Medieval Studies

Department Website: http://medieval.uchicago.edu

Program of Study

The undergraduate program in medieval studies offers an interdisciplinary major that allows students to explore the history, philosophy, theology, and cultural production of the Middle Ages in an integrated and nuanced fashion, through engagement with a diverse array of textual and material artifacts.

Program Requirements

Students interested in majoring in medieval studies must consult the program director as early as possible in order to design a program of study that meets the student's intellectual interests and goals. The major requires twelve courses, chosen from the College Catalog or the Medieval Studies website (https://medievalstudies.uchicago.edu/undergraduate-program/undergraduate-courses/), and distributed as follows: at least two courses in history; two courses in language or literature; two courses in art, archeology, architecture, or music; two courses in philosophy or theology; one course in methods and materials; and at least two electives. Students should determine these courses in consultation with the program director.

The program also requires all students to participate in a one-quarter reading and research course, usually in Autumn or Winter Quarter of their fourth year. This course is typically conducted as an independent study with the student's BA paper advisor. The program requires completion of a BA paper of around 25 pages to be submitted by Monday of the fifth week of the quarter in which the student is graduating. All papers require a faculty director and a second reader.

Summary of Requirements

Two courses in history	200
Two courses in medieval language or literature *	200
Two courses in art, archeology, architecture, or music	200
Two courses in philosophy or theology	200
Two electives	200
One course in methods and materials **	100
One reading and research course	100
BA paper	000
Total Units	1200

* Medieval language may include such courses as Old French, Old English, Occitan, or Medieval Latin. Students may also enroll in literature courses taught in the target language or in translation. Students who think they may wish to apply to graduate school in a field related to medieval studies are strongly advised to acquire reading competence in at least one medieval language.

** Students may take courses such as paleography, codicology, manuscript studies, or epigraphy, that will allow them to engage directly with medieval source materials and objects. Alternatively, students may enroll in a course like literary theory, aesthetics, or historiography that will help them develop their methodological orientation.

Grading

All courses must be taken for a quality grade.

Honors

Consideration for honors is individually arranged with the program director. For candidacy, a student must have completed a BA paper of the highest quality, and have a GPA of at least 3.0 overall and at least 3.5 within the major.

Minor Program in Medieval Studies

The undergraduate program in medieval studies offers an interdisciplinary minor that allows students to explore the history, philosophy, theology, and cultural production of the Middle Ages in an integrated and nuanced fashion, through engagement with a diverse array of textual and material artifacts.

Students interested in the minor in medieval studies should consult the program director as early as possible in order to design a program of study that meets the student's intellectual interests and goals. The minor requires six courses chosen from the College Catalog or the Medieval Studies website (https://medievalstudies.uchicago.edu/undergraduate-program/undergraduate-courses/), divided among subject areas as follows:

One course in history	100
One course in medieval language or literature *	100

One course in art, archeology, architecture, or music	100
One course in philosophy or theology	100
Two electives	200
Total Units	600

* Medieval language may include such courses as Old French, Old English, Occitan, or Medieval Latin. Students may also enroll in literature courses taught in the target language or in translation. Students who think they may wish to apply to graduate school in a field related to medieval studies are strongly advised to acquire reading competence in at least one medieval language.

Students choose courses in consultation with the program director. Students must complete the Consent to Complete a Minor Program form (https://humanities-web.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/college-prod/s3fs-public/documents/Consent_Minor_Program.pdf), which requires the signature of the director of the undergraduate program in medieval studies. Students must submit a copy of the signed approval form to their College adviser by the deadline on the form.

Courses in the minor: (1) may not be double-counted with the student's major(s) or with other minors; and (2) may not be counted toward general education requirements. Courses in the minor must be taken for a quality grade, and more than half of the requirements for the minor must be met by registering for courses bearing University of Chicago course numbers.

Medieval Studies Courses

Students completing a major or minor in medieval studies may take courses from across the University. Course offerings may include those listed below. For an updated listing of courses being offered in a given quarter, students may also consult the Medieval Studies website (https://medievalstudies.uchicago.edu/undergraduate-program/undergraduate-courses/).

MDVL 10030. Introduction to the Qur'an. 100 Units.
The Qur'an's historical setting, thematic and literary features, major biblical figures, and foundational narratives of the Quran. Explorations of medieval exegetical literature on the Quran and its reception in the early (8th-10th century CE) and medieval periods (11th - 15th century CE) will feature heavily in this course. Readings consist primarily of English translations of the Quran alongside a running commentary, as well as secondary articles.
Instructor(s): Yousef Casewit Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): This course meets the HS or CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students. This course counts as a Gateway course for RLST majors/minors.
Equivalent Course(s): ISLM 30030, RLST 11030, NEHC 30030

MDVL 10101. Introduction to African Civilization I. 100 Units.
Part one considers literary, oral, linguistic, and material sources to investigate African societies and states from the early Iron Age through the emergence of the Atlantic World. Case studies include: the empires of Ghana and Mali, the Swahili Coast, Great Zimbabwe, Nok of Nigeria, and medieval Ethiopia. We also consider religious and spiritual transformation, including Islam in Africa, as well as the origins and effects of European contact, and the emergence of the transatlantic trade in enslaved human beings. Students examine these times and places through primary sources (such as cultural artifacts, visual representations, myths, and memoirs) which illuminate African perspectives on these different places and times. Assignments: oral presentations, document analyses, essays, and team projects.
Instructor(s): Staff Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): SOSC 20101, HIST 10101, ANTH 20701

MDVL 10105. Introduction to Old Turkic I. 100 Units.
An introductory course in the written language of the Orkhon Inscriptions, dating back to the 5th-8th Century Kök Türk State of Central Eurasia, and of related inscriptions from the Yenisei River area, Mongolia, Central Asia and Eastern Europe. The language of the inscriptions is considered to be the ancestor of the majority of Turkic languages spoken today, and uses a distinctive alphabet sometimes known as the Old Turkic Runiform Alphabet. The course covers a brief historic overview, basic grammar, reading selections from the inscriptions in the original and in translation, and familiarization with the alphabet itself. K. Arik, Autumn.
Instructor(s): K. Arik Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): One year of a Turkic language or the equivalent, and/or consent of the instructor
Equivalent Course(s): TURK 10105

MDVL 11040. Encountering the Qur'an: Scripture, History, and Reception. 100 Units.
This course introduces students to the Qur'an, Islam's holy book, by exploring both the text itself and the theological and historical contexts in which it emerged. We will examine the Qur'an's major themes, literary features, and theological ideas, paying close attention to how its revelations address the concerns of their time. The course also considers shared biblical figures and foundational narratives, and surveys how Muslim scholars have interpreted certain passages of the Qur'an from its conception to the modern era.
Instructor(s): Mehmetcan Akpinar Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): This class is a Gateway course for the Religious Studies (RLST) program.

Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 30040, RLST 11040, ISLM 30040, NEHC 11040, FNDL 11040

MDVL 12000. Jewish Civilization I: Ancient Beginnings to Medieval Period. 100 Units.
This course provides an interdisciplinary introduction to some transformations (textual, geo-political, social, economic, religious, cultural, and historical) between the first millennium BCE and the middle of the second millennium CE that Jewish communities, and the scholars who study them, draw upon, interpret, investigate, and disagree about, when talking about "Jewish Civilization." Working both chronologically and thematically, it covers a range of primary textual sources-biblical, Talmudic, philosophical, literary, mystical, epistolary, and others-to better understand the histories of Jewish communities as constituted through mutually influencing exchanges with, and attempts at differentiation from, neighboring, dominant populations, as well as contestation about the possible trajectories of Jewish life internal to Jewish communities. It will also address questions of method and genre in the study of Judaism-namely, what sorts of artifacts can be or should be called upon to study a "civilization," how such artifacts should be approached, and whose authority shapes (and ought to shape) such decisions.
Instructor(s): Larisa Reznik, James Adam Redfield Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 11701, NEHC 22010, JWSC 12000, RLST 22010

MDVL 12203. Italian Renaissance: Petrarch, Machiavelli, and the Wars of Popes and Kings. 100 Units.
Florence, Rome, and the Italian city-states in the age of plagues and cathedrals, Petrarch and Machiavelli, Medici and Borgia (1250-1600), with a focus on literature, philosophy, primary sources, the revival of antiquity, and the papacy's entanglement with pan-European politics. We will examine humanism, patronage, politics, corruption, assassination, feuds, art, music, magic, censorship, education, science, heresy, and the roots of the Reformation. Writing assignments focus on higher level writing skills, with a creative writing component linked to our in-class role-played reenactment of a Renaissance papal election (LARP). First-year students and non-History majors welcome.
Instructor(s): A. Palmer Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Graduate students by consent only.
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 32202, CLCV 22216, KNOW 12203, RLST 22203, HIST 12203, ITAL 16000, FNDL 22204, ITAL 32202, SIGN 26034, RENS 12203

MDVL 12500. Introduction to the New Testament: Texts and Contexts of Interpretation. 100 Units.
This class introduces students to the texts that make up the New Testament through close readings of representative examples. Through course lectures and readings, students will gain familiarity with the historical, geographical, social, religious, cultural, and political contexts of New Testament literature and the events they narrate. We will also learn about the central literary genres found within the collection of texts that came to form the canonical New Testament, including "gospels," "acts," "letters," and "apocalypses", and we will examine how awareness of genre conventions enhances our reading of these works. Students will also learn about the distinctive theological and cultural viewpoints contained within various New Testament texts. As we learn about the history of biblical scholarship, especially the goals and methods of biblical interpretation, we will practice refining our questions. Assignments and discussion will allow students to develop their skills as attuned readers of both ancient texts as well as modern biblical scholarship.
Instructor(s): Erin Walsh Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): No prior knowledge of biblical literature, the ancient world, or Christianity is expected. The only expectation is commitment to engaged discussion about the challenges of interpretation with classmates holding various viewpoints.
Equivalent Course(s): JWSC 20122, RLST 12000, CLCV 22524, CLAS 32524, FNDL 28202, BIBL 32500

