purity? This course approaches that question by considering
the invention of medieval ideas of race, ethnicity and religious difference. Our
focus will be on a selection of texts dealing with encounters -- real and imaginary
-- of Western European Christians with cultures from the Mongol Empire to
the Celtic "borderlands." The readings will begin historically with the Crusades
and the grisly chronicles written by Christian, Muslim, and Jewish authors.
Other genres will include religious polemics and travel accounts by missionaries,
spies, and colonial propagandists. We will also read some later romances and

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plays, fictions that re-imagine the past in terms of exoticized sexuality, racial transformation, cannibalism, and nationalist fantasy.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL353
Prereq: None

MDST373 From Courtly Love to Cannibalism: Medieval Romances
Romance is the narrative form of medieval sexualities and courtly love, but it also gives literary shape to social worlds in which a protagonist loses gender, skin color changes with religion, and a dog might be the hero of a tale. In this course, we will begin with texts that date from the Romance's origins in 12th-century France and continue with the form's development up to the well-known Middle English texts of the 14th century, including Sir Gawain and the Green Knight set at King Arthur's court. Some of the topics we will consider are Romance's engagement with the religious and ethnic conflicts of the Crusades, theories of good and bad government, and of course, Christian mysticism and the Holy Grail.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL373
Prereq: None

MDST401 Individual Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

MDST402 Individual Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

MDST403 Department/Program Project or Essay
Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

MDST404 Department/Program Project or Essay
Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

MDST407 Senior Tutorial (downgraded thesis)
Downgraded Senior Thesis Tutorial - Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor. Only enrolled in through the Honors Coordinator.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

MDST408 Senior Tutorial (downgraded thesis)
Downgraded Senior Thesis Tutorial - Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor. Only enrolled in through the Honors Coordinator.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

MDST409 Senior Thesis Tutorial
Topic to be arranged in consultation with tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

MDST410 Senior Thesis Tutorial
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT