

**Medieval  
Studies  
Courses**

**fall 2013**

# Medieval Studies Program

## Courses being offered in Fall 2013

### First-Year Writing Seminars\*:

#### MEDVL 1101

##### Section 101

t.b.d.

#### ASPECTS OF MEDIEVAL CULTURE:

##### Words as Weapons: Defending the Self in Medieval Literature

TR 11:40-12:55. R. Mullett.

"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." In medieval literature, however, spoken and written words were used as weapons to defend the self and injure the opposition. Focusing on how the medieval religious attempted to protect their body and soul from threats of evil, this course will examine the text as a form of spiritual defense. We will read a broad range of medieval works in translation, including the heroic poem 'The Battle of Maldon', the lives of saints Guthlac and Juliana, and Chaucer's 'Clerk's Tale'. Class discussions will seek to draw out major themes and historic issues in order to develop the skills for writing informal responses, close readings, and critical essays.

##### Section 102

t.b.d.

##### Brains & Booze: Writings from & about Medieval Students

MW 8:40-9:55. C. Matlis.

Where there are students, one often finds shoddy philosophy, booze, and bawdy poetry. This course will wander through some of the texts, especially the bawdy and casual poetry, produced in medieval educational contexts including Charlemagne's court, eleventh-century cathedral schools, and the early universities. Themes that will be discussed include the social interactions between students and masters, students and townspeople, and between students themselves. The academic subjects our medieval counterparts studied will appear, but what the students did in their free time will overshadow (and influence) our discussions of the medieval version of hitting the books. Modern students enrolled in this course will write in analytical, creative, and personal styles.

##### Section 103

t.b.d.

##### Law & Order: Improbable Medieval Mysteries

MWF 10:10-11:00. M. Matlack.

Who dunnit? Miss Scarlet with the wrench in the library? Or Queen Guinevere with the poisoned apples at the dinner party? Mystery stories often expose what a society finds abnormal and dangerous—whether racial, ethnic, religious or sexual minorities, or atypical relationships, bodies, and gender roles. Mysteries also explore the limits of the knowable, and their resolution reveals what constitutes truth and proof in the Middle Ages. To explore these issues, we will look at such far-ranging sources as heresy and witch trials, murders in romances and sagas, and bizarre cases of mistaken identity. We will compare our medieval sources to the methods of post-Enlightenment detectives like Sherlock Holmes, and to the lurid conclusions of modern procedurals like *Chinatown* and *Law & Order*.

##### Section 104

t.b.d.

##### "I Saw Myself as a Man": Embodying Medieval Holy Women

TR 10:10-11:25. H. Byland.

Pick up any brightly-colored magazine today and you will find yourself inundated with ways to improve your looks, change your clothes, and get a partner. That *Cosmopolitan* sensibility is not a modern invention and in fact, pressure to have the perfect body has been around since the days of the ancient Greeks. This class will explore the ways that medieval contemporaries constructed physical identity, focusing primarily on holy women and female saints. As we move between genres—from saints' lives to medical texts to passionate love letters—we will challenge our own notions of femininity and embodied gender. Formal

\* All First-Year Writing Seminars are 3 credits.

writing assignments, along with lively class discussion, will strengthen students' critical thinking and writing abilities.

**Section 105**                      **The Real Old-School Gamers: Medieval Gaming and Gambling**  
t.b.d.                                      MWF 1:25-2:15. A. Lowell.

The German "Spiel des Jahres" prize for outstanding new board games has only existed since 1979, but it reflects a centuries-long European love of tabletop play. In medieval societies, many aspects of culture were limited to certain classes or professions, but nearly anyone could play games. In this course, students will write analytically about various popular medieval board and dice games, people who played them, and attitudes towards games and players, using texts ranging from courtly poetry to raunchy tavern songs. What themes are common to medieval games themselves and literature about games? Why were some games looked down upon, and others considered wholesome pastimes? Assignments will include short responses, close readings, and critical analyses which seek to expand upon these questions and others.

**MEDVL 1102**                      **LITERATURE OF CHIVALRY:**  
**Section 101**                      **Cartoons and Culture in the Middle Ages**  
t.b.d.                                      TR 8:40-9:55. D. Wu.