MDVL 14200. Introduction to Medieval Art. 100 Units.
This course provides an introduction to art produced during the European Middle Ages. Beginning with the fusion of Christian and Imperial images under the Roman Empire and ending with the introduction of print in the fifteenth century, this course considers works of art across a variety of media (architecture, sculpture, painting, textiles, metalwork, stained glass) and in a range of historical and cultural contexts. We will address the complex social, religious, and political motivations that informed artistic production during the Middle Ages, and we will focus on the question of how images were seen and understood by medieval viewers. The course is organized chronologically and is structured around a set of broad thematic concerns such as the relationship between art and power, changing theorizations of the image, the re-use of the past, the body in art, the relationship of the secular and the sacred, and the role of art in public and private devotion. Readings will include medieval sources in translation and selected works of modern scholarship.
Instructor(s): C. Boxer Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Students must attend first class to confirm enrollment. This course meets the general education requirement in the arts.
Equivalent Course(s): ARTH 14200

MDVL 15240. Medieval Death. 100 Units.
This course will examine late medieval representations of death and dying, considering it in terms of both a conceptual problematic and a practice, especially as it appears in the literature and art of fourteenth and fifteenth century England. In addition to reading poetic, theological, and philosophical texts from the medieval period, students will examine visual art, architecture, and other media to the end of asking questions about how people and cultures understand and prepare themselves for death. (Pre-1650)

Instructor(s): Jack Dragu Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): ENGL 15240

MDVL 15600. Medieval English Literature. 100 Units.
A course on experimental poetry of the late 14th century, with special attention to how formal techniques of disorientation and discontinuity are related to the philosophical, ethical, and political ambitions of poetry. (Poetry, Medieval/Early Modern, Pre-1650)
Instructor(s): Mark Miller Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): ENGL 15600

MDVL 16900. Ancient Mediterranean World III: Late Antiquity. 100 Units.
Part III examines late antiquity, a period of paradox. The later Roman emperors established the most intensive, pervasive state structures of the ancient Mediterranean, yet yielded their northern and western territories to Goths, Huns, Vandals, and, ultimately, their Middle Eastern core to the Arab Muslims. Imperial Christianity united the populations of the Roman Mediterranean in the service of one God, but simultaneously divided them into competing sectarian factions. A novel culture of Christian asceticism coexisted with the consolidation of an aristocratic ruling class notable for its insatiable appetite for gold. The course will address these apparent contradictions while charting the profound transformations of the cultures, societies, economies, and political orders of the Mediterranean from the conversion of Constantine to the rise of Islam.
Instructor(s): J. Simmons and E. Walsh Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies.
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 16900, SOSC 27910, CLCV 20900, RLST 20690

MDVL 20012. Ancient Empires II: The Ottoman Empire. 100 Units.
The Ottomans ruled in Anatolia, the Middle East, South East Europe and North Africa for over six hundred years. The objective of this course is to understand the society and culture of this bygone Empire whose legacy continues, in one way or another, in some twenty-five contemporary successor states from the Balkans to the Arabian Peninsula. The course is designed as an introduction to the Ottoman World with a focus on the cultural history of the Ottoman society. It explores identities and mentalities, customs and rituals, status of minorities, mystical orders and religious establishments, literacy and the use of the public sphere.
Instructor(s): Theo Knights Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): Taking these courses in sequence is not required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies.
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 20012, CLCV 25800, HIST 15603, SOSC 20012

MDVL 20022. Documentary Cultures in Early Islamicate Societies. 100 Units.
This Seminar for graduate students centers on the use of material and documentary sources for the study of early Islamic history (ca. 640-1000 CE), particularly looking at multiple religious groups, languages, and literary traditions. It will introduce the students to the study of documentary texts such as the Arabic papyri, the expansion of Arabic papyrology as a field, and the integration of literary and non-literary sources. Students will be encouraged and challenged to think of texts also as material objects. We will talk about sources and resources for the study of political, economic, social, and intellectual histories of the Islamicate world; in so doing, we will discuss also methods, problems, and perspectives.
Instructor(s): CECILIA PALOMBO Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): RLST 20122, NEHC 30022, ISLM 30022, HIST 46000, NEHC 20022

MDVL 20120. Eastern Christianity: The First Thousand Years. 100 Units.
This course introduces students to Eastern Christianity from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages. We will start with contextualizing Eastern Christianity's diverse, global, and multilingual trajectories. We will then turn to review select themes of Eastern Christian history. We will cover the shaping of orthodoxy in the Byzantine world in the contexts of both inter-religious debates and intra-Christian concerns over heresy. We will explore the Christological Controversies of Late Antiquity, which continue to fracture Eastern Christianity until this very day. We will review the rise of Islam, its divergent Eastern Christian responses, and its broader theological, social, and cultural implications on medieval Middle Eastern religions. The translation movements under the #Abbasids will occupy us next and will further reveal the contributions of Eastern Christians to the intellectual and religious landscapes of the medieval Middle East. We will conclude with Eastern Christianity's position in the Middle Eastern world between the Crusades and the Mongol conquests, historical developments whose reverberations can still be felt in the present-day world where many Eastern Christian communities are spread across an increasingly global diaspora.
Instructor(s): Omri Matarasso Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): This course meets the HS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): RLST 20120, NEHC 30122, HIST 31601, CLAS 30120, HCHR 30120, HIST 21601, CLCV 20120, NEHC 20122

MDVL 20124. The Bible Throughout History: From the Dead Sea Scrolls to King James. 100 Units.
While the collection of ancient texts found in modern Bibles appears fixed and is read by many people as a source of edification or theological insight, it has not always been this way. Though absent from most Bibles, there is an entire body of literature commonly known as "rewritten bible": early translations, retellings, or entirely new stories with familiar names and faces that update, retcon, or subvert their "biblical" sources. How might we understand these ancient forms of fan fiction? The class will introduce this corpus (including some of

the Dead Sea Scrolls) and its sources, production, and historical contexts. We will confront significant problems in understanding religious texts: how is it that some texts become authoritative while other very similar texts do not? Who gets to retell foundational religious narratives, and within what social or political constraints? What does it mean to relate to sacred texts as artistic prompts or imperfect points of departure? Can a biblical text be rewritten for an entirely different religious tradition? We will consider similar questions for contemporary religious practice, asking: how did rewriting the Bible get started, and has it stopped?
Instructor(s): Doren Snoek Terms Offered: Winter. Not offered 2025–26
Equivalent Course(s): RLST 20124, FNDL 20124, HIST 29908, JWSC 20924

MDVL 20202. Islamicate Civilization II: 950-1750. 100 Units.
This course, a continuation of Islamicate Civilization I, surveys intellectual, cultural, religious and political developments in the Islamic world from Andalusia to the South Asian sub-continent during the periods from ca. 950 to 1750. We trace the arrival and incorporation of the Steppe Peoples (Turks and Mongols) into the central Islamic lands; the splintering of the Abbasid Caliphate and the impact on political theory; the flowering of literature of Arabic, Turkic and Persian expression; the evolution of religious and legal scholarship and devotional life; transformations in the intellectual and philosophical traditions; the emergence of Shi`i states (Buyids and Fatimids); the Crusades and Mongol conquests; the Mamluks and Timurids, and the "gunpowder empires" of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Moghuls; the dynamics of gender and class relations; etc. This class partially fulfills the requirement for MA students in CMES, as well as for NELC majors and PhD students.
Instructor(s): Mustafa Kaya Terms Offered: Winter. This course will not be offered for the 2021-2022 academic year.
Prerequisite(s): Islamicate Civilization I (NEHC 20201) or Islamic Thought & Literature-1 (NEHC 20601), or the equivalent
Note(s): The Islamicate Civilization sequence does not fulfill the General Ed requirements
Equivalent Course(s): ISLM 30202, HIST 35622, HIST 15612, NEHC 30202, RLST 20202, NEHC 20202

MDVL 20501. Islamic History and Society I: The Rise of Islam and the Caliphate. 100 Units.
This course covers the period from ca. 600 to 1100, including the rise and spread of Islam, the Islamic empire under the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs, and the emergence of regional Islamic states from Afghanistan and eastern Iran to North Africa and Spain.
Instructor(s): Ahmed El Shamsy Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 20501, RLST 20501, SOSC 20501, CMES 30501, NEHC 30501, HIST 25704, HIST 35704, ISLM 30500

MDVL 20522. Archaeology of Islamic Syria-Palestine. 100 Units.
This course is an exploration of the cultural patterns in the Levant from the late Byzantine period down to modern times, a span of some 1500 years. While the subject matter is archaeological sites of this period in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel, the focus is on the role of medieval archaeology in amplifying the history of economic and social systems. It is this connective quality of Islamic archaeology that contributes to an understanding of the earlier history and archaeology of this region.
Instructor(s): D. Whitcomb Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Introductory course in archaeology
Equivalent Course(s): NEAA 30522, NEAA 20522

MDVL 20530. Introduction to Islamic Archaeology. 100 Units.
This course is intended as a survey of the regions of the Islamic world from Arabia to North Africa, from Central Asia to the Gulf. The aim will be a comparative stratigraphy for the archaeological periods of the last millennium. A primary focus will be the consideration of the historical archaeology of the Islamic lands, the interaction of history and archaeology, and the study of patterns of cultural interaction over this region, which may also amplify understanding of ancient archaeological periods in the Near East.
Instructor(s): D. Whitcomb Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): NEAA 20501, NEAA 30501

