MEDIEVAL STUDIES

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http://medieval.yale.edu
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

Chair and Director of Graduate Studies
Ardis Butterfield

Acting Chair and Director of Graduate Studies (2018–2019)
Jessica Brantley

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Faculty associated with the program
R. Howard Bloch, Gerhard Böwering, Jessica Brantley, Ardis Butterfield, Walter Cahn (Emeritus), Marcia Colish (Emerita), Stephen Davis, Paul Freedman, Johanna Frideriksdottir, Creighton Gilbert (Emeritus), Walter Goffart (Emeritus), Harvey Goldblatt, Frank Griffel, Dimitri Gutas (Emeritus), Valerie Hansen, Peter Hawkins, Jacqueline Jung, Traugott Lawler (Emeritus), Ivan Marcus, Vasileios Marinis, Giuseppe Mazzotta, Mary Miller, Robert Nelson, Henry Parkes, Fred Robinson (Emeritus), Barbara Shailor, Emily Thornberry, Shawkat Toorawa, Anders Winroth, Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan, Anna Zayaruznaya

Lecturer
Raymond Clemens

FIELDS OF STUDY
Fields in this interdisciplinary program include history, history of art, history of music, religious studies, languages and literatures, linguistics, and philosophy.

SPECIAL ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS
The General Test of the GRE is required. A writing sample of ten to twenty pages should be included with the application.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE
Languages required are Latin, French, and German. Latin may be replaced with Arabic, Greek, or Hebrew when appropriate. Proficiency in Latin, Arabic, Greek, and Hebrew is tested with an examination administered and evaluated by the program during the first term. Proficiency in French and German is demonstrated by passing the departmental examinations and should be achieved by the third term. Students will design their programs in close contact with the director of graduate studies (DGS). During the first two years students take fourteen term courses, and must receive an Honors grade in at least four term courses the first year. Students take an oral examination, usually in the fifth term, on a set of three topics worked out in consultation with the DGS. Then, having nurtured a topic of particular interest, the student submits a dissertation prospectus that must be approved by the end of the third year. Upon completion of all predissertation requirements, including the prospectus, students are admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree. What remains, then, is the writing, submission, and approval of the dissertation during the final two years.

Students in Medieval Studies participate in the Teaching Fellows Program in the third and fourth years.

MASTER’S DEGREES
M.Phil. See degree requirements under Policies and Regulations. The M.Phil. degree may be requested after all requirements but the dissertation are met.

M.A. (en route to the Ph.D.) Students enrolled in the Ph.D. program may qualify for the M.A. degree upon satisfactory completion of three terms of course work. Minimum requirements include a High Pass average in courses and passing the examination in Latin, Arabic, Greek, or Hebrew.

COURSES

MDVL 536a / HIST 536a, Charters, Cartularies, and Archives
Paul Freedman and N. Raymond Clemens
An examination of medieval documentation and how to use it to answer questions about medieval politics, society, and religion. Charters are single documents representing transactions, ranging from wills to grants of rights to sales contracts. Cartularies are collections of documents that show how an institution (usually an ecclesiastical institution) acquired property; and they back up and prove rights over those properties. The course looks at archives and ways in which documents end up in archives, how they are organized, and what that can tell us about the issues they focus on.

MDVL 563b / CLSS 602b, Advanced Latin Paleography
Barbara Shailor
The challenges of using hand-produced Latin manuscripts in research, with an emphasis on texts from the late Middle Ages. Gothic cursive scripts and book hands ca. 1200–ca. 1500; fragments of unidentified codices; complex or composite codices with heavy interlinear and marginal annotations. Manuscripts and fragments selected largely from collections in the Beinecke Library. Prerequisite: CLSS 601 or permission of the instructor.
MDVL 571a / CLSS 601a, Introduction to Latin Paleography  N. Raymond Clemens
Latin paleography from the fourth century CE to ca. 1500. Topics include the history and development of national hands; the introduction and evolution of Caroline minuscule, pre-gothic, gothic, and humanist scripts (both cursive and book hands); the production, circulation, and transmission of texts (primarily Latin, with reference to Greek and Middle English); advances in the technical analysis and digital manipulation of manuscripts. Seminars are based on the examination of codices and fragments in the Beinecke Library; students select a manuscript for class presentation and final paper.

MDVL 609b / MUSI 625b, The Liturgy, Ritual, and Chant of Medieval England (Sarum Use)  Bryan Spinks and Henry Parkes
This team-taught interdisciplinary travel seminar focuses on the rites, ceremonies, and music of the Use of Sarum (Salisbury), which was the predominant form of Christian worship in late medieval England. With particular attention to Salisbury Cathedral, as well as to surviving texts and material evidence pertaining to that foundation, it explores how liturgy was cultivated, documented, and experienced in the High Middle Ages. It considers the ritual intersections of community, architectural space, visual decoration, sound, movement, and written text. It also considers the significance of Sarum Use in the formation of the 1549 Book of Common Prayer and, more recently, as a resource for liturgical revival and renewal. Prerequisite: REL 682.

