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 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 culture, 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.

AFFILIATED FACULTY

Joseph Salvatore Ackley
AB, Dartmouth College; MA, New York University; PHD, New York University
Assistant Professor of Art History; Assistant Professor, Medieval Studies

Jane Alden
BMU, Manchester University; MMU, 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; Spanish Section Head; Associate Professor, Medieval Studies; Associate Professor, Latin American Studies

MICHAEL MEERE
BA, Northwestern University; MA, University of Virginia; PHD, University of Virginia
Assistant Professor of French; Assistant Professor, Medieval Studies

Cecilia Miller
BA, LeTourneau College; DPHIL, Oxford University; MPHIL, University of St Andrews
Professor of History; Professor, Medieval Studies; Tutor, College of Social Studies

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

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

Jeff Rider
• Undergraduate Medieval Studies Major (catalog.wesleyan.edu/departments/mdst/ugrd-mdst/)
• Undergraduate Medieval Studies Minor (catalog.wesleyan.edu/departments/mdst/ugrd-mdst-min/)

MDST125 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: RL&L123, COL123, FGSS123
Prereq: None

MDST125F Love, Sex, and Marriage in Renaissance Europe (FYS)
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, friendship, religion, family and class structures, and divorce.
Offering: Crosslisting
MDST128 Constantinople: A Digital Archaeology of Medieval Rome

Constantinople was founded as New Rome by Emperor Constantine the Great in 330. From there, its history is that of the heart of the medieval Roman (Byzantine) Empire, which lasted until 1453, when it was succeeded by the Ottoman Empire and the city was called Istanbul. Now, we're making medieval Constantinople come alive again with an interactive map-based digital encyclopedia. In this course—which requires no previous background in history—students will be introduced to the history of Constantinople and medieval Rome. Then, after exploring the textual and material relics of this medieval metropolis, students will pursue their own research interests by collaborating on a public digital database (https://arcg.is/0e4Lb4). At the end of the course, students will draw from this database to craft their own histories, applying both imagination and analysis into believable and reliable stories that convey the diversities and paradoxes of life in The City.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: RL&L123F, COL123F, FGSS123F, WLIT249F
Prereq: None