MDVL 20601. Islamic Thought and Literature I. 100 Units.
In the first quarter of Islamic Thought and Literature, students will explore the intellectual and cultural history of the Islamic world in its various political and social contexts. Chronologically, the course begins with emergence of Islam in the 7th century CE and continues through the Mongol conquests until the rise of the "gunpowder empires" circa 1500. Students will leave the course with a historical and geographical framework for understanding the history of the Middle East and a familiarity with the major forms of premodern Islamic cultural production (e.g., history-writing, scriptural exegesis, poetry, philosophy, jurisprudence, etc.). Students will also develop the skills and contextual knowledge necessary for analyzing these sources in English translation; they will thus come to appreciate premodern Islamic cultural products on their own terms while engaging in the collective work of historical interpretation. No prior background in the subject is required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies.
Instructor(s): O'Malley, Austin , Jack Buredn Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): SOSC 22000, HIST 25610, NEHC 20601, RLST 20401

MDVL 20602. Islamic Thought and Literature II. 100 Units.
In the second quarter of Islamic Thought and Literature, students will explore the Islamic world in its various political, social, and intellectual aspects. Chronologically, the course begins with the consolidation of the

"gunpowder empires" in the 16th Century and continues into the modern era. Students will leave the course with a historical and geographical framework for understanding the history of the Middle East and a familiarity with the major debates such as state reform efforts, Islamic modernism, and nationalism; new genres (e.g., the novel); and new modes of communication, such as journals and newspapers. No prior background in the subject is required.Participation in the first quarter of the sequence is assumedThis sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies.
Instructor(s): Holly Shissler, Murat Bozluolcay Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): Taking these courses in sequence is recommended but not required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies.
Equivalent Course(s): RLST 20402, SOSC 22100, HIST 25615, NEHC 20602

MDVL 20605. Colloquium: Sources for the Study of Islamic History. 100 Units.
This course is designed to acquaint the student with the basic problems and concepts as well as the sources and methodology for the study of premodern Islamic history. Sources will be read in English translation and the tools acquired will be applied to specific research projects to be submitted as term papers.
Instructor(s): J. Woods Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 20605, HIST 36005, ISLM 30605, HIST 26005, NEHC 30605

MDVL 20808. Biography of the Prophet Muhammad. 100 Units.
This introductory course offers an overview of Prophet Muhammad's life as portrayed in the early and medieval Arabic narrative tradition and through the lens of modern scholarship. We will discuss a diverse range of topics, such as life in pre-Islamic Arabia, the Prophet's early life before prophethood, the first revelations, the Meccan period, his migration to Medina, his religio-political leadership and the military expeditions during the Medinan period, his reported miracles, etc. At the same time, students will gain an overview of the sira/maghazi literature, i.e., the texts devoted to the life of the Prophet Muhammad in the Muslim tradition. Modern methodological questions which concern the reliability of the narrative traditions in reconstructing the biography of the "historical Muhammad" and a wide range of approaches developed in Western academia to overcome problems related to the source material will also be addressed.
Instructor(s): Mehmetcan Akpinar Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): No background in Islamic studies or Arabic language required. This course meets the HS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 20808, ISLM 30808, RLST 20808, NEHC 30808, NEHC 20808

MDVL 21014. Medieval Indian Cities. 100 Units.
This seminar examines the fascinating, surprising, and confounding ways in which cities developed in "medieval" South Asia-a millennium long period comprising roughly ca. 500 to 1500 CE. Some of these cities, such as Delhi, have grown to become modern metropolises. Some others, such as Hampi (one of the largest cities on earth at the height of their fame), have become abandoned archaeological towns. What social, political, religious, and mercantile networks shaped their development? How did people-the elites and the so-called subalterns-live in these cities? And what can a serious study of this distant period tell us about the pressures that shaped medieval built environments and that continue to affect cities today? Among the cities to be discussed are Delhi, Surat, Thanjavur, Hampi (Vijayanagara), Warangal, Daulatabad, and Gwalior. Final assignment could take the shape of an academic paper, or, in consultation with the instructor, a creative assignment that imagines an aspect of urban life in a medieval Indian city. Seminar is directed towards students with interests in medieval history, religious history, South Asian history, urban history, and architectural history.
Instructor(s): M. Manohar Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): This course fulfills the following requirements in the ARTH major and minor: Asian pre-1800
Equivalent Course(s): SALC 21014, CEGU 31114, ARTH 31014, SALC 31014, ARTH 21014, CEGU 21114, ARCH 21014

MDVL 21100. A Medieval Menagerie: Animal Spirituality in the Middle Ages. 100 Units.
In contemporary philosophy, ethics, and literature, a subject attracting more and more attention is animals - human animals, non-human animals, and the complex relation between these paradigmatic others. The aim of this course is to consider many of the same problems and questions raised in modern discourse from the perspective of ancient and medieval sources. Drawing from a diverse corpus of texts - Aristotelian, Neoplatonic, Hindu, Jewish, Christian, Muslim - the course will explore the richness of the medieval traditions of animal symbolism, and the complexity of medieval human beings' understanding of themselves in relationship to their familiar and immanently present confreres in the world of nature.
Instructor(s): James Robinson Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): JWSC 26252, RLST 22406, HIJD 31100, ISLM 41100, RLVC 41100, HREL 41101

MDVL 21330. Despair and Consolation: Emotion and Affect in Late-Medieval and Reformation Christianity. 100 Units.
The course surveys major texts in Christian thought and culture from the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries, and it focuses on how these authors understood despair-a central theme in the writings of many women and men, secular and religious-and how, if at all, despair may be remedied. We will think alongside these late-medieval and early-modern figures about the phenomenon of emotion, the relations between of feeling and knowing, possible responses to (especially negative) affects, and how religious belief, practice, and experience shape and are shaped by emotional life. Major historical figures to be read include: Catherine of Siena, Jean

Gerson, Christine de Pisan, Julian of Norwich, Heinrich Kramer, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Teresa of Ávila, and Michel de Montaigne. We will also read selected contemporary voices in affect theory and disability studies to hone our critical and analytical resources for interpreting the primary texts.
Instructor(s): M. Vanderpoel Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): GNSE 21330, HIST 22121, RLST 21330

MDVL 21506. Medieval Visions. 100 Units.
This seminar will introduce students to key medieval theories of vision in western Europe ranging from the theological to the scientific. We will explore the ways in which beholders approached and interacted with images, as well as how they understood and theorized these visual experiences. Ultimately, this course will interrogate the overlaps and gaps between theories of looking and practices of looking in order to better understand what looking at an image in the Middle Ages entailed. Topics will include, but are not limited to: visionary experience; optical science; female mystics; devotional images; the Book of Revelation; dream theory; and changes in pre-modern "visuality" on the eve of the Reformation.
Instructor(s): T. Golan Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Fulfills the following requirements in the ARTH major and minor: European and American, pre-modern (pre-1800)
Equivalent Course(s): ARTH 31506, ARTH 21506

MDVL 21700. Le Roman de la Rose. 100 Units.
The "Roman de la Rose" (mid-13th century), a sprawling, encyclopedic summa composed by two separate authors, was arguably the single most influential vernacular text of the Middle Ages. Whether they hated or admired it, subsequent writers could not escape the long shadow cast by this magisterial œuvre. And, as Kate Soper's recent opera adaptation of the "Rose" demonstrates, this labyrinthine work remains a source of creative inspiration. In this course we will read the "Rose" together. Each student will choose a critical lens (e.g. gender and sexuality, animal and/or ecocritical studies, ethics and philosophy, reception studies, manuscript studies, text & image, etc.) to structure their engagement with the text, and together we will collaborate to chart a rich and diverse set of interpretive paths through this complex work.
Instructor(s): Daisy Delogu Terms Offered: Not offered this academic year
Prerequisite(s): For French majors/minors, FREN 20500, 20503 or a previous literature course taught in French.
Equivalent Course(s): GNSE 27300, GNSE 37300, FREN 21700, FNDL 21700, FREN 31700

MDVL 21705. Iberian Literatures and Cultures: Medieval and Early Modern. 100 Units.
This course explores Spanish language, literature, and culture focusing on premodern Iberian texts and artifacts. We will start by anonymous "Cantar de Mio Cid," the first great vernacular epic in the Middle Ages, and we will end in Maria de Zayas's "Novelas ejemplares," one of the finest expressions of European early modern short story. Between these two literary works we will talk about music, painting, witchcraft, conversion, and the Inquisition as milestones of a five-century span. In this time Spanish consolidates as a written language, while numerous political and religious conflicts mark the struggle for hegemony in the Iberian Peninsula. In addition to enhancing your knowledge of Iberian cultural history and improving your close reading and critical thinking skills, this course is designed to continue building on your linguistic competence in Spanish.
Instructor(s): Noel Blanco Mourelle (autumn), Pablo García Piñar (spring) Terms Offered: Autumn Spring
Prerequisite(s): SPAN 20300 or consent of instructor. Taught in Spanish.
Equivalent Course(s): SPAN 21705

MDVL 21900. Dante's Divine Comedy 1: Inferno. 100 Units.
This is the first part of a sequence focusing on Dante's masterpiece. We examine Dante's Inferno in its cultural (i.e., historical, artistic, philosophical, sociopolitical) context. In particular, we study Dante's poem alongside other crucial Latin and vernacular texts of his age. They include selections from the Bible, Virgil's Aeneid, Augustine's Confessions, Ovid's Metamorphoses, and the stilnovist and Siculo-Tuscan poets. Political turmoil, economic transformation, changing philosophical and theological paradigms, and social and religious conflict all converge in the making of the Inferno.
Instructor(s): H. Justin Steinberg Terms Offered: Not offered this academic year
Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 27200, ITAL 21900, ITAL 31900

