



MEDIEVAL STUDIES

Spring 2018 Courses

- I. Undergraduate Course Descriptions
- II. Undergraduate/Graduate Courses
- III. Graduate Course Descriptions

Note: For Cross-listed courses the CRN is that for MDVL; the CRN for other Departments will differ.

For information on the MDVL major, minor and Graduate concentration, please email stoppino@illinois.edu



I. Undergraduate Courses

MDVL 111 Ancient to Medieval Art

credit: 4 hours

Same as ARTH 111.

This course satisfies the General Education Criteria in Spring 2018 for Humanities – Lit & Arts

63613 — Lecture: 2:00 - 3:20 TR

312 Gregory Hall

Instructor: John Senseny

MDVL 122 Swords, Sorcery & Sex: The Middle Ages in Popular Culture

credit: 3 hours.

Same as ENGL 122.

This course satisfies the General Education Criteria in Spring 2018 for Humanities – Lit & Arts

2:00 - 3:15 MW - 1120 FLB

Explores the use of medievalism in contemporary popular culture. Instructors may draw from film, television, music, fiction, graphic novels, gaming, and other sources, and they approach the material from a variety of cultural, historical, and aesthetic traditions. The goal of the course will be to understand how the medieval periods of world cultures have been reinvented in modern times, and how modernity has been constructed in relation and in opposition to the medieval imaginary.

HIST 141 Western Civilization from Antiquity to 1660

credit: 3 hours.

33867 Lecture: 10:00AM - 10:50AM MW - 120 Architecture Building

Fundamental developments in the history of Western societies from antiquity to early modern Europe; includes the Greek and Roman worlds, the influence of Christianity and Islam, the emergence of medieval monarchies, the rise of cities, the commercial and intellectual revolutions of the Middle Ages, the birth of the university, the conquest and colonization of the Atlantic world, the Renaissance and Reformation, the political and religious upheavals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

MDVL 201 Medieval Literature and Culture

credit: 3 hours

Same as ENGL 202 and CWL 253 Section P

43183 — 11:00-12:15 TR - 108 English Bldg.

Instructor: C. Wright

In this class we'll traverse the medieval globe, with layovers in Ireland, England, and Germany; China and Japan; and Persia and West Africa, sampling as we go great literary works (all in English translation) from each civilization during the period corresponding to the European "Middle Ages." Starting out in Ireland we'll read the outrageous epic *The Táin*, about a cattle-raid led by the warrior-queen Medb of Connacht against the Ulstermen and their boy-hero Cuchulainn (whose weirdest super-power is his grotesque "warp-spasm"). We'll then cross the Irish Sea to read the *Lais of Marie de France* (who lived in England, actually), in which desperate housewives and courtly lovers inhabit a medieval fantasy world at once naïve and sophisticated. On our tour of East Asia we'll take up Chinese Tang Dynasty poems, exquisitely concise observations of nature, culture, and human emotion; the *Tale of Genji*, a leisurely narrative about the affairs (and marriages) of the "shining prince" of the Japanese imperial court; and *The Confessions of Lady Nijo*, a scandalous memoir of the affairs (and travels) of an imperial concubine who became a Buddhist nun and whose favorite book was—the *Tale of Genji*! Passing through medieval Iran on our way back to Europe, we'll read *Vis and Ramin*, a Persian romance about a queen's affair with her husband's brother. Then we'll make for Germany to compare *Vis and Ramin* with *Tristan and Isolde*, a European variation on the same basic story, but in a very different setting and with a very different ending. And finally we'll venture south into medieval and modern Africa to attend a recitation of *The Epic of Sunjata* (preserved in twentieth-century oral versions but with roots reaching back to the thirteenth century), whose hero overcomes a physical disability as well as the enmity of the queen stepmother and her own son. Our fifteen-week mission: to explore strange old worlds—to seek out medieval life and medieval civilizations!

HIST 213 African Muslim Cultures

credit: 3 Hours.

This course satisfies the General Education Criteria in Spring 2018 for Cultural Studies - Non-West;

Humanities – Hist & Phil

65936 — 11:00-12:20 MW - 370 Armory

Instructor: Mauro Nobili

The course focuses on the history and historiography of Muslim societies in Africa. It investigates the dynamics of the spread of Islam in Africa, and explores differences in Islam in Africa from other areas of the Islamic world, with attention to the image in Western scholarship of Islam in Africa. Provides students with the knowledge and skills they need to understand this central phenomenon in modern world history. Same as AFST 213.

MDVL 245 Women and Gender in Medieval Europe

credit: 3 hours.

2nd 8-week course; CRN and schedule TBA

Instructor: Kent Navalesi

The course examines the history of women and the evolution of concepts of gender in western Europe from roughly 400 to 1700. Topics include the interactions of class and ethnicity with women's experiences, the social construction of sexuality and gender, the misogynist tradition, and women's self-images.