MDST131 Introduction to Western Art I: Ancient to Medieval

This course introduces the art and architecture of the Western world during the ancient and medieval periods. The artistic traditions of the Near East, Europe, and the wider Mediterranean will be surveyed from the prehistoric era to c. 1400 CE. Questions of style, content, function, and cultural and historical context will be examined, in addition to issues of religion, rulership, class, luxury, and the definition of art within its ancient and medieval milieus.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ART
Identical With: ARHA109
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
rise of Islam through the end of the Middle Ages. Our approach will seek out both intersections and comparisons: while attending to the borders, crossings, and overlaps that existed between medieval Christendom and the Islamic world, this course will also stage comparisons of key themes specific to these traditions, chief among them the picturing of divinity, the status of a sacred text, the organization of sacred space, and the practice of luxury. We will survey a series of historical encounters, including Byzantine Iconoclasm, the Crusades, and trade and diplomacy in general, before culminating in Renaissance Italy. Special emphasis will be reserved for key geographies of exchange, including Spain, Sicily, North Africa, and the Holy Land. Consideration will be given to the media of architecture, mosaic, painting, relief sculpture, decorated books, ivory, metalwork, and textiles. Questions of geography, ethnicity, the other, the idol, cultural translation, and the status of text vs. image will be threaded throughout. Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ART
Identical With: ARHA209
Prereq: None
MDST210 Medieval Art and Architecture, c. 1100-1400
This course introduces the art and architecture of Romanesque and Gothic Europe, c. 1100-1400, focusing especially on Germany, France, Italy, England, and Spain, as well as the wider Mediterranean. Architecture, painting, sculpture, and the luxury arts (e.g., metalwork, ivory, and textiles) will be our focus, supplemented by primary-source texts and secondary literature. Key themes will include sacred spaces, such as cathedrals and monasteries; sacred images and devotion; gender; pilgrimage and the relic; geography; the other; the monstrous and the miraculous; courtly love and chivalry; the relationship between Christianity, Judaism, and Islam; and premodern definitions of art, the artist, the donor, craftsmanship, and value.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ART
Identical With: ARHA210, RL&L210
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 healthy singing, musical style, performance practice, musical independence, and performance techniques. 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. Students also attend a weekly sectional rehearsal, scheduled according to availability by voice part.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-MUSC
Identical With: MUSC438
Prereq: None
MDST213 Early Medieval Art, c. 300-1100
This class surveys the art and architecture of early medieval Europe, beginning with Late Antique multiculturalism, the decline of the Roman Empire, and the spread of Christianity, and continuing through the glory of Byzantium, the rise of Islam, and the establishment of Germanic kingdoms in Northern Europe. Style, content, function, and historical context shall be examined across monuments of architecture, sculpture, mosaic, manuscripts, painting, and the luxury arts. Questions of religious practice, political messaging, and cross-cultural translation shall be threaded throughout. The periods considered will include Late Antique, Byzantine, Umayyad, Abbasid, Migration, Insular, Carolingian, Mozarabic, and Ottonian art.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ART
Identical With: ARHA213
Prereq: None
MDST214 Introduction to the New Testament
This course invites students to engage the text of the New Testament and other early Christian writings while becoming familiar with critical issues surrounding their composition, authorship, and reception. Students will be expected to demonstrate the following: acute engagement with the New Testament as an ancient text, ability to articulate (though not necessarily to agree with) viewpoints other than one’s own, an understanding of the formation of the New Testament, and an appreciation of the New Testament’s history of interpretation. Issues that will also be covered in this course include the study of the historical Jesus, the canonicity of the New Testament, extra-New Testament texts, interpretive strategies, and various issues involving the New Testament and race, sexuality, slavery, and gender.
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: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: RELI215, CCIV212
Prereq: None
MDST219 Northern Renaissance Art
The Northern Renaissance ( roughly c. 1400-1600) was a period of thrilling transition in Europe and profound change for the Western tradition of art and architecture. For art history, the period’s many paradigm shifts include the rise of oil painting, the spread of the printing press and print media, the growth of middle-class patronage, the Protestant Reformation, radical developments in the practice of portraiture, an increasingly global worldview and mentality, the spread of humanism, the foundations of what might be referred to as an art market, and a fundamental revision of the purpose and definition of both art and the artist. This course explores these and other histories as they played out within panel painting, book painting, the sumptuous arts ( e.g., tapestries and metalwork), printing, sculpture, and architecture, focusing mainly on France, the Low Countries, Germany, and England. We will begin within the late medieval world of Burgundy, Prague, and Germany, before progressing through such key artistic personalities as Sluter, Broederlam, the Limbourgs, Campin, the van Eyck, van der Weyden, Memling, Fouquet, Riemenschneider, Düer, Grünewald, Altdorfer, Cranach, Bosch, Holbein, and Bruegel—such a narrative, however,
will be equally enriched with less familiar and less canonical works. Threaded throughout are questions of mimesis, realism, skill, medium, and the growing cult of genius, as well as the relationship with the Italian Renaissance, the Mediterranean, and the expanding globe.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ART
Identical With: ARHA220
Prereq: None

MDST220 Love and Loss in Medieval and Early Modern French Literature and Culture
The interconnected themes of love and loss encompass others such as desire, passion, friendship, death, separation, and grief. This course introduces students to the uses of these themes in French literature of the medieval and early modern periods by reading a range of texts, from the courtly romance and lyric poetry, to the essay, the novel, and theater. We will examine how men and women treat these themes, and we will be especially sensitive to the ways in which women write in genres traditionally dominated by men. Topics of study will include the body, virtues and vices, marriage, sexuality, seduction, chastity, and violence. We will also place emphasis on improving French pronunciation and on developing oral presentation and written skills. Readings, papers, and discussions will be in French.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: FREN222, COL217
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 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 millennium ago, but also to better understand social and cultural distances in the modern world.