MDVL 21901. Beyond the Canon: The New Testament Apocrypha. 100 Units.
The twenty-seven books of the New Testament have been the authoritative canon for Christians for centuries. But these books were not the only Christian texts written in the early centuries CE to be read and circulated. While not adopted into the canon, these texts, which are often referred to as the New Testament Apocrypha, have had much influence on later literature, art, liturgy, and popular culture. The course provides a survey of these texts, which include gospels of the life of Jesus, acts of the lives of different apostles, and apocalypses of heavenly realms. In this course, we will explore a variety of questions: What were these alternative early stories about Jesus and his followers? Why were these texts written and for whom? What authority did these non-canonical accounts have? What can an analysis of these texts tell us about how textual authority is construed across religious traditions, especially in terms of popular piety? How can these accounts change our perception of early Christianity? Students will leave the course better acquainted with the diversity of the early Christian movement and the alternative paths the religious tradition could have taken.
Terms Offered: not being offered 23-24
Equivalent Course(s): RLST 21900, FNDL 21905, CMLT 21901

MDVL 22002. Money in Medieval Europe. 100 Units.
This course will investigate the history of minting and money in Europe from Late Antiquity to the end of the Middle Ages (ca. 1500). Topics will include the sourcing of silver and gold for coinage, the different monetary regimes in the different kingdoms of Europe, and the development of European banking systems from the thirteenth century onward. This course is open to all College students, and no prior knowledge of medieval European history is required. Grades will be calculated on the basis of class participation, two short papers and a final exam.
Instructor(s): J. Lyon
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 12000, HIST 32000

MDVL 22003. Dante's Divine Comedy II: Purgatorio. 100 Units.
This course is an intense study of the middle cantica of the "Divine Comedy" and its relationship with Dante's early masterpiece, the "Vita Nuova." The very middleness of the Purgatorio provides Dante the opportunity to explore a variety of problems dealing with our life here, now, on earth: contemporary politics, the relationship between body and soul, poetry and the literary canon, art and imagination, the nature of dreams, and, of course, love and desire. The Purgatorio is also Dante's most original contribution to the imagination of the underworld, equally influenced by new conceptualizations of "merchant time" and by contemporary travel writing and fantastic voyages.
Instructor(s): H. Justin Steinberg Terms Offered: Not offered this academic year
Equivalent Course(s): ITAL 32000, ITAL 22000, FNDL 27202

MDVL 22101. Dante's Divine Comedy III: Paradiso. 100 Units.
An in-depth study of the third cantica of Dante's masterpiece, considered the most difficult but in many ways also the most innovative. Read alongside his scientific treatise the "Convivio" and his political manifesto the "Monarchia."
Instructor(s): H. Justin Steinberg Terms Offered: Not offered this academic year
Prerequisite(s): Completion of the previous courses in the sequence not required, but students should familiarize themselves with the "Inferno" and the "Purgatorio" before the first day of class.
Equivalent Course(s): ITAL 22101, ITAL 32101, FNDL 21804

MDVL 22123. Natural Law in the Hist of Scholastic Political Thought: Aquinas, Vitoria, Suárez, Hooker, Grotius. 100 Units.
The concept of natural law has played a central role in the history of Western political thought, and it has often been deployed in political argumentation at pivotal moments in human history, from the discovery of the New World and the American founding to the Nuremberg trials and the Civil Rights Movement. Though the doctrine has antecedents in Greek and Roman philosophers, including Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, it received its classic articulation in the writings of the Scholastic thinkers of the Middle Ages and early modern period. In this seminar, we will read key primary source texts in the development of natural law theory in the Scholastic age from five of the Scholastic tradition's seminal thinkers: Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), Francisco de Vitoria (1483-1546), Francisco Suárez (1548-1617), Richard Hooker (1554-1600), and Hugo Grotius (1583-1645). In reading their works, we will consider the theories of natural law they construct as well as the implications of their respective theories for political debates concerning such questions as Spanish treatment of Native Americans, religious toleration, the foundations of international law, and the origins of political authority. We will also consider questions of continuity and discontinuity between the authors and the ways in which their works reflect the historical contexts in which they were written. Throughout, we will focus on close reading and careful exegesis of the primary source texts.
Instructor(s): S. Waldorf
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 22123, RLST 27123, HMRT 22123

MDVL 22125. Nature, Consent, and the Origins of Political Authority. 100 Units.
The question of the basis of political authority is one of the fundamental problems of political philosophy. The course will examine the history of this question, focusing especially on the tradition of thought that grounds political legitimacy in claims about human nature, and that which locates it in the consent of the governed. We will read classic representatives of political naturalism such as Aristotle and Aquinas, examine the role of popular sovereignty in Marsilius of Padua's intervention in debates between pope and emperor, consider the attempts of late-Scholastic thinkers such as Suarez to bridge naturalism and government by consent, and explore the emergence of social contract theory in early Enlightenment thinkers such as Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. Throughout, we will focus on a close reading of primary texts, seeking to understand how these philosophers thought about the source of political authority and how their theories were shaped by their historical contexts. We will also address broader themes such as the place of normative conceptions of human nature in a democratic society.
Instructor(s): S. Waldorf
Equivalent Course(s): RLST 27215, HIST 22125, PLSC 22125

MDVL 22350. Speaking Truth to Power in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia. 100 Units.
In the multilingual and multireligious environment of the Iberian middle ages, poetry can express many things. And while literary history has granted a prestigious space to some of these things, such as love or spirituality, it has consistently neglected others, such as socio-political satire or vulgarity. This class will be paying attention to that other less talked-about poetry that gets into the political struggles of the period, that talks in profanities

about profane things. In other words, the poetry that does not speak to the eternity of existence, but that gets its hands dirty with earthly matters. The poetry that savagely mocks and cuts through social conventions in a way that makes seem contemporary Twitter trolls benevolent in comparison. For this class we will be reading authors who wrote in Galician-Portuguese such as Joao Soares de Paiva or King Alfonso X, authors who wrote in Catalan such as Guillem de Bergueda or Ramon Vidal de Besalu, and authors who wrote in Spanish such as Juan Ruiz or Juan de Mena. Translations to Spanish will be provided or worked though class discussion.
Instructor(s): Noel Blanco Mourelle Terms Offered: Not offered this academic year
Equivalent Course(s): SPAN 32350, PORT 32350, SPAN 22350, CATA 22350, CATA 32350, PORT 22350

MDVL 22409. Studying Medieval History. 100 Units.
This course will introduce students to the study of medieval European history as a dynamic exercise in crafting and evaluating theories and narratives in conversation with the primary sources. We will consider why the Middle Ages have played the role that they do in modern historiography; ways in which the Middle Ages underpin major theoretical movements in the social sciences; and how medieval historians have challenged these theorizations. We will begin with an overview of the periodization of the Middle Ages from Late Antiquity to the Later Middle Ages, visit Special Collections to meet some of the primary sources, and test what we have learned against some of the main arguments about what happened to transform ancient Rome into early modern Europe.
Instructor(s): R. Fulton Brown Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 22409, HIST 32409

MDVL 22910. Medieval Beasts. 100 Units.
From fables to bestiaries, in the margins of medieval manuscripts and at the center of animal narratives, animals abound in medieval literature. Transformations from human to animal form (or vice versa), friendships between animals and humans, the anthropomorphization of animals, invite us to interrogate the relationship between animals and humans, and to put into question the boundary (if indeed one can be defined) between the two. In this course we will read a variety of medieval texts as well as modern critical theory in order to gain a better understanding of the textual, narrative, hermeneutic, and ethical roles that animals play in medieval literature, and in our contemporary critical posture vis à vis the natural world.
Instructor(s): Daisy Delogu Terms Offered: Not offered this academic year
Prerequisite(s): Reading knowledge of French.
Equivalent Course(s): FREN 22910, FREN 32910

MDVL 23101. Early Italian Lyric: Dante and His Rivals. 100 Units.
An intense reading of Dante's early experiment in autobiography, self-commentary, and self-anthologizing. The "Vita Nova" is an essential text for readers of Dante's Commedia since the poet constantly refers back to it, and we will read it keeping in mind this dialogue. However, our primary focus will be to examine the "Vita Nova" in the context of contemporaneous literary practices. How does Dante engage with the philosophical and aesthetic debates of his time? We will use "Vita Nova" to gain entry into the larger world of early Italian poetry (Guittone, Guinizzelli, Cavalcanti, and others) and we will examine his contribution to the courtly love tradition.
Instructor(s): H. Justin Steinberg Terms Offered: Not offered this academic year
Equivalent Course(s): ITAL 33101, ITAL 23101

MDVL 23425. Love in the Middle Ages. 100 Units.
In this course, we will examine the origins of European love poetry, focusing on the works of Italian authors from the 13th and 14th centuries. Writers such as Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio explored the nature of love-its power, its perils, and its role in human life. Through close reading and discussion of texts including The Divine Comedy, the Canzoniere, and the Decameron, we will investigate fundamental questions: What is love, and what defines a true lover? Can earthly love coexist with divine love? Is love a fleeting illusion, or does it possess the capacity to shape society? Throughout the course, we will analyze the interplay between literature, philosophy, and cultural history, examining poetic and rhetorical strategies alongside thematic concerns. By the end of the course, students will have developed a strong foundation for engaging more deeply with later literary traditions. Simultaneously, they will gain a broader perspective on love-not merely as an emotion but as a force that has shaped culture and society throughout history.
Instructor(s): Caterina Nicodemo Terms Offered: Course not taught in 2025-26
Note(s): Language will be determined by students' backgrounds.
Equivalent Course(s): ITAL 23425

MDVL 23502. Boccaccio's Decameron. 100 Units.
One of the most important and influential works of the middle ages-and a lot funnier than the "Divine Comedy." Written in the midst of the social disruption caused by the Black Death (1348), the "Decameron" may have held readers attention for centuries because of its bawdiness, but it is also a profound exploration into the basis of faith and the meaning of death, the status of language, the construction of social hierarchy and social order, and the nature of crisis and historical change. Framed by a storytelling contest between seven young ladies and three young men who have left the city to avoid the plague, the one hundred stories of Boccaccio's "Decameron" form a structural masterpiece that anticipates the Renaissance epics, Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," and the modern short story. Students will be encouraged to further explore in individual projects the many topics raised by the text, including (and in addition to the themes mentioned above) magic, the visual arts, mercantile culture, travel and discovery, and new religious practices.
Instructor(s): H. Justin Steinberg Terms Offered: Spring

