

Medieval/Renaissance Studies

AN INTERDEPARTMENTAL MAJOR

Director: *Ramseyer (History)*

Advisory Committee: *Carroll^{A2} (Art), Elkins (Religion), Lynch (English), Vega^A (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.

For a Medieval/Renaissance Studies major, students must take at least eight units of course work from the list that follows. 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 majors' courses for 2008-09 are (1) ARTH 330 (Birth, Marriage, and Death in Renaissance Italy) (for details, see the listing under Art History) and (2) ENG 235 (Earthly Delights: Gardens in Medieval and Renaissance Literature) (for details, see the listing under English). Normally, credit/non courses do not count for the major. The Medieval/Renaissance Studies program does not accept AP credits to replace course work in the major. Under normal circumstances, no more than two courses taken outside of Wellesley College will be counted toward the major.

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.

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 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.

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.

ME/R 246 Monsters, Villians, and Wives

Lynch (English)

NOT OFFERED IN 2008-09. 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: N/O Unit: 1.0

ME/R 247 Arthurian Legends

Wall-Randell (English)

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: Spring Unit: 1.0

ME/R 248 Medieval Women Writers

NOT OFFERED IN 2008-09. 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/ENG 315 The Love Story of Troilus and Criseyde

Lynch (English)

This seminar will trace the love story of Troilus and Criseyde (or as she is alternately called “Briseida” or “Cressida”) from its origins in the Middle Ages through Shakespeare’s treatment in the Renaissance (and beyond). We will especially note the evolution of Criseyde’s character as she is handled by different (male) authors as well as questions of historical truth that are linked to the transgressions of this lovely but faithless woman. Versions of her story taken from Latin, Old French, Italian, and Middle Scots texts will be considered alongside the canonical versions of Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Dryden. During the first month, the course will meet an additional hour for the instruction in Middle English that will enable students to read Chaucer’s poem in its original Middle English. *Students may register for either ME/R 344 or ENG 315 and credit will be granted accordingly.*

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

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: Fall 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 The Art and Architecture of the High Middle Ages in Europe

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 Sixteenth-Century Art in Italy

ARTH 246 The Baroque and Rococo in Italy

ARTH 247 Islamic Art and Architecture

ARTH 251 Renaissance Painting, Sculpture, and Decorative Arts in Italy

ARTH 267 Cross-Cultural Encounters in the Early Medieval Mediterranean

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

ARTH 304 Seminar. Renaissance Art

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

ARTH 310 Renaissance Architecture, Material Culture and Urban Form

ARTH 330 Seminar. Birth, Marriage, and Death in Renaissance Italy

ARTH 331 Seminar. The Art of Early Modern Europe. Topic for 2008-09: Rembrandt

ARTH 332 Seminar. Topics in Medieval Art.

ARTH 369 Seminar. Conservation Studies: The Material 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.

ENG 325 Advanced Studies in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Literature. Topic for 2008-09: Earthly Delights: Gardens in Medieval and Renaissance Literature.

ENG 383 Women in Literature, Culture, and Society. Topic for 2008-09: Jane Austen Among Others

EXP/ENG 150 Estranged Bedfellows of Literary History: Chaucer and Shakespeare

EXTD 240 Papyrus to Print to Pixel

FREN 301 Books and Voices in Renaissance France

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 to 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

PHIL 226 Human Nature in Three Medieval Philosophers

PHIL 310 Seminar. Ancient and Medieval Philosophy. Topic for 2008-09: The Psyche in Aristotle and Aristotelianism

PHIL 323 *Fides et Ratio*: Augustine's *Confessions* and the Philosophical Origins of Christianity

POL4 240 Classical and Medieval Political Theory

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 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 Travellers
SPAN 252 Christians, Jews, and Muslims: 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