The course material will be presented through lectures and discussion, listening assignments, singing, and readings. Weekly lab sessions go over technical terminology and address the challenges that arise. The lab also facilitates reviews for quizzes and provides coaching in essay writing, research skills, and the development of analytical listening.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-MUSC
Identical With: MUSC241
Prereq: None

MDST222 Early Renaissance Art and Architecture in Italy
This course surveys key monuments of Italian art and architecture produced between ca. 1300 and 1500. Focusing on major centers such as Florence, Milan, Rome, and Venice, as well as smaller courts such as Urbino and Mantua, it considers the works and careers of the most important artists and architects of the period, among them Giotto, Brunelleschi, Donatello, Giovanni Bellini, Botticelli, and Leonardo da Vinci. Monuments are studied in their broader intellectual, political, and religious context, with particular attention paid to issues of patronage, devotion, gender, and spectatorship. Class discussions will be based on close readings of primary sources and scholarly texts on a wide range of topics. Museum trip(s) will expose students to original works of art.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ART
Identical With: ARHA221, RL&L212
Prereq: None

MDST223 The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Rethinking the Italian Renaissance
In this course we explore the intellectual achievements of the Italian Renaissance. We study the development of new secular values and the quest for the fulfillment of body and soul, glory, and exuberant pleasures. We question notions of beauty, symmetry, proportion, and order. We also unveil often-neglected aspects of Renaissance counter-cultures, such as the aesthetics of ugliness and obscenity and practices of marginalization (e.g., misogyny, homophobia). We inquire into the rediscovery of classical civilizations. We consider how the study of antiquity fundamentally changed the politics, literatures, arts, and philosophies of Italy at the dawn of the modern era. Through a close reading of texts by authors such as Francesco Petrarca, Niccolo Machiavelli, and Michelangelo, we investigate continuities and ruptures between their quest for human identity and ours. This course is conducted in English, and all primary and secondary sources are in English.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: RL&L224, COL224, ITAL224
Prereq: None

MDST224 Medieval Drama: Read It and Be in It
It was and still is revolutionary theater! This course will examine early English drama in 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: ENGL224, THEA224
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: RL&L226, ITAL226, COL234, RELI218
Prereq: None

MDST228 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 the 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 literary preparation is required, only a willingness to engage the readings closely (textually and historically).

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: RL&L226, ITAL226, COL234, RELI218
Prereq: None

MDST229 Fight like the French: Debates, Quarrels and Polemics in French Culture
In the age of 'fake news' and polarization, knowing how to debate is essential. The French are notoriously practiced in debate; the importance of public opinion and the figure of the public intellectual have made French society as a whole particularly prone to the agonistic discussion of ideas. This course will survey foundational aesthetic and political debates in French culture from the 15th century to this day, focusing on those that were led by writers, philosophers, and intellectuals and that have entered French literary and cultural history. The course will show how controversies mark and make paradigmatic changes in the cultural landscape, advancing the arts and sciences and voicing political dissent. Throughout the course we will read literary works, treatises, letters, and newspapers.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: FREN228
Prereq: None

MDST230 Lancelot, Guinevere, Grail: Enigma in the Romances of Chrétien de Troyes
Chrétien de Troyes, the greatest writer of medieval France, was the first to tell the stories of Lancelot and Guinevere's fatal passion and of the quest for the Holy Grail. Written at the height of the Renaissance of the 12th century, his Arthurian tales became the basis for all future retellings of the legend. We will read these tales in depth, paying particular attention to their enigmatic quality.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: FREN220
Prereq: None

MDST232 Obscure Enigma of Desire
This course is an introduction to the study of the ways we create meanings when we read texts. It will focus on several deliberately obscure literary texts from twelfth-century France and will examine them in the light of the classical and medieval concepts of enigma, the marvelous (wonderful), fabula, and allegory as well as some modern theoretical works about how we understand narratives. We will seek to understand why deliberate obscurity is an important part of literature and how medieval authors created narratives that seem particularly meaningful precisely because they are obscure. We will consider why we feel these texts have meaning and the ways in which we make them meaningful to us. This course will be co-taught in parallel with a course (in English) on the same subject offered at the Charles University in Prague by Professor Lucie Dolezalova. About half of the classes will be conducted together with the class in Prague through teleconferencing and Professor Dolezalova will teach one week of the course at Wesleyan and meet with students while she is here.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: RL&L232
Prereq: None

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: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: FREN334
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 13th-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: RL&L176
Prereq: None

