

Medieval/Renaissance Studies

AN INTERDEPARTMENTAL MAJOR

Director: *Ramseyer (History)*

Advisory Committee: *Carroll (Art), Elkins (Religion), Lynch (English), Vega (Spanish)*

The major in Medieval/Renaissance Studies enables students to explore the richness and variety of European and Mediterranean civilization from later Greco-Roman times through the Renaissance and Reformation, as reflected in art, history, literature, music, and religion. It has a strong interdisciplinary emphasis; we encourage students to make connections between the approaches and subject matters in the different fields that make up the major. At the same time, the requirements for the major encourage special competence in at least one field.

Goals for the Major

The Medieval/Renaissance major seeks to develop the following areas of knowledge and skills in its majors:

An acquaintance with the richness and variety of European and Mediterranean civilization from the later Greco-Roman times through the Renaissance and Reformation (c. 300–1600 C.E.), as reflected in art, history, literature, music, and religion

The opportunity to work across disciplines and make connections between the approaches and subject matters in the different fields that make up the major

An in-depth understanding and special competence in at least one area of humanistic study during the period

The ability to analyze and critique primary and secondary source material in a variety of humanistic disciplines

The ability to express ideas clearly and cogently in both written and spoken language, and to conduct original research

ME/R 246 Monsters, Villains, and Wives

Lynch (English)

This course will select its monsters, villains, and wives from early English, French, and Anglo-Norman literature, ranging from the giant Grendel (and his mother) in *Beowulf* to the arch-villain Ganelon in *The Song of Roland*, from Guinevere to the wife of the enigmatic Green Man in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. We will finish by considering the survival of the magical villain in a modern-day fantasy classic like the medievalist J.R.R. Tolkien's *Hobbit*, or a volume in his *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, and in John Gardner's recasting of the *Beowulf* story, *Grendel*.

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: Spring

Unit: 1.0

ME/R 247 Arthurian Legends

Wall-Randell (English)

NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10. The legends of King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table, with their themes of chivalry, magic, friendship, war, adventure, corruption, and nostalgia, as well as romantic love and betrayal, make up one of the most influential and enduring mythologies in European culture. This course will examine literary interpretations of the Arthurian legend, in history, epic, and romance, from the sixth century through the sixteenth. We will also consider some later examples of Arthuriana, on page and movie screen, in the Victorian and modern periods.

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: N/O

Unit: 1.0

ME/R 248 Medieval Women Writers

NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10. This course explores a variety of texts by medieval women writers and the contexts in which and against which they were written. These texts raise questions about the role of the female body and about strategies of self-authorization which remain important today. The writers we will consider in depth are Marie de France, Heloise (and Abelard), selected medieval mystics, Margery Kempe, Julian of Norwich, and Christine de Pizan.

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: N/O

Unit: 1.0

ME/R 344 Tales of Love

NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10. Love becomes a central subject of literature in the Middle Ages and remains so in our own time. This course explores some canonic medieval tales of love and selected Renaissance dramatizations of the power of passion. Topics range from Tristan and Iseult's transgressive love to the ill-fated wartime infatuation of Troilus and Criseyde.

Prerequisite: Open to juniors and seniors or by permission of the instructor. Preference given to Medieval/Renaissance Studies majors.

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: N/O

Unit: 1.0

ME/R 350 Research or Individual Study

Prerequisite: Open by permission to juniors and seniors.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring

Unit: 1.0

ME/R 360 Senior Thesis Research

Prerequisite: By permission of the directors of the Medieval/Renaissance Studies program. See Directions for Election and Academic Distinctions.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring

Unit: 1.0

ME/R 370 Senior Thesis

Prerequisite: 360 and permission of department.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring

Unit: 1.0

Related Courses

For Credit Toward the Major

ARTH 100 Introduction to the History of Art Part I: Ancient and Medieval Art

ARTH 100/WRIT 125 Introduction to the History of Art Part I: Ancient and Medieval Art

ARTH 101 Introduction to the History of Art Part II: Renaissance to the Present

ARTH 101/WRIT 125 Introduction to the History of Art Part II: Renaissance to the Present

ARTH 201 Medieval Art and Architecture

ARTH 202 Byzantine Art and Architecture

ARTH 218 From Van Eyck to Bruegel: Painting in the Netherlands in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries

ARTH 221 Seventeenth-Century Dutch and Flemish Painting

ARTH 227 Islamic Architecture in the Age of the Caliphates

ARTH 244 Art, Patronage, and Society in Sixteenth-Century Italy

ARTH 246 Collectors, Saints, and Cheese Eaters in Baroque Italy

ARTH 247 Islamic Art and Architecture

ARTH 251 Renaissance Italy Before and After the Black Death

ARTH 267 Cross-Cultural Encounters in the Medieval Mediterranean

ARTH 268 Art, Architecture, and Pilgrimage in the Medieval World

ARTH 305 Seminar. History of Prints: New Media of the Renaissance

ARTH 330 Seminar. Italian Renaissance Art. Topic for 2009-10: Women Artists in Renaissance and Baroque Italy

ARTH 331 Seminar. The Art of Northern Europe. Topic for 2009-10: Bosch and Bruegel

ARTH 332 Seminar. Topics in Medieval Art. Topic for 2009-10: At the Crossroads of the Medieval Mediterranean: Southern Italy and Sicily, 1000–1300 C.E.