Prerequisite(s): Taught in English.
Equivalent Course(s): ITAL 23502, FNDL 21714, ITAL 33502

MDVL 23510. The Arts of Language in the Middle Ages: The Trivium. 100 Units.
Throughout the Middle Ages, formal education began with the study of language: grammar, including the study of literature as well as the practical mastery of the mechanics of language (here, Latin); logic or dialectic, whether narrowly defined as the art of constructing arguments or, more generally, as metaphysics, including the philosophy of mind; and rhetoric, or the art of speaking well, whether to praise or to persuade. In this course, we will be following this medieval curriculum insofar as we are able through some of its primary texts, many only recently translated, so as to come to a better appreciation of the way in which the study of these arts affected the development of medieval European intellectual and artistic culture.
Instructor(s): R. Fulton Brown Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 23902, HIST 33510, HIST 23510

MDVL 23518. Colloquium: How to Be Good. 100 Units.
Medieval Christians understood virtue as both a habit and a gift of grace. In this course, we will test this understanding by comparison with the definitions of virtue found in three complementary traditions: Greek, Jewish, and Confucian. Readings will be taken from the New Testament, Thomas Aquinas, Aristotle, Plato, the Torah, the Talmud, and the Analects. Our purpose will be to discover how each of these systems of training the soul works, along with their similarities and differences.
Instructor(s): R. Fulton Brown
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 23518, FNDL 23518, HIST 33518

MDVL 23519. The Arts of Number in the Middle Ages: The Quadrivium. 100 Units.
Alongside the arts of language (grammar, rhetoric, and logic), medieval students would encounter the arts of number: arithmetic, the study of pure number; geometry, number in space; music, number in time; and astronomy, number in space and time (in Stratford Caldecott's formulation). In this course, we will be following this medieval curriculum insofar as we are able through some of its primary texts, many only recently translated, so as to come to a better appreciation of the way in which the study of these arts affected the development of the medieval European intellectual, scientific, and artistic tradition. This is a companion course to "The Arts of Language in the Middle Ages: The Trivium," but the two courses may be taken in either order.
Instructor(s): R. Fulton Brown Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 23519, CHSS 33519, HIST 33519, HIPS 23519, FNDL 25688

MDVL 23625. Middle Ages on Film. 100 Units.
This course will explore cinematic representations of the European middle ages. Ranging from the silent era to the present day, from arthouse pictures to swashbuckling epics, we will consider the uses of medievalism in the modern imagination. Where do these cultural fantasies come from? How do they change over time? How do they relate to the academic disciplines of history and medieval studies? And what role does cinema play in these questions? Screenings will be complemented with readings both from medieval source documents and from contemporary film and cultural theory. Works discussed will include "The Passion of Joan of Arc" (Carl Theodor Dreyer, 1929), "The Flowers of Saint Francis" (Roberto Rossellini, 1950), "The Seventh Seal" (Ingmar Bergman, 1957), "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" (1975), "Braveheart" (Mel Gibson, 1995), and "Hard to be a God" (Aleksei German, 2014), among others.
Instructor(s): Jane Vincent Terms Offered: Course not taught in 2025-26
Note(s): Taught in English.
Equivalent Course(s): ITAL 23625

MDVL 23809. Pain, Truth, and Justice. 100 Units.
Why should the truth hurt? Does pain guarantee the truth told? Is pain the price of exposure to the truth? Does that make punishment just? In this course, we will take a historical and philosophical approach to examine the relations between pain, truth, and justice. In the premodern period, we will draw from Genesis, Sophocles' Oedipus, Augustine, Tertullian, martyrdom accounts, and public penance in medieval Christianity. To study the theme in the early modern nation-state spectacles of punishment, colonial contexts, and contemporary scenes of justice, we will turn to the writings of Foucault, Fanon, and others. Over the course of the historical and philosophical examinations, we will trace the themes of body, affect, and performance; truth, law, and ritual; power, religion, and the nation-state. In the end, we will turn a critical eye to contemporary cultural discourses and representations of pain, truth, and justice in the arts, law, literature, philosophy, and politics. No prerequisites.
Instructor(s): Maureen Kelly Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): GNSE 23809, CLCV 23809, RLST 23809

MDVL 23823. Melancholy: Readings in Medieval Christian Literature. 100 Units.
The idea of melancholy, a persistent affective orientation toward sadness and/or despair, is ubiquitous in Christian writings from the Middle Ages. This course considers the nature and function of melancholy and possible remedies in Christian discourses, and in so doing it provides a survey of medieval Christian literature. Readings may be drawn from authors such as Boethius, Alan of Lille, Jean de Meun, Marguerite Porete, Dante, and Christine de Pizan. Special attention will be given to the role of literary form in Christian writing, competing accounts of despair and hope, and the relationship of Christianity to non-Christian discourses. There are no

language prerequisites, though reading groups may be formed if sufficient students posses relevant language skills.
Instructor(s): M. Vanderpoel Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CMLT 23823, RLST 23823

MDVL 24103. Nature and the Natural in the Middle Ages. 100 Units.
In this course we will undertake a study of nature and ideas about what is "natural" centered around three main axes, and will adopt a variety of relevant critical perspectives (e.g., ecocriticism, studies of gender and sexuality, political theory) to support our analyses. First, we will explore nature as the created world of which humans are a part (as one of God's creations), yet from which they also stand apart (as sovereign caretakers). Second, we will examine how the diffusion of Aristotelian works (notably the Politics) in the later Middle Ages provided a justificatory framework for social and political hierarchies and practices of economic exploitation. Third, we will consider the intersection of nature with gender, sexuality, and reproduction, a topic complicated by the fact that Nature is itself represented, in allegorical terms, as a woman.
Instructor(s): Daisy Delogu Terms Offered: Not offered this academic year
Prerequisite(s): Reading knowledge of French for all students. FREN 20500, 20503 or a literature course taught in French for those seeking credit for the French major/minor.
Equivalent Course(s): CEGU 24110, FREN 24100, FREN 34100, GNSE 34103, GNSE 24103

MDVL 24202. Indian Philosophy II: The Classical Traditions. 100 Units.
This course follows the first module on Indian philosophy by exploring the debates between several classical "schools" or "viewpoints" (darśanas) of Indian philosophy. In addition to expanding upon the methods of systematized reasoning inaugurated by the Nyāya and Buddhist epistemological traditions, particular attention will be given to systems of scriptural hermeneutics -- Mīmā#sā and Vedānta -- and their consequences for the philosophy of language, theories of cognitive error, and even poetics.
Instructor(s): Anand Venkatkrishnan, Andrew Ollett Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): DVPR 30302, HREL 30300, SALC 30902, SALC 20902, RLST 24202

MDVL 24275. Chinese Buddhist Omnicentrism: Tiantai and Huayan. 100 Units.
In this course we will read and analyze the key texts (in English translation) of the two great classical "sinifying" Chinese Buddhist theoretical schools of the Sui, Tang, and Song dynasties: Tiantai and Huayan, with special attention to what is arguably their biggest shared innovation: the development of the classical Mahāyāna Buddhist idea of Emptiness (sūnyata) into the "omnicentric" idea that each entity, precisely through its emptiness, is in some sense present in all times and places, is eternal and omnipresent--and the controversies arising from the different justifications and implications advanced by the two schools for this shared doctrine. Readings will include the works of Zhiyi, Zhanran, and Zhili from the Tiantai school, and Dushun, Zhiyan, Chengguan, and Zongmi. Some basic background in Buddhist thought is recommended. Readings will be in English, but an optional reading group working with the original classical texts will likely also be convened.
Instructor(s): Brook Ziporyn Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): This course meets the HS or CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): EALC 44275, DVPR 44275, EALC 24275, RLST 24275

MDVL 24276. Tiantai Buddhism and Neo-Tiantai Thinking: Recontextualizations of Recontextualizationism. 100 Units.
This course will explore the philosophical doctrines of classical Tiantai Buddhism and their extensions and reconfigurations as developed in the ideas of later thinkers, both Tiantai and non-Tiantai, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist. Readings will be drawn from the classical Tiantai thinkers Zhiyi, Zhanran and Zhili, followed by writings of early Chinese Chan Buddhism, Japanese Tendai "Original Enlightenment" thought, Kamakura Buddhist reformers including Dōgen, Nichiren and Shinran, the 20th century Confucian Mou Zongsan, and contemporary Anglophone "Neo-Tiantai" thinking.
Instructor(s): Brook Ziporyn Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): This course meets the CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): HREL 44276, FNDL 24276, EALC 24276, EALC 34276, DVPR 44276, RLST 24276

MDVL 24550. Major Trends in Islamic Mysticism. 100 Units.
An examination of Islamic mysticism, commonly known as Sufism, through English translations of premodern and contemporary Sufi literature originally composed in Arabic and Persian. The aim of this course is to gain firsthand exposure to a wide range of literary expressions of Islamic spirituality within their historical contexts, and to understand exactly what, how, and why Sufis say what they say. Each unit consists of lectures and close readings of selected excerpts in both the original Arabic/Persian and English translation.
Instructor(s): Yousef Casewit Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): This course meets the HS or CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 32419, SIGN 26068, NEHC 24550, ISLM 32419, RLST 24550, GLST 24550

MDVL 24590. Readings in Islamic Theology. 100 Units.
This course offers students the opportunity to engage first-hand with foundational texts-primarily in English translation, but also in the Arabic original-that shaped debates, polemics, and doctrine in Islamic theology up until the early modern period. At the center of the course is a wide range of key themes, including faith, free will, God's attributes, the nature of revelation, prophethood, eschatology, salvation, etc., as they are explored in writings produced by diverse theological orientations. To support close engagement with the primary

sources, selected secondary literature will be incorporated into our discussions. The course enables students to understand Islamic theological themes within their intellectual contexts, while also making connections to modern theological debates in the Islamic world, which adapt and reinterpret earlier formulations. Knowledge of Arabic is recommended.
Instructor(s): Mehmetcan Akpinar Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 24590, ISLM 34590, NEHC 34590, RLST 24590