MDST236 Don Quixote: How to Read the Ultimate Novel
No novel is more celebrated than 'Don Quixote,' albeit in often contrary ways:
touchstone at once of the modern and the post-modern; of prosaic and magical
realism; of Romantic idealism and skepticism, relativism, or materialism; of a
truth-telling folly; and of the competing claims of books and 'life' or history and
fiction. Sample superlatives: the one text that can challenge Shakespeare in the
Western canon (Harold Bloom), all prose fiction is a variation on its theme (Lionel
Trilling), one of the four great myths of modern individualism (Ian Watt). Each
generation recognizes itself differently in it and every major literary tradition has
made it its own. One secret of its lasting appeal is that, brilliantly improvisatory
and encyclopedic, it resists being pinned down. Nothing quite prepares us for
the hallucinatory thing itself. There is something for every taste: self-invention;
the biology of personality; humor, pathos, and tragicomedy; high and low
culture; prose, poetry, and theatrics; episodic variety in a long narrative arc;
probing examination of the ambiguities of heroism with a parade of spirited and
resourceful heroines who rival and often upstage the heroes; and the disruptive
transformations of a new world order (the print, educational, and military
revolutions; early modern globalization; incipient capitalism; the explosive
growth of profit-driven entertainments). A celebration of the transformative
power of imagination even as it casts a gimlet eye on how fantasies can go
awry, what passes for 'the real world' is often as nutty as the hero himself.
We will read, discuss, and write about 'Don Quixote' in English, together with
key examples of the critical, philosophical, literary, and artistic responses it
has inspired. The course assumes no familiarity with literature, history, or
Spanish; it does call for an interest in grappling with this wonderful text closely,
inimaginatively, and historically.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: RL&L236, COL236, WLIT247
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, RL&L231
Prereq: None

MDST245 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-RLAN
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)
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: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: SBS-HIST
Prereq: None

MDST255 The Vikings and the Viking Age, 700-1066
The Vikings erupted from their isolated northern homelands throughout Europe
from the eighth century, and arguably reoriented European history both in
the West, where they were instrumental in the history of the British Isles and France, as well as the East, where they were founders of the Russian kingdom. By 1100, they and their descendants had also established themselves in the Mediterranean, Italy, Sicily, and the Holy Land. This course will examine the reasons the Vikings emerged, and will explain their role not only as warriors, but as important merchants, administrators, and contributors to a robust European literary culture. They provide the perfect avenue by which to understand the creation of European culture and politics.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST255
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 various forms of short fiction and poetry from the French Middle Ages and the Renaissance (12th-16th centuries). We will focus on the representations of human relations, above all romantic relations and their inherent conflicts of power, in these works. 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

MDST258 The Medieval Gig Economy: Saints, Scholars, Sailors
A friar preaching to birds, a scoundrel passing as a saint, a nun conversing with Jesus, a Greek hero sinking into hell, a scholar talking to the dead, and a merchant exploring uncharted territories: We find unusual professional figures gigging in Italy circa 1300. In this course we explore medieval alterity through the voices of its most illustrious representatives: from Francis of Assisi to Dante Alighieri, and through a variety of other workers in the Italian economy. We examine various aspects of medieval religious culture ranging from mystical visions to the institutional politics of the Church. We consider the development of mercantile capitalism and its emerging virtues of wit and self-reliance. We track seafarers as they encounter the Other during their maritime voyages. For those staying closer to home, like clerics and other literate “Italians,” we review the dynamics of composition and reception from orality to manuscript culture. We observe how medieval otherness is embodied through different media, from manuscript illuminations to film. And by combining micro- and macro-perspectives, we approach the Italian Middle Ages from a broad aesthetic, historical, and socio-anthropological standpoint.