Bugs Bunny's classic question, "What's up, doc?" and Spongebob Squarepants' piercing laughter are among the animated cartoon's many contributions to pop culture. An often underestimated art form, cartoons are a shrewd form of subversive commentary designed for immediate and memorable impact. In this class, we will compare the animated cartoon – especially its use of satire, slapstick, and the grotesque – with medieval texts and iconography similarly created to shock, entertain, and instruct. From propaganda to protest, we will consider how image and text express and combat social beliefs and frustrations. Texts include the Robin Hood ballads, Marie de France's *lais*, Chaucer's *Miller's Tale*, and lyrical showdowns between Vikings. Through class discussion, writing exercises, and formal papers, students will strengthen their writing and critical reasoning.

**MEDVL 1103**                      **LEGENDS, FANTASY & VISION:**  
**Section 101**                      **Vikings and Dragons: Early Heroic Literature in the North**  
t.b.d.                                      MWF 11:15-12:05. E. Currie.

In the film *The 13th Warrior*, Ahmad ibn Fadlan, a traveler from Baghdad, expresses surprise at his companion's calmness on the eve of battle, but the Norseman responds: "The All-Father wove the skein of your life a long time ago. Go and hide in a hole if you wish, but you won't live one instant longer."

This course will examine medieval texts that inspire such modern representations of heroism. Readings will include *Beowulf*, *The Battle of Maldon*, *The Saga of the Volsungs*, and selections from the *Elder Edda*. We will strive to appreciate the complexity of the heroic ethos in various forms, in texts from related cultures. Class discussions and a series of papers will encourage clear writing, close reading, and analysis of the texts.

**Section 102**                      **Introduction to Oral Tradition and Literature**  
16874                                      MWF 10:10-11:00. T. Hill.

Literature as usually defined and studied consists of a canon of "authorized" texts -- texts written by specific authors and then made public ("published") in a fixed form. An alternative tradition of literature, however, is "oral"/"traditional" literature, texts such as ballads and folktales which were disseminated orally and which change from performance to performance. This course will serve as an introduction to "oral"/"traditional" literary forms, concentrating on English and Scots ballads and folktales, but giving some attention to literary authors such as Malory and Tolkien who either write in a traditional mode or who imitate "traditional"/"oral" literature in their fictions.

**Courses for upper-level undergraduates and graduate students:**

**MEDVL 2170**                      **EARLY MODERN IBERIAN SURVEY** (also SPAN 2170, LATA 2170)  
9428                                      MWF 1:25-2:15. 4 credits. M. Garcés.  
Prerequisite: Spanish 2070 or 2090, or CASE Q+, or permission of instructor.

This course explores major texts and themes of the Hispanic tradition from the 11th to the 17th centuries. We will examine general questions on literary analysis and the relationship between literature and history around certain events, such as medieval multicultural Iberia, the creation of the Spanish Inquisition in the 15th century and the expulsion of the Jews in 1492; the encounter between the Old and the New Worlds; the 'opposition' of high and low in popular culture, and of the secular and the sacred in poetry and prose. Readings may be drawn from medieval short stories and miracle collections; chivalric romances, Columbus, Lazarillo de Tormes, Cervantes, Lope de Vega, Calderón, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, among others.

**MEDVL 2217**                      **HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TO 1300** (also LING 2217,  
9365                                      ENGL 2170)  
MWF 10:10-11:00. 4 credits. W. Harbert.

Explores the development of the English language from its Indo-European beginnings through the period of Early Middle English. Topics include linguistic reconstruction, changes in sound, vocabulary and grammatical structure, external influences, and Old and Early Middle English language and literature. This course forms a sequence with [LING 2218](#), but the two may be taken independently.

**MEDVL 2655**                      **INTRODUCTION TO ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION** (also NES 2655, HIST  
9322                                      2530, RELST 2655)  
MW 11:15-12:05 plus F section. 3 credits. D. Powers.

The seventh-century Arab conquests resulted in the creation of a vibrant new civilization that stretched from the Iberian peninsula in the west to Central Asia and the borders of India in the east. We will follow the course of Islamic history from the birth of Muhammad until the Mongol sack of Baghdad in 1258, with special attention to the achievements of Muslims in the fields of law, theology, literature, science, philosophy, art and architecture. Friday sections are devoted to the reading and analysis of primary sources in English translation.

**MEDVL 2740**                      **SCOTTISH LITERATURE** (also ENGL 2740)  
9494                                      MWF 1:25-2:15. 3-4 credits. T. Hill and H. Shaw.

Although Scotland, which was long a separate nation, is now politically united with England, it preserves its distinctiveness. This course provides an introduction to Scottish literature, with special emphasis on the medieval period and the 18th through the 20th centuries. The course should appeal to those who wish to learn about their Scottish heritage, and also those who simply wish to encounter a remarkable national culture and the literature it has produced. Some of the texts will be read in Scots, but no familiarity with Scots or earlier English is presumed. We welcome readers of literature who are not English majors.