MDVL 24623. Dante's Inferno: Judging the Earthly World. 100 Units.
The course will offer a close, discussion-based reading of Dante's "Inferno." The course begins with an introduction to the fundamental features and meanings of the "Commedia" (genesis; structure; models; language; realism; literal and allegorical sense; poetry and prophecy). We will then proceed with the reading and analysis of the most significant cantos of the "Inferno." In particular, the protagonist's path of redemption will be examined in its autobiographical and allegorical dimension. In his dual identity of author and character, Dante takes on the role of judge (the author), who accuses and condemns his contemporaries, and of penitent (the character), who finds himself in front of the same passions and sins that tormented his earthly life. We will try to understand how the ambiguous and eternal charm of the great characters of the "Inferno" (Francesca, Farinata, Pier della Vigna, Brunetto, Ulysses, Ugolino) arises from the conflict between these two dimensions. Upon completion of the course, students should have improved their ability to think critically, and to understand and analyze a literary text on different levels of meaning. Furthermore, they should have developed an in-depth knowledge of Dante's works and the methodologies of Dante studies
Instructor(s): Roberto Rea
Note(s): Taught in English, but Italian majors, minors and grad students are required to do the readings and writing in Italian.
Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 24623, ITAL 24623, ITAL 34623

MDVL 24803. History of Sexuality and Sin. 100 Units.
Since Foucault's groundbreaking work on the History of Sexuality, we have become attuned to the effects of power and the political implications of the science of sexuality. While Foucault's text has offered a critical avenue to examine the secular state's administrations of sexuality, it begins with Christianity's techniques of power based on the confession of one's sex. The Christian formulation of the relationship between 'sex' and 'sin' is essential to understanding the techniques of power that connect sexuality, legality, criminality, normality, and transgression in modern secular contexts. In this class, we will begin with the critical questions of the History of Sexuality, then turn to primary texts in order to examine the way 'sex' and 'sin' became conceptually connected in Christianity, and finally interrogate the effects of this relation for medieval and modern politics. Over the course of these readings, we will trace the relation between the concepts and their effects to discern the histories of sexuality that lie at the root of contemporary debates on freedom, power, resistance, and desire. No prerequisites.
Instructor(s): Maureen Kelly Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 24806, RLST 24803, HIPS 24803, GNSE 23152

MDVL 25102. Reading Augustine's Confessions. 100 Units.
This course will carry out a close reading of Augustine's Confessions. We will study the work not only as a spiritual autobiography-a common approach-but also as a philosophical argument against alternatives to Christian faith and practice in the late fourth century. That argument will invite us to examine the implications of religious faith for human well-being and on how religious convictions affect the quality of human relationships, self-knowledge, and the emotions. We'll thus examine how Confessions interrogates the quality of human love, fear, hatred, and regret; moral responsibilities to ourselves and others; the (anxious) awareness that we are limited in body and time; and how to craft an honest narrative of self-understanding. We will ask (among other things), Is religion a source of personal healing and health, or an obstacle to it? What sorts of problems is religion meant to cure? What problems do religious beliefs create? How does religion bear on the self's loves, its past, its mortality, its doubts? Along the way we'll ask whether it is possible to want to do evil, whether it is possible to love or grieve too much, whether we are responsible for what happens in our dreams, what it means to be a friend to others-and how Augustine's answers to these questions presuppose a wider account of divine justice, charity, and the ordering of the cosmos.
Instructor(s): Richard B. Miller Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 27002, RLST 25102

MDVL 25218. Suhrawardi and His Interpreters. 100 Units.
Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī (d. 1191), the founder of the ishrāqī philosophical tradition, is undoubtedly one of the most innovative and influential philosophers in the history of Islamic thought. In this seminar, we will examine major themes in the writings of Suhrawardī along with excerpts from Arabic commentaries by Muslim and Jewish authors such as Ibn Kammūnah (d. 1284), Shahrazūrī (d. 1288), Qu#b al-Dīn Shīrāzī (d. 1311), Dawānī (d.1502), Dashtakī (d. 1542), Qarabāghī (d. 1625) and Harawī (d. 1689). Topics include, Suhrawardī's understanding of the history of philosophy, light and the order of existence, virtues and human happiness, self-knowledge and self-awareness, conceptual and non-conceptual knowledge, and theory of ritual actions.
Instructor(s): Nariman Aavani Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): 2 years of Arabic.
Note(s): This course meets the CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 35218, ISLM 35218, RLST 25218, FNDL 25218, NEHC 25218

MDVL 25400. Readings in Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed. 100 Units.
A careful study of select passages in Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed, focusing on the method of the work and its major philosophical-theological themes, including: divine attributes, creation vs. eternity, prophecy, the problem of evil and divine providence, law and ethics, the final aim of human existence.
Instructor(s): James T. Robinson Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): RLVC 45400, NEHC 20471, JWSC 21107, RLST 23107, JTAC 45400, FNDL 24106, NEHC 40470, ISLM 45400, HREL 45401

MDVL 25809. Islamic and Jewish Political Philosophy. 100 Units.
What can we learn about political philosophy from reading Muslim and Jewish thinkers? The flowering of political philosophy in the medieval Islamic world provides a mirror for examining our own assumptions about religion, politics, and philosophy. In this course, students read major works by Muslim and Jewish thinkers who debated whether and how to apply philosophical ideas to the political life of a community governed by divine laws. We will begin by discussing the transmission of Greek philosophy into Arabic-Islamic culture, the debates that ensued over the status of "foreign wisdom," and the issue of esoteric writing. These preliminary topics provide necessary background for studying the tradition of political philosophy that developed under Islam and Judaism in the Middle Ages. Major themes include approaches to divine law, the figure of the philosopher-prophet, logic and language, scriptural interpretation, the place of the philosopher in society, and the nature of human perfection.
Instructor(s): Yonatan Shemesh Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): No prerequisites
Equivalent Course(s): JWSC 28809, RLST 25809

MDVL 26001. Religion and Visual Culture in the Late Antique Mediterranean. 100 Units.
In this seminar, we examine sacred sites and artifacts of early Christians and their neighbors in the regions around the Mediterranean from the third century to about 750 CE. Case studies will illustrate the wealth of religious art and architecture associated with different religions that existed side by side-Christianity, Judaism, polytheism, and emerging Islam. This course has five main objectives: (1) to examine how the designs of religious spaces, buildings, and objects respond to specific spiritual or ritualistic needs; (2) to gain familiarity with typical features characterizing the arts of each religion or sect; (3) to identify elements of a common visual language that result from shared traditions or artistic cross-pollination; (4) to examine different ways in which material artifacts were employed as means of ideological propaganda; and (5) to study art and architecture as evidence of doctrinal competition and conflict. While this course foregrounds the study of material culture, written sources (in translation) complement the analysis of the visual evidence.
Instructor(s): Karin Krause Terms Offered: Spring. Not offered 2025–26
Note(s): This course meets the HS or LMCS Committee distribution for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): HCHR 36001, RLVC 36001, ARTH 36001, CLCV 26024, CLAS 36024, NEHC 26001, JWSC 26020, ARTH 26001, RLST 26001

MDVL 26002. Philosophical Petrarchism. 100 Units.
This course is a close reading of Petrarch's Latin corpus. Readings include the Coronation Oration, The Secret, and selections from Remedies for Fortune Fair and Foul, On Illustrious Men, On Religious Leisure, and The Life of Solitude. Special attention is devoted to Petrarch's letter collections (Letters on Familiar Matters, Letters of Old Age, Book without a Name, etc.) and his invectives. The aim of the course is to familiarize the student with the new and complete Petrarch that emerged in 2004 on the occasion of the 700th anniversary of his birth. Discussion will focus on Petrarch's self-consciousness as the "father of humanism," his relationship to Dante, autobiographism, dialogical inquiry, anti-scholasticism, patriotism, and Petrarch's "civic" reception in the Quattrocento as well as on a comparative evaluation of the nineteenth-century Petrarchs of Alfred Mézières, Georg Voigt, and Francesco De Sanctis.
Instructor(s): Rocco Rubini Terms Offered: Not offered this academic year
Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 25802, ITAL 36002, ITAL 26002

MDVL 26250. Buddhist Poetry in India. 100 Units.
The substantial Buddhist contribution to Indian poetry is of interest for what it teaches us of both Buddhism and the broad development of Indian literature. The present course will focus upon three phases in this history, with attention to what changes of language and literary genre tell us of the transformations of Indian religious culture from the last centuries B.C.E. to about the year 1000. Readings (all in translation) will include the Therīgāthā, a collection of verses written in Pali and the most ancient Indian example of womens' literature, selections from the work of the great Sanskrit poets Aśvagho#a, Āryaśūra, and Māt#ceta, and the mystical songs, in the Apabhra#śa language, of the Buddhist tantric saints.
Instructor(s): Matthew Kapstein Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): General knowledge of Buddhism is desirable.
Note(s): This course meets the HS or LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): RLVC 34300, DVPR 34300, SALC 34300, RLST 26250, HREL 34300