The course is conducted in Italian. Authors include Francis of Assisi, Catherine of Siena, Angela of Foligno, Giotto, Dante Alighieri, Francesco Petrarca, Giovanni Boccaccio, Marco Polo, and Christopher Columbus.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: ITAL256
Prereq: None

MDST268 The Origins of Global Capitalism: Economic History, 1400–1800
This course explores how the modern market economy came into being in Europe and why this system expanded outward to bring the rest of the world into its orbit by 1800. Among other things, it seeks to provide answers for why China’s economy—perhaps the most sophisticated in the world before 1500—fell into relative stagnation and why Europe was the first region to develop mechanized industry and break out of a poverty trap that had restricted prosperity for millennia. The course begins by exploring late medieval European agriculture, market systems, institutions, and technology to reveal how the paths of economic development taken in Europe began to diverge fundamentally from those taken by societies in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. It will explore the role of the spice trade in the expansion of European influence abroad, the significance of new food and cash crops in the development of plantation systems and long-haul trade, the impact of organized coercion in the development of monopolies and monopoly companies, and the role of proto-industrial methods of production and colonial economies in the birth of the Industrial Revolution. The course aims to be accessible, broad, and comparative, drawing insights from many fields to consider the environmental, geographical, cultural, institutional, and political factors shaping the economic changes that have created modern capitalism.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST268
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 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 cinematographic 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: RL&L300
Prereq: None

MDST308 Medieval 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: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-COL
Identical With: COL308, HIST303
Prereq: None

MDST310 Muslims, Jews, and Christians: Convivencia in Medieval Iberia
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 polemic, 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 decor, 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

MDST311 The Body in Medieval Art
Medieval thinkers theorized the body in ways vastly different from how human bodies are conceptualized and defined today in the twenty-first-century West. Indeed, the 'medieval body' was not at all a stable or monolithic entity, but rather a shifting constellation of ideas and practices that waxed, waned, and coexisted throughout the European Middle Ages, c. 400-1400. The diversity of medieval attitudes toward the body helped inform its representation in art, which, simultaneously, was also dependent upon conventions of craft, medium, artistry, preciousness, and style. 'Body' signals not only earthly bodies—sexed, fleshly, corruptible, and soon to decay—but also the soul (equally fragile), as well as heavenly, angelic, and divine bodies, including that of Christ. This course analyzes medieval strategies of representing these bodies while situating them in their respective intellectual and cultural environments. Primary-source materials will be contextualized by secondary literature, and our inquiries will remain cognizant of gender-, sexuality-, race-, and performance-critical methods. The bodies examined will include, and are not limited to, saintly, gendered, racialized, clerical, monstrous, virginal, heretical, sickly, healthy, courteously resurrected, and uncircumscribable bodies.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ART
Identical With: ARHA311
Prereq: None

MDST312 The Medieval Beast
How did medieval writers think about the distinction between human and animal? This course will examine the categories of soul and body, ruler and ruled, language and thought—among others. We will also read about human-animal hybrids like werewolves and bird-men in order to think through some of these binaries. Texts will include Marie de France’s ‘Lais and Fables,’ Chrétien de Troyes’s ‘Knight of the Lion,’ William of Palerne, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, and Chaucer’s ‘Parliament of Fowls’ and ‘Nun’s Priest’s Tale’; also bestiaries (encyclopedias of beasts) and some treatises about hunting and falconry.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL310
Prereq: None

MDST313 Medieval Manuscripts
Medieval manuscripts were dense, considered gatherings of text and image, and they are among the richest of artifacts bequeathed to us by the Middle Ages. Manuscripts both crystallized and intervened in many of the key intellectual, religious, and aesthetic foundations of medieval Europe. To step into a luxurious medieval manuscript—its script, its miniatures, its marginal decoration, its scribbles, its little monsters and unexpected grotesques, its tears and signs of use—is to probe definitions of painted image and written word that differ markedly from our own today. Throughout, basic questions of the relationship between text and image, and the linguistic and the pictorial, repeatedly beg attention. How were these books made, who used them (if they were used at all), how did the reading process unfold in the medieval period, and how did pictorial decoration assist in revealing—or, perhaps, obscuring—truth? These questions, and more, will inform this seminar’s systematic inquiry of the making, function, and layout of the medieval book, from its Late Antique origins to the 15th-century advent of printing.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ART
Identical With: ARHA312
Prereq: None

MDST315 The Politics of the French Language and the Birth of the French State
Today, the advantages of national borders and monolingual language policies are being trumpeted all across the world. And yet, the study of premodern languages and literatures reveals that the history of national languages has always been a multicultural affair. In this course, we will look at the case of the French language, particularly the establishment of French as a literary language through strategies of legitimization. Starting with an examination of the first text written in the language that would later become French, from the 9th century, we will then go on to study (in modern French) a series of medieval and early-modern poems, plays, treatises and essays that borrow from other languages and literatures, even as they establish French as a literary and a national language. The final portion of this class will include a meditation on the status of French language in contemporary Francophone countries based on Derrida’s essay ‘Le monolinguisme de l’autre.’