EALC 275 Masterpieces of East Asian Literature

credit: 3 hours.

This course satisfies the General Education Criteria for a: UIUC: Non-Western Cultures

UIUC: Literature and the Arts

33152 Lecture: 12:00 PM - 12:50 PM MW 2 Education Building

Instructor: Giampiero Persiani

Study of major works in the literary traditions of China and Japan, including haiku, noh, Tale of Genji, kabuki, Tang poetry, Ming theater, and the colloquial tale. Same as CWL 275. No knowledge of Chinese or Japanese language required.

SCAN 306/506 Old Norse-Icelandic II

63439 (U)/63447 (G) 12:30-1:50 TR - 1024 FLB

Instructor: Verena Hoefig

An introduction to Old Norse-Icelandic literature and culture, accompanied by selected readings in prose and poetry, both in the original language and in translation. This course builds on the first semester introduction to the written language of Medieval Iceland and Norway, but will shift its emphasis from grammar instruction and translation practice to questions concerning the composition, style, content, and transmission of texts in Old Norse-Icelandic, and explore recent scholarly debates on issues pertaining to the study of Viking Age and Medieval Scandinavia. By the end of the course, students will have read, translated and analyzed excerpts from prose and poetry texts, and will have gained a thorough overview over the literary culture of the Medieval North.

Prerequisite: Scan/Mdv 305/505 or consent of instructor.

MDVL 344 Medieval Jewish Thought

credit: 3 hours. Same as REL 344.

59734 — 12:30-1:50 TR 111- David Kinley Hall

Instructor: Dov Weiss

Study of the distinctive religious ideas, movements, and figures of Medieval Judaism [500 CE-1700 CE]. Topics include theology, philosophy, Talmudic and

Biblical exegesis, mysticism, Jewish-Christian polemics, and law. Emphasis will be placed not only on content and form, but also on historical and social context.

II. Graduate/Undergraduate Courses

MDVL 410 Intersectionality in the Medieval British Isles

52274 (U) / 52275 (G) — 3:30 – 4:45 MW - 150 English Building

Instructor: Renée Trilling

Medieval Britain is often portrayed as a relatively quiet cultural backwater, far from the bright cosmopolitan centers of the Middle Ages, with rigid class distinctions, strict gender roles, and an utter lack of ethnic and religious diversity. Throughout the period, however, Insular art and culture reveals a fascination with a broad range of cultural intersections available through its literary heritage, and these texts form the foundation of what we know today as “British literature.” Our goal will be to excavate that foundation in search of a richer, more nuanced understanding of the medieval British Isles as part of a much larger cultural world. In this course, we will dive deep into the multilingual, multicultural milieu of medieval British literary production. Medieval authors wrote in English, French, Latin, Irish, Welsh, Norse and Scots; they describe encounters with Vikings and Africans, Jews and Muslims. Our readings will include Irish myth and legend, Welsh Arthuriana, Anglo-Saxon stories of the Far East, Scandinavian-influenced poetry, French romance, Middle English tales of blood libel, and the biography of a transgender prostitute. As we read, we will consider how notions of group identity are being developed and deployed across periods and genres, and we will explore the various ways that medieval authors, like modern readers, grapple with questions of difference.

MDVL 413 Dante’s *Comedy*

3 undergraduate hours. 4 graduate hours. Same as CWL 413 and MDVL 413.

34723 (U) / 59975 (G) — 11:00-12:20 TR - 164 Noyes Laboratory

Instructor: Corey Flack

Enter the world of Dante through his masterpiece, the *Divine comedy*. We will explore the three realms of the afterlife, Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso, as well as the medieval historical, religious, and cultural context of Dante’s work. Taught in English. Knowledge of Italian is not required.

MDVL 440 Early Christian Thought

40401 (U)/40397 (G) 1:00-1:50 MWF - G36 FLB

Same as REL 440

Instructor: Richard Layton

Study of major developments in early Christian thought (first four centuries) through discussion of primary texts in translation.

3 undergraduate hours. 3 or 4 graduate hours. Prerequisite: REL 121 or REL 202, or consent of instructor.

MDVL 443 The Early Byzantine Empire

50021 (U)/ 50022 (G) 12:30-1:50 TR - 311 Gregory Hall
Same as HIST 443

Instructor: Ralph Mathisen

The course will examine the political, social, economic, military, institutional, religious and cultural development of the Early Byzantine Empire focusing on the reigns of Diocletian (284-305 CE) through the Heraclian Dynasty (610-717 CE).