MDVL 26314. Judaism and Science. 100 Units.
We shall examine how Jewish thinkers examined the interplay between science and the Jewish intellectual tradition, with particular focus on the Middle Ages and Renaissance. This course will explore questions such as: Is the study of science opposed to the study of Jewish texts? Should one study science differently from the way of

studying traditional Jewish texts? Are different logical syllogisms appropriate for science and for religious texts? Additionally, we shall examine the materials and formal structures that Jewish thinkers had to study science. We shall begin with the introduction of translations in the 12th-13th centuries among Hebrew readers who had no access to Universities and continue through to the opening of (some) Universities to Jewish students in the 15th and 16th centuries. Readings include Maimonides, Jacob Anatoli, Gersonides, Albo, Judah Messer Leon, Alemanno, Isaac Abravanel, and Obadiah Sforno.
Instructor(s): Yehuda Halper Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): This course meets the HS or SCSR Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): HIPS 23614, HIJD 36314, JWSC 26314, RLST 26314

MDVL 26523. Dante's Vita Nuova: a Revolutionary Love. 100 Units.
The course consists of a close, discussion-based reading of Dante's "Vita nuova," examined within its biographical, literary and cultural context. The aim is to understand why the "Vita nuova," an autobiographical narration in vernacular about Dante's love for Beatrice, represents a revolutionary book in the panorama of Medieval literature. The course will proceed with the reading and analysis of the most important chapters and poems, which will be contextualized within the author's self-representation strategy. In this way, we will retrace the fundamental stages of the inner renewal that lead Dante to discover a new conception of love and poetry. Furthermore, some episodes will be read in relation to the cantos of "Purgatory" in which Dante returns to confront his past as a love poet. Finally, special attention will be paid to the relationship with Guido Cavalcanti, celebrated by Dante as "first friend" and dedicatee, but ultimately surpassed by Dante's new representation of love. Upon completion of the course, students should have improved their ability to think critically, and to understand and analyze a literary text on different levels of meaning. Furthermore, they should have developed an in-depth knowledge of Dante's works and the methodologies of Dante studies.
Instructor(s): H. Justin Steinberg Terms Offered: Not offered this academic year
Prerequisite(s): Consent of instructor required for undergraduates.
Equivalent Course(s): ITAL 36523, ITAL 26523, FNDL 26523

MDVL 26700. Jeanne d'Arc, histoire et legende. 100 Units.
S'appuyant sur l'exemple de Jeanne d'Arc, ce cours s'intéressera à la manière dont nous transformons le passé à la lumière des besoins et des soucis du présent. Nous situerons Jeanne d'Arc dans son contexte historique à l'aide des documents légaux, littéraires, et ecclésiastiques. Nous considérerons ensuite les représentations multiples et variées de Jeanne au cours des siècles suivants, examinant par exemple des textes de Voltaire, de Michelet, d'Anouilh, et d'autres, ainsi que des films qui présentent la vie de Jeanne d'Arc.
Instructor(s): Daisy Delogu Terms Offered: Not offered this academic year
Prerequisite(s): FREN 20500, 20503 or a literature course taught in French.
Equivalent Course(s): FREN 26700, GNSE 26700

MDVL 26706. Humor and Judaism in the Middle Ages. 100 Units.
We shall examine medieval Jewish humoristic writings of 12-14th Spain and Southern France against the backdrop of the curious fact that the authors of these writings were also some of the most important medieval Jewish philosophers of the period. Is it coincidence that Aristotelian philosophers also wrote lasting works of humor? Did they see their humoristic writings as diversions from their philosophical and scientific activities or part of a larger project? If the latter, what kind of philosophical content could be in these writings? Is such humor a skeptical approach to serious science? Does it reflect deeper ethical questions? Does humor provide a place to question religious tenets? To approach these questions we will read the central writings of these thinkers, beginning with Joseph Ibn Zabara's Book of Delights, then turning to Immanuel of Rome's Canto's, then Qalonimos ben Qalonimos' Eben Bohan and Purim parody, and finally turning to Gersonides's Purim parodies. We shall take into consideration questions of genre such as the influence of the Arabic maqamat, Italian parodies, and French farces.
Instructor(s): Yehuda Halper Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): This course meets the HS or LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): HIJD 36706, JWSC 26706, RLST 26706

MDVL 27020. Christianity and Islam in the Western Mediterranean World during the Late Middle Ages. 100 Units.
El curso analizará los contactos mantenidos entre mundo cristiano y mundo islámico en el Mediterráneo bajomedieval, tomando la Corona de Aragón y sus ricas fuentes documentales como observatorio privilegiado. Las particularidades de la Corona de Aragón se compararán con las de otros estados cristianos del Occidente mediterráneo que mantuvieron relaciones sostenidas con los musulmanes. Tras la definición de la naturaleza y de las especificidades de los contactos político-diplomáticos, mercantiles y pirático-corsarios entre Cristiandad e Islam, las clases se focalizarán en la identificación y caracterización de colectivos y personas que actuaron como mediadores lingüísticos y culturales entre ambas realidades. Se determinarán las circunstancias y motivos que permitieron que agentes diplomáticos, mercaderes, mercenarios, piratas-corsarios o cautivos-esclavos vehicularan los contactos. Y se analizarán y compararán las distintas tipologías documentales que son plasmación de todos esos intercambios y contactos culturales y humanos.
Instructor(s): R. Salicrú i Lluch
Note(s): Taught in Spanish.
Equivalent Course(s): CATA 37020, CATA 27020, SPAN 27020, RLST 27020, SPAN 37020

MDVL 27880. Labor, Sex, and Magic: Celestina and Other Witches. 100 Units.
The image of witchcraft in the Iberian Peninsula is rooted in a tradition of technique, healing, bodily care, and the management of sexual labor. In this class, we will discuss the numerous witches of Iberian literary traditions (Trotaconventos, Eufrosina, Fabia), paying particular attention to Fernando de Rojas's "Celestina," written during the transition from the Middle Ages to the early modern period. These witches orchestrate the romances of unfortunate young people and strive for survival in the shifting urban landscape of pre-modernity, a time of wars, revolts, plagues, and catastrophes. In this class, we will explore the status of these women within the social transformations of their time, why so many authors regarded them as emblematic figures of pre-modern Iberian cities, and what they reveal to us today about the lives of women in that era.
Instructor(s): Noel Blanco Mourelle Terms Offered: Not offered this academic year
Equivalent Course(s): GNSE 30157, GNSE 20157, SPAN 37880, SPAN 27880

MDVL 28013. Love, Desire, and Sexuality in Islamic Texts and Contexts. 100 Units.
What separates love from lust? How do our erotic desires and sexual practices intersect with our beliefs? This interdisciplinary class explores these questions in conversation with foundational thinkers from the Islamic tradition alongside insights from feminist and queer theory. We will delve into questions on the relationship between romantic, familial, and divine love; gender, sexuality, and the body; and Orientalism and the politics of reading desire cross-culturally. Exploring a diverse set of primary sources that range from the Qur'ān to Rūmī's Masnāvī to contemporary Bollywood, we will encounter different representations of love, desire, and sexuality in religious and philosophical discourses, literary representations, and visual media. We will examine not only how these representations reflect different historical norms, but also how and to what extent texts and images can inform or impact the norms of their contexts as well. No prerequisite knowledge of the topics or time periods discussed is needed, and students will have the opportunity over the course of the class to develop a project that relates our content to their own interests.
Instructor(s): Allison Kanner-Botan Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): SALC 28013, CMLT 28013, GNSE 23135, RLST 28013, NEHC 29018

MDVL 28311. Image, Iconoclasm, Animation. 100 Units.
This course will explore the fantasies of the animation of images both ancient and early Christian, both secular and sacred, as the backdrop to examining the phenomenon of iconoclasm as an assault on the image from pre-Christian antiquity via Byzantium to the Protestant Reformation. It will tackle both texts and images, the archaeological context of image-assault and the conceptual (indeed theological) contexts within which such assault was both justified and condemned. These historical issues cannot be separated, in our scholarly approaches and responses, from a vibrant contemporary culture around question of virtuality, animation, image-worship and image-destruction in the current world. The course will provide space to reflect on the problems raised by this. The course will be taught over the first four and a half weeks in the Spring Quarter on an intensive schedule. It will be examined on the basis of a paper, due on a subject to be agreed and on a date to be agreed at the end of the Spring quarter.
Instructor(s): Jaś Elsner Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): The course will be taught over the first 4 and a half weeks in the Spring Quarter on an intensive schedule.
Note(s): This course meets the HS or LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): ARTH 38311, CLAS 35923, RLST 28311, ARTH 28311, RLVC 38311, CLCV 25923, KNOW 38311

MDVL 28319. Iconophobia: The Prohibition and Destruction of Religious Images. 100 Units.
This course examines concepts of art that reflect iconophobia, "fear of images," in the Abrahamic religions-Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Since antiquity, iconophobia has led to theological debates that resulted in the prohibition of images in sacred spaces, rituals, and other forms of religious practice. In extreme cases, iconophobia has caused acts of iconoclasm, the violent destruction of art. In all three religions, fear of idolatry ("idol worship") has been the main cause of iconophobia. We will examine what exactly constitutes an idol and how the definitions of idols differ from iconophile ("image-loving") assessments of religious art. Both iconophobic and iconophile arguments shed light on the various functions and effects of religious images and illustrate their power. Furthermore, they reveal attitudes towards artistic creation, materiality, aesthetics, sensory perception, and truth in art. Most of the topics and readings will focus on the premodern period from antiquity to the 16th century. However, we will also look at some of the effects of iconophobia in modernity. Readings will include, but are not limited to, texts from the Hebrew Bible, Christian exegesis, the Qur'an, Byzantine Iconoclasm, and the Protestant Reformation. Material evidence of iconophobia and iconoclasm from different religious contexts will also be discussed.
Instructor(s): Karin Krause Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CLCV 28325, RLST 28319, RLVC 38319, HCHR 38319, ARTH 28319, CLAS 38325, ARTH 38319, GLST 28319