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: FREN315
Prereq: None

MDST330 Lancelot, Guinevere, Grail: Enigma in the Romances of Chretien de Troyes
Chretien de Troyes, the greatest writer of medieval France, was the first to tell the stories of Lancelot and Guinevere's fatal passion and of the quest for the
Associated with: FREN330
Prereq: None

MDST350 History as Tragedy: Genre, Gender, and Power in the Alexiad of Anna Komnena
Why did it take until the 11th century for a woman to write a work in the genre of history? What did it take for Anna Komnena—a renowned student of ancient literature, mathematics, astronomy, and philosophy, and a princess of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire—to finally break into this most gendered of genres? And, how has Anna Komnena’s accomplishment been received? This course will spend an entire semester delving into this deeply literary history, and its influence from the Middle Ages to the present. Students will engage with ‘The Alexiad’ through close intertextual readings, critical scholarship in history, relevant work in theory, and digital research methods.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL353
Prereq: None

MDST351 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 Europeans with cultures from the Mongol Empire to the Celtic ‘borderlands.’ The readings will begin historically with the Crusades and the gruesome chronicles written by Christian, Muslim, and Jewish authors. We will move on to religious polemics, travel accounts and, above all, romances: fictions that re-imagine the past in terms of exoticized sexuality, racial transformation, cannibalism, and nationalist fantasy.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
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

MDST376 Travel and Communication in Europe
This course will explore the character of travel and communication networks, patterns, technologies, and ideas in Europe in the medieval and early modern periods. Students will therefore learn the concept of travel and mobility, whether commercial, cultural, or bureaucratic, and the concept of notable reconfigurations and acceleration of exchange in this period. Beyond ideas, the networks they linked to will be prominent. These include technologies such as the bridge, road, and wayfinding, as well as cybernetic creations like the riding horse (with iron shoes and complex needs); the development of institutions of hospitality, like the monastery, the hostel and the inn; and the adaptation of writing to facilitate motion and communication. Due attention will be paid to exotic travel such as crusading, pilgrimage and warfare; however, routine business travel will be key, such as the trips required by law, by trade, by the search for money, and the desire to see family.
Methodologically, the course will focus on the idea of networks and the techniques of the digital humanities. Thus, text mining for information; mapping in GIS (Geographic Information Systems); and analyzing network relations will be important additions to the usual historical skills of reading and writing essays.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST376
Prereq: None

MDST378 Visionary Journeys through Sacred Landscapes: Japanese Art of Pilgrimage
This course examines the ways in which religious paintings were used and viewed in medieval Japan. Emphasis will be laid on images of sacred landscapes and the visionary journeys they inspired. Though primarily conceived as fundraising tools and advertisements aimed at inspiring viewers to undertake a physical journey to the illustrated site, these images became sacred in their own right and were approached by worshipers as one would approach the enshrined deity of the represented site. They also allowed spiritual travel through the images, providing virtual pilgrimages with the karmic benefits of actual pilgrimage without the hardships of travel.
Each week we will immerse ourselves in a sacred site, reading about its history, deities, religious practices, and unique benefits. We will then look at how these were given visual form and the artistic language developed to endow these visual representations with the power to inspire and move contemporary audiences.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ART
Identical With: ARHA379, CEAS379
Medieval Studies Program

Prereq: None

MDST379 Christianity and Sexuality
This course will explore a range of Christian teachings on, attitudes toward, and technologies of sex and sexuality. We will read medieval and modern theologies of gender and sex, as well as contemporary historical, sociological, cultural, and literary studies. Points of focus will include confession, mysticism, marriage, celibacy, queer and trans* practices, politics, identities, and reproductive justice.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RELI
Identical With: RELI379, FGSS309
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

MDST411 Group Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

MDST412 Group Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

MDST470 Independent Study, Undergraduate
Credit may be earned for an independent study during a summer or authorized leave of absence provided that (1) plans have been approved in advance, and (2) all specified requirements have been satisfied.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: None
Prereq: None