ANTH 459 The Ancient Maya

3 undergraduate hours. 3 graduate hours.
51361 — 12:30-1:50 TR - 329 Davenport Hall

Instructor: Lisa Lucero

Introduction to the Ancient Maya of Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, and Honduras. Evaluates theories that account for the rise and fall of Classic (c. A.D. 250-950) Maya rulership. Excavation data, iconography, and inscriptions are used to reconstruct political and social organization, ideology, subsistence activities, and inter-regional interactions.

III. Graduate Seminars

MDVL 500

Medieval Seminar: The Apocrypha in the Middle Ages

Same as ENGL 564 Section T
32281 – 3:00-4:50 R - 135 English

Instructor: Charlie Wright

Topic: The Apocrypha in the Middle Ages. In the Middle Ages the Bible was complemented by a wide range of apocryphal and pseudepigraphical narratives that purported to supply information and back-stories that the Bible left out, such as the fall of Lucifer; the life of Adam and Eve after the Fall; the childhood of Jesus; the Harrowing of Hell; the visions and missions of the apostles; the life and Assumption of Mary; and the fate of souls after death. Despite their non-canonical

status, these narratives were widely popular and widely read. Many were translated or adapted in medieval vernacular languages, and they profoundly influenced medieval beliefs, literature, and art. We will read (in modern English translation) some of the most important and influential Jewish and Christian apocrypha, focusing on their medieval transmission and influence as well as on some of their medieval vernacular avatars. Special attention will be paid to the apocrypha in Anglo-Saxon England and Ireland, but we will also be concerned with the apocrypha as a broader global medieval phenomenon in which texts originally written in (or now surviving only in) Hebrew, Greek, Syriac, Ethiopic, and Coptic were translated into Latin and migrated across Europe. There will also be some cross-cultural comparison with the relation of apocrypha to scriptural canon in other medieval religions, notably in Islamic and Buddhist. Reading knowledge of Latin (or any other medieval language) is not required or expected (though it would obviously be an advantage in enabling access to the original texts, opening up research possibilities, and following the secondary scholarship). Seminar papers can deal with any aspect of the original apocryphal writings, with their medieval transmission, translation, adaptation, or influence, or with apocryphal writings in other medieval world religions.

MDVL 506 Old Norse-Icelandic II

Same as SCAN 506

63447 - 12:30-1:50 TR - 1024 FLB

Instructor: Verena Hoefig

An introduction to Old Norse-Icelandic literature and culture, accompanied by selected readings in prose and poetry, both in the original language and in translation. This course builds on the first semester introduction to the written language of Medieval Iceland and Norway, but will shift its emphasis from grammar instruction and translation practice to questions concerning the composition, style, content, and transmission of texts in Old Norse-Icelandic, and explore recent scholarly debates on issues pertaining to the study of Viking Age and Medieval Scandinavia. By the end of the course, students will have read, translated and analyzed excerpts from prose and poetry texts, and will have gained a thorough overview over the literary culture of the Medieval North.

Prerequisite: Scan/Mdv 305/505 or consent of instructor.

SLAV 525 G

Medieval Epics and Modern Forgeries: The Igor Tale in its Contexts

48681 – 2:00–4:50 W - 1032 FLB

Instructor: David Cooper

Since its discovery in the late eighteenth century, the Slovo o polku Igoreve (the Igor Tale) has occupied a central but isolated place in Russian literary history. Received as a secular national epic, Slovo stood out as unique in the canon of medieval Russian literature and as singularly important to the forging of a modern Russian national literary identity. These features led to suspicions concerning the authenticity of the work from the very beginning. In this course, we will read the text of Slovo closely (in the Old East Slavic/OCS) and examine its features as a literary work in comparison to related Kievan period texts, to other “authentic” medieval epics, to oral epic traditions, and to later “forgeries.” We will examine the debates over Slovo’s authenticity and explore how arguments on both sides shed light on the nature of medieval literature and how that literature was received (and transformed) in the age of developing nationalism. Ability to read literary and critical texts in Russian required; inquire with instructor about the possibility to accommodate graduate students with different linguistic abilities.

MDVL 571 Medieval German Studies: The Heroic Tradition

40116 — 3:00-4:50 T 1118 FLB

Instructor: Verena Hoefig

This course provides a survey of the heroic legends which create the backbone of medieval Germanic storytelling. More specifically, it will focus on works dealing with the figure of Wieland der Schmied, Dietrich of Bern, and the Nibelungen / Völsungar clan. We will dedicate attention to the historical background of the Germanic legends (the last centuries of the Roman Empire), study the development of Germanic oral narrative poetry, and discuss the various forms, the geographical locations, and the social contexts that led to the preservation of literary and pictorial versions of Germanic heroic legend. How come so much of the extant material stems from Iceland, of all places? Readings will be assigned in English translation whenever possible, but may include smaller segments in Old and Middle High German, Old Norse, or Latin, depending on students’ interests.