MDVL 28325. Art and Description in Antiquity and Byzantium. 100 Units.
This course explores the rich tradition of ekphrasis in Greco-Roman antiquity and Byzantium - as it ranges from vivid description in general to a specific engagement with works of art. While the prime focus will remain on texts from Greece, Rome and Byzantium - in order to establish what might be called the ancestry of a genre in the European tradition and especially its fascinating place between pagan polytheistic and Christian writing -- there will be opportunity in the final paper to range beyond this into questions of comparative literature,

art (history) writing and ekphrasis in other periods or contexts, depending on students' interests and needs. A reading knowledge of Greek in particular could not be described as a disadvantage, but the course can be taken without knowing the ancient languages. The course will be taught over the first 4 and a half weeks in the Spring Quarter on an intensive schedule. It will be examined on the basis of a paper, due on a subject to be agreed and on a date to be agreed at the end of the Spring quarter.
Instructor(s): Jaś Elsner and Karin Krause Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): The course will be taught over the first 4 and a half weeks in the Spring Quarter on an intensive schedule.
Note(s): This course meets the HS or LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): RLVC 38325, RLST 28325, CLCV 28323, KNOW 38325, ARTH 28325, ARTH 38325, CLAS 38323

MDVL 28328. Africa's Byzantine Heritage: Religion and Art in Pluralistic Societies. 100 Units.
This quarter-length course is conceived around themes and artifacts of an innovative special exhibition titled Africa & Byzantium at the Metropolitan Museum of Art that we will be visiting together (Feb. 16-18, 2024). It will be the first time a museum has showcased the important contributions of Africa's multiethnic societies to the cultural and religious life of the Christian Empire of Byzantium. In addition, the Met boasts a world-renowned permanent collection of Byzantine artifacts, several of which we will be studying as well during our field trip. The Byzantine Empire (4th cent.-1453) encompassed large parts of the Mediterranean, the Balkans, Anatolia, and the Middle East, with North and East Africa forming part of the empire from the fourth century CE to the Islamic conquest (early 7th cent.). Under Islamic rule, the African continent's Byzantine-Christian legacy continued to be influential and has a rich afterlife to this day. The field trip will enable students hone their competence in visual analysis through close-up study of artworks representing a range of artistic media and techniques. The classroom sessions will illuminate the historical and cultural framework in which the artifacts are situated. Africa's Byzantine heritage is an emerging field of study and in this course students who wish to pursue their own research projects will have ample opportunity to do so. Students will also attend weekly discussion sections led by the TA.
Instructor(s): Karin Krause Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Students enrolled in this course will participate in a *mandatory* three-day field trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Feb. 16–18, 2024). Travel and lodging will be fully covered through a Curricular Innovation and Undergraduate Research grant provided by the College.
Equivalent Course(s): CLCV 25323, ARTH 28328, RLST 28328

MDVL 28404. Introduction to Old English. 100 Units.
Moðde word fræt." These are the first words of a riddle that students will learn how to read in this course. As the first part of the Medieval Research Series, this course introduces students to the Old English language, the literary history of early medieval England, and current research tools and scholarship in the field of Old English. In studying the language, we will explore its diverse and exciting body of literature, including poems of heroic violence and lament, laws, medical recipes, and humorously obscene riddles. Successful completion of the course will give students a rich sense not only of the earliest period of English literary culture, but also of the structure of the English language as it is written and spoken today. (Pre-1650; Med/Ren) This course is the first in a two quarter Medieval Research sequence. No prior experience with Old or Middle English is required. The second course in the Medieval Research sequence (Beowulf) will be offered in the Spring Quarter.
Instructor(s): Benjamin Saltzman Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): ENGL 38404, ENGL 28404

MDVL 28405. Old English Riddles (Med. Research Sequence II) 100 Units.
In this course, we will read and translate all of the Exeter Book Riddles from Old English, attending closely to issues of language, paleography, textual cruxes, and-of course-interpretation. In an effort to understand these riddles within a broader early medieval tradition of enigmatic poetry, we will also read several Old English charms as well as Anglo-Latin riddles in translation. Emphasis will also be placed on the history of scholarship on early medieval riddles, and over the course of the term, each student will produce a piece original scholarly research that engages with a riddle or set of riddles and the critical tradition. (Pre-1650, Poetry); (Med/Ren).
Instructor(s): Benjamin Saltzman Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): This course is the second in a two-quarter Medieval Research Sequence and prior knowledge of Old English will be required.
Equivalent Course(s): ENGL 38405, ENGL 28405

MDVL 28705. Christian Iconography. 100 Units.
In Christian culture, visual images have for many centuries played a pivotal role in ritual, devotion, intellectual thought, and religious instruction. The most important aims of this course are that students understand images convey meaning in very unique ways and learn how to decode their visual messages. The study of iconography encompasses a variety of methods used to identify the subject matter of a pictorial image, describe its contents, and analyze its discursive strategies in view of its original cultural context. We will cover some of the most important themes visualized in the arts of Christianity by analyzing imagery spanning different periods, geographical regions, pictorial media, and artistic techniques. While special emphasis is placed on the intersections of art and literature, we will also examine pictorial themes that are independent of a specific textual basis. Alongside the study of Christian iconography, this course will address broader issues of visual inquiry, such as patronage, viewer response, emotions, and gender roles. In this course, students will acquire

a 'visual literacy' that will enable them to explore all kinds of works of art fruitfully as primary sources in their own right. Students will be examined on the basis of an essay and one oral presentation of a work of art. Active participation in the classroom discussion is also a requirement.
Instructor(s): Karin Krause Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): This course is intended primarily for students who have little or no familiarity with the methods of visual analysis.
Equivalent Course(s): ARTH 28705, RLST 28705, CMLT 28705

MDVL 29004. Ekphrasis: Art, Description and Religion. 100 Units.
This course explores the rich traditions of description - ekphrasis - from Greco-Roman antiquity into the middle ages. It tackles texts (both prose and verse) in order to establish the ramifications of a genre in the European tradition, and its applications in particular to visual culture and religion. There will be opportunity in the final paper to range beyond these into questions of comparative literature, art (history) writing, religious imagination and ekphrasis in all periods or contexts, as well as into the use of images or films as themselves forms of descriptive response. The course is intended for graduates but interested undergraduates are very welcome. It will be examined on the basis of a paper, due on a subject to be agreed and on a date to be agreed at the end of the Spring quarter.
Instructor(s): Jaś Elsner Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): This course will be taught virtually for the last two weeks of the quarter. This course meets the HS or LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): RLST 29004, RLVC 40400, BIBL 40400, ARTH 40400, CLAS 42600, CLCV 29600, ARTH 21702

MDVL 29104. Antisemitism and Islamophobia, Historically and Today. 100 Units.
How are antisemitism and Islamophobia linked together? Are they two different modes of oppression and discrimination or are they part of a similar phenomenon? Moreover, are they religious, racial, or ethnic forms of discrimination? Throughout this course, we will complicate the media narrative that sees Jews and Arabs as perpetual enemies through a historical and philosophical exploration into the origins and development of Orientalism, Islamophobia, and antisemitism. Students will think historically about the construction of race, ethnicity, and religion, and the discriminatory modes by which these are employed; and they will use that knowledge to think critically about current depictions of anti-Jewish and anti-Islamic violence. In the first part of the course, we will consider the historical and conceptual underpinnings of antisemitism and Islamophobia. We will look to 14th and 15th century Spain in order to better understand how and where they originated; we will then track their development through modernity, paying close attention to how these discourses changed and evolved over time; finally, we will look at the impact of the Holocaust and the rise of the State of Israel and consider current iterations of Islamophobia and antisemitism in Europe and America today.
Instructor(s): Mendel Kranz Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 26009, JWSC 29104, RLST 29104

MDVL 29806. Archival Methods and Historical Thinking. 100 Units.
Archival Methods & Historical Thinking interrogates the concepts, theories, and practices of the archive from a historical perspective. In many ways, history is a discipline defined by a set of questions rather than a singular approach. We will begin by analyzing how historians do the work of interpreting sources to construct historical narratives and arguments. Then, examining archival theory, its lapses, and its possibilities, we will determine what characteristics make an archive and how we can historicize it as an object of inquiry in its own right. We will then tackle a representative sample of the types of sources and archives you are most likely to engage as a social science researcher. Looking at how people have archived written ephemera, material culture, photographs, film, music, urban space, and the internet, we will pair the specific theoretical concerns of a given source type's archiving with practical examples of how social scientists have explicitly mediated, transcended, or succumbed to the experience of the archive: its structure, its customs, its absences, and more. You will gain an understanding of the mechanics of archival work for a social science researcher as well as an appreciation for the complexity of historical thinking. By the end of the course, you will learn how to reconcile archival theory with the realities and practices of research in order to become better, more ethical, and more rigorous researchers.
Instructor(s): A. Hofmann Terms Offered: Summer
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 29806, RLST 20806

MDVL 29902. Tolkien: Medieval and Modern. 100 Units.
J. R. R. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings" is one of the most popular works of imaginative literature of the twentieth centruy. This course seeks to understand its appeal by situating Tolkien's creation within the context of Tolkien's own work as both artist and scholar alongside its medieval sources and modern parallels. Themes to be addressed include the problem of genre and the uses of tradition; the nature of history and its relationship to place; the activity of creation and its relationship to language, beauty, evil, and power; the role of monsters in imagination and criticism; the twinned challenges of death and immortality, fate and free will; and the interaction between the world of "faerie" and religious belief.
Instructor(s): R. Fulton Brown Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Students must have read "The Lord of the Rings" prior to first day of class.
Equivalent Course(s): RLST 22400, HIST 29902, FNDL 24901

MDVL 35418. Figura, Persona, Vox: Prosopopoeia in the Middle Ages. 100 Units.
This course considers fictional persons, tropes of anthropomorphism and vivification, and personificational allegory as these operate in the theory and practice of medieval imaginative writing. In addition, it places practices of prosopopoeia within ongoing scholarly conversations about lyric voice, literary character, affect, the ontology of fiction, and the relation of speech to writing. (Med/Ren)
Instructor(s): Julie Orlemanski Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): ENGL 35418