ARTH 369 Seminar. Conservation Studies: The Materials and Techniques of Painting and Sculpture

ARTS 107 Book Arts Studio

CLCV 211/311 Epic and Empire

ENG 112 Introduction to Shakespeare

ENG 213 Chaucer

ENG 222 Renaissance Literature

ENG 223 Shakespeare Part I: The Elizabethan Period

ENG 224 Shakespeare Part II: The Jacobean Period

ENG 225 Seventeenth-Century Literature

ENG 227 Milton

ENG 315 Advanced Studies in Medieval Literature

ENG 324 Advanced Studies in Shakespeare. Topic for 2009-10: *Hamlet Versus King Lear*. Which is Shakespeare's Greatest Play?

ENG 325 Advanced Studies in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Literature

ENG 387 Authors. Topic for 2009-10: Shakespeare Our Contemporary

FREN 301 Books and Voices in Renaissance France

FREN 333 French Classical Tragedy: Corneille Versus Racine: Rethinking the Parallel

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HIST 208 Society and Culture in Medieval Europe
HIST 209 The British Isles: From Roses to Revolution
HIST 213 Conquest and Crusade in the Medieval Mediterranean
HIST 214 Medieval Italy
HIST 219 The Jews of Spain and the Lands of Islam
HIST 222 The Barbarian Kingdoms of Early Medieval Europe
HIST 227 The Renaissance in Italy and Northern Europe
HIST 232 The Transformation of the Western World: Europe from 1300–1815
HIST 246 Vikings, Icons, Mongols, and Tsars
HIST 279/379 Heresy and Popular Religion in the Middle Ages
HIST 307 Seminar. Religious Change and the Emergence of Modernity in Early Modern Europe, 1600–1800
HIST 330 Seminar. Revolution and Rebellion in Twelfth-Century European Society
ITAS 263 Dante (in English)
ITAS 311 Theatre, Politics, and the Arts in Renaissance Italy
ITAS 312 *Rinascimento e Rinascimenti*: Cultural Identities in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Italy
MUS 200 History of Western Music I
MUS 224/REL 224 Hildegard of Bingen
REL 109 Religions of the Silk Road
REL 215 Christian Spirituality
REL 216 Christian Thought: 100–1600
REL 224/MUS 224 Hildegard of Bingen
REL 226 The Virgin Mary
REL 240 Romans, Jews, and Christians in the Roman Empire
REL 242 Introduction to Rabbinic Literature
REL 260 Islamic/ate Civilization
REL 261 Cities of the Islamic World
REL 262 The Formation of the Islamic Tradition
REL 269 Religion and Culture in Iran
REL 361 Seminar. Studying Islam and the Middle East
REL 364 Seminar. Sufism: Islamic Mysticism
REL 367 Seminar. Muslim Travelers
SPAN 252 Christians, Jews, and Moslems:
The Spirit of Spain in Its Literature
SPAN 300 Seminar. Honor, Monarchy, and Religion in Golden Age Drama
SPAN 302 Seminar. Cervantes
SPAN 307 Seminar. The Clothed and the Naked in Colonial Latin America
SPAN 318 Seminar. Love and Desire in Spain's Early Literature
WRIT 125/ARTH 100 Introduction to the History of Art Part I: Ancient and Medieval Art
WRIT 125/ARTH 101 Introduction to the History of Art Part II: Renaissance to the Present

Requirements for the Major

For a Medieval/Renaissance Studies major, students must take at least eight units of course work from the preceding course listings. Of these, at least four must be above the 100 level in an area of concentration—a single department, a geographical location, a topic or theme. A major in Medieval/Renaissance Studies will normally select her major advisor from the department or area in which she is concentrating. Two units of course work must be at the 300 level, and under normal circumstances, both of these courses must be taken at Wellesley College. Each year at least one 200-level course and one seminar are offered which are especially designed to accommodate the needs and interests of majors. The two majors' courses for 2009-10 are: ENG 324 Advanced Studies in Shakespeare. *Hamlet* versus *King Lear*: Which is Shakespeare's Greatest Play? (for details, see the listing under English) and ARTH 332 Seminar. At the Crossroads of the Medieval Mediterranean: Southern Italy and Sicily, 1000–1300 C.E. (for details, see the listing under History of Art). Normally, credit/noncredit courses do not count for the major.

Honors

The only route to honors in the major is writing a thesis and passing an oral examination. To be admitted to the thesis program, a student

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must have a grade point average of at least 3.5 in all work in the major field above the 100-level; the department may petition on her behalf if her GPA in the major is between 3.0 and 3.5. See Academic Distinctions.

Graduate Study and Careers

Majors who are contemplating postgraduate academic or professional careers in this or related fields should consult faculty advisors to plan a sequence of courses that will provide them with a sound background in the language and critical techniques essential to further work in their chosen fields. We make every effort to accommodate individual interests and needs through independent study projects (350s and senior theses) carried out under the supervision of one or more faculty members and designed to supplement, or substitute for, advanced seminar-level work.

Advanced Placement Policy

The Medieval/Renaissance Studies program does not accept AP credits to replace course work in the major.

Transfer Credit

Under normal circumstances, no more than two courses taken outside of Wellesley College will be counted toward the major.

Study Abroad

There are numerous opportunities for study abroad for those who wish to broaden their experience and supplement their research skills through direct contact with European and Mediterranean culture. Up to three courses in accredited programs abroad may be counted toward the major. By participating in the Collegium Musicum, students can learn to perform Medieval and Renaissance music; see the departmental entry for Music.