MDVL 611a, Medieval Latin for Sinners and Saints  John Dillon
This is an introductory reading course in Late Antique and Medieval Latin that is intended to help students interested in Christian Latin sources improve their reading ability. The primary objective is to familiarize students with Medieval Latin and improve their proficiency in reading and translating Medieval Latin texts. Students come to recognize the features (grammatical and syntactical) that make Medieval Latin distinct, improve their overall command of Latin by reviewing grammar and syntax, and gain an appreciation of the immense variety of texts written in Medieval Latin. Prerequisite: basic knowledge of Latin grammar and syntax, equivalent to the elementary Latin grammar courses offered by the Classics department (LATN 110, LATN 120).

MDVL 631a, Origins of Christian Art in Late Antiquity  Vasileios Marinis and Felicity Harley
This course examines the origins and development of Christian art in the visual culture of Roman late antiquity, ca. 200—ca. 500 CE. Its aim is to introduce students to key developments in the history of Christian art through the close study of images preserved on a range of objects in different media (including frescoes, glassware, sculpture, coins, textiles, mosaic) made for a variety of purposes. The course involves visits to the Yale Art Gallery and focuses on the importance of situating objects within their larger social and cultural context through the analysis of primary source evidence, which may include archaeological, iconographic, epigraphic, and textual sources (Jewish, early Christian, and other contemporary Roman texts). Topics include the literary and archaeological evidence for early Christian attitudes to visual representation; contexts of manufacture; the social and economic basis of patronage; Roman political influence on Christian iconography; development of new genres of imagery; and the role of imperial patronage in the transformation of civic spaces.

MDVL 650a / HSAR 591a, Visions and Art in Medieval Europe  Jacqueline Jung
From the Book of Revelation to the Showings of Julian of Norwich (d. 1423), accounts of visions in the Christian tradition were inextricably intertwined with the visual arts. Through examinations of medieval texts, images, and material culture, in conjunction with modern analyses of related phenomena, this seminar explores the range of representational practices that helped medieval Christians summon up, make sense of, and communicate extraordinary moments of contact with the divine. We address such questions as the changes in visionary experiences over time, the role of language and literacy in the communication of such experiences, the impact of gender on visions, the varieties and functions of other senses (especially touch and taste) in medieval visions, and the impact of visionary reports on the development of art. We begin by addressing the theoretical, cognitive, and anthropological facets of visionary experience before turning to medieval primary sources such as saints’ lives, accounts of otherworld journeys, miracle books, sermons, monastic chronicles, and individually composed vision books, and to modern interpretations by historians such as Caroline Bynum, William Christian, Peter Dinzelbacher, Jeffrey Hamburger, Barbara Newman, Giselle de Nie, and Jean-Claude Schmitt. Visual materials include both depictions of visions (such as Apocalypse manuscripts, paintings of the Temptation of St. Anthony, and renderings of Hildegard’s visions) and images that played a role in sparking visionary experience (such as Marian statues, crucifixes, Man of Sorrows images, and Baby Jesus dolls). Reading knowledge of German, French, and Latin is strongly recommended.

MDVL 660b / HIST 540b, Introduction to Research in Medieval History  Anders Winroth
The seminar provides an introduction to research in medieval European history: often-used source genres, methods, and research tools. We focus on working with primary sources in original languages, occasionally in their original manuscript and early printed form. A working knowledge of a medieval language is, therefore, desirable. Yale is particularly fortunate in that the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library possesses much relevant material, including medieval manuscripts and early printed bibles.

MDVL 661b, Medieval Hagiography: Reading the Saints  N. Raymond Clemens
This course examines the lives of the saints and their cults in the late antique and medieval period (to 1500) in Western Christian culture. We attempt to isolate what is unique to medieval Western Europe and what features are common across cultural and chronological boundaries. We examine the attributes of the saints—their special powers and relationship with a transcendent power. We pursue some of the differences between men’s and women’s treatment at the hands of their hagiographers. Finally, we pay special attention to the saints’ relics (body parts) and how they were treated, what powers they had, and how one determined their identity and authenticity.

MDVL 662a / CPLT 651a / NELC 615a, Medieval Baghdad  Shawkat Toorawa
The founding of Baghdad in the mid-eighth-century by the ascendant ’Abbasid dynasty (ruled 750–1258) ushered in a period of intense scholarly, administrative, and artistic activity. The rulers patronized poets and prose writers and supported translation from Greek,
Medieval Studies

Persian, and other languages into Arabic; learned individuals hosted intellectual discussions (and meals and drinking sessions) late into the night at their homes; the literati spent entire nights in bookstores voraciously reading everything they could lay their hands on; theologians and philosophers debated the nature of reality and of God; scientists tested theories in engineering, medicine, and mathematics; and travelers reported their discoveries from China and India. We read works by and about Baghdadis, including how they overthrew the preceding Umayyad dynasty and how they built the legendary Round City. We read travel accounts, geographies, and graffiti; and we read tales from the Arabian Nights. We see how paper, books, and writing changed Baghdad, Islamic society, and human knowledge; and how Arab-Islamic society's contributions changed the world.