Those choosing the 4 credit option will complete an additional writing project. May be used as one of the three pre-1800 courses required of English majors.

**MEDVL 3110/6110**              **OLD ENGLISH** (also ENGL 3110/6110)  
9495/9496                              TR 2:55-4:10. 4 credits. S. Zacher.

In this course, we will read and discuss some of the earliest surviving English poetry and prose. Attention will be paid to (1) learning to read the language in which this literature is written, (2) evaluating the poetry as poetry: its form, structure, style, and varieties of meaning, and (3) seeing what can be learned about the culture of Anglo-Saxon England and about the early Germanic world in general, from an examination of the Old English literary records. We will begin by reading some easy prose and will go on to consider some

more challenging heroic, elegiac, and devotional poetry, including an excerpt from the masterpiece *Beowulf*. The course may also be used as preparation for the sequence [ENGL 3120/ENGL 6120](#).

May be used as one of the three pre-1800 courses required of English majors.

**MEDVL 3308**                      **READINGS IN CELTIC LANGUAGES** (also LING 3308)  
9358                                      TBA. 1 credit. W. Harbert.

Reading/discussion groups in Welsh or Scottish Gaelic.

**MEDVL 3315**                      **OLD NORSE I** (also LING 3315)  
9525                                      MWF 9:05-9:55. 4 credits. L. Heimisdottir.

Old Norse is a collective term for the earliest North Germanic literary languages: Old Icelandic, Old Norwegian, Old Danish, and Old Swedish. The richly documented Old Icelandic is the center of attention, and the purpose is twofold: the students gain knowledge of an ancient North Germanic language, important from a linguistic point of view, and gain access to the medieval Icelandic (and Scandinavian) literature. The structure of Old Norse (Old Icelandic), phonology, and morphology, with reading of selections from the Prose-Edda, a 13th-century narrative based on the Eddaic poetry.

**MEDVL 3750**                      **INTRODUCTION TO DENDROCHRONOLOGY** (also CLASS 3750,  
9476                                      ARKEO 3090, ARTH 3250)  
W 12:20-1:10 plus lab. 4 credits. S. Manning.

Introduction and training in dendrochronology and its application to archaeology, art history, and environment through participation in a research project dating ancient to modern tree-ring samples especially from the Mediterranean. Supervised reading and laboratory/project work. A possibility exists for summer fieldwork in the Mediterranean.

Permission of instructor required. Limited to 10 students.

**MEDVL 4002/6020**                      **LATIN PHILOSOPHICAL TEXTS** (also PHIL 4002/6020, LATIN 7262,  
9482/9483                                      RELST 6020)  
TBA. 1-4 credits. C. Brittain.  
Prerequisite: Knowledge of Latin; department consent required.

Reading of Latin philosophical texts in the original.

**MEDVL 4352/6352**                      **MEDIEVAL COSMOLOGIES: TEXT, IMAGE, AND MUSIC** (also  
16286/16321                                      ARTH 4352/6352, CLASS 4753/7753, MUSIC 4352, NES 4352/6352, RELST  
4352/6352, VISST 4352, STS 4352/6352)  
F 1:25-4:25. 4 credits. B. Anderson / A. Hicks.

Cosmology can be understood as the search for order in the universe, for an underlying logic that structures and renders intelligible the raw chaos of sensory experience. In this sense, the production of cosmologies is not only a scientific or theoretical enterprise, but also has direct implications for religion, politics, and social ideology. We will adopt a broad approach to the study of the dominant cosmological models in the medieval Mediterranean (ca. 500-1500 C.E.), considering both their sources (Greco-Roman science, mythology, revealed religion, etc.) and their expressions in literature, art, and music.

**MEDVL 7211**                      **LATIN REVIEW FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS** (also LATIN 7211)  
16988/16989                                      MWF 12:20-1:10. 3 credits. Z. Yuzwa.

This course offers a consolidation of Latin grammar, syntax, and vocabulary for graduate students who have had some Latin but are insufficiently prepared for Latin study at the doctoral level.

**MEDVL 8010**  
6477

**DIRECTED STUDY** – Individual

**MEDVL 8020**  
6478

**DIRECTED STUDY** – Group

**GRAD 9001**  
12873

**GRADUATE DISSERTATION RESEARCH**  
(required for anyone not taking other courses)