MEDIEVAL STUDIES

Humanities Quadrangle, Rms. 431 & 438, 203.432.0672  
http://medieval.yale.edu  
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

Chair and Director of Graduate Studies  
Mimi Yiengpruksawan

Core faculty  
Lucas Bender, R. Howard Bloch, Jessica Brantley, Ardis Butterfield, Raymond Clemens, Stephen Davis, Maria Doerfler, Adam Eitel, Marcel Elias, Hussein Fancy, Paul Freedman, Frank Griffel, Valerie Hansen, Felicity Harley, Samuel Hodgkin, Jacqueline Jung, Volker Leppin, Ivan Marcus, Vasileios Marinis, Christiana Purdy Moudarres, Emily Thornbury, Shawkat Toorawa, Kevin van Bladel, Jesús Velasco, Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan

Additional affiliated faculty  
Adel Allouche (Emeritus), Felisa Baynes-Ross, Gerhard Bowering (Emeritus), Marcia Colish (Emerita), Orgu Dalgic, John Dillon, Carlos Eire, Roberta Frank (Emerita), Walter Goffart (Emeritus), Harvey Goldblatt (Emeritus), Eric Greene, Dimitri Gutas (Emeritus), Peter Hawkins (Emeritus), Subhashini Kaligotla, Christina Kraus, Traugott Lawler (Emeritus), Noel Lenski, Ahuva Liberles, Giuseppe Mazzotta (Emeritus), Alastair Minnis (Emeritus), Robert Nelson (Emeritus), Carla Neuss, Morgan Ng, Barbara Shailor (Emerita), Jane Tylus, Travis Zadeh

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 REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE

Students are required to demonstrate proficiency in at least one medieval language of scholarship (Arabic, classical Chinese, classical Persian, Greek, Hebrew, or Latin) and in two modern languages appropriate to their field of study. Language proficiency may be demonstrated either by passing a departmental examination within the first two years of study, or by achieving at least a High Pass in an advanced language or literature course, as approved by the DGS.

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, usually in the third year and one year thereafter.
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 Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, or Latin.

**Terminal Master’s Degree Program** Students enrolled in the terminal master’s degree program must complete either seven term courses or six term courses and a special project. One course must have a focus on the study of original manuscripts or documents. There must be at least one grade of Honors, and there may not be more than one grade of Pass. Students must maintain a minimum average of High Pass each term. Students must take two consecutive terms of a language relevant to the study of the medieval period, appropriate to the student’s particular needs and interests. Students must also demonstrate knowledge of one or more of Arabic, classical Chinese, classical Persian, Greek, Hebrew, or Latin, as relevant to their research. For more information, please visit the program website: http://medieval.yale.edu.

COURSES

**MDVL 550a, Directed Reading**  Staff
By arrangement with faculty.

**MDVL 560b, Master’s Project**  Staff
Directed reading and research on a topic approved by the DGS and advised by a faculty member (by arrangement) with expertise or specialized competence in the chosen field. Readings and research are done in preparation for the optional master’s project.

**MDVL 585b / HIST 535b, Problems in Church History, 800–1500**  Paul Freedman
The course runs chronologically from the Carolingian Empire and its form of imperial church governance through the ecclesiastical reform of the eleventh century, monastic orders and their proliferation in the twelfth century, the emergence of the papal monarchy, and challenges to church authority from secular rulers and popular, sometimes heretical, movements. It ends with the upheavals of the late Middle Ages, specifically the Great Schism of 1378–1417 and the failed conciliar movement of the fifteenth century. Among the sources to be considered are cathedral and monastic cartularies, archival documents, saints’ lives and other biographies of church figures, and records indicating the position of the church in the secular world, including education, commerce, city planning, and jurisdictional conflicts.

**MDVL 590b / HIST 590b / JDST 764b / RLST 777b, Jews in Muslim Lands from the Seventh through the Sixteenth Century**  Ivan Marcus
Introduction to Jewish culture and society in Muslim lands from the Prophet Muhammad to Suleiman the Magnificent. Topics include Islam and Judaism; Jerusalem as a holy site; rabbinic leadership and literature in Baghdad; Jewish courtiers, poets, and philosophers in Muslim Spain; and the Jews in the Ottoman Empire.
MDVL 596a / HIST 596a / JDST 761a / RLST 773a, Jewish History and Thought to Early Modern Times  Ivan Marcus
A broad introduction to the history of the Jews from biblical beginnings until the European Reformation and the Ottoman Empire. Focus on the formative period of classical rabbinic Judaism and on the symbiotic relationships among Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Jewish society and culture in its biblical, rabbinic, and medieval settings.

MDVL 603b / HIST 603b / JDST 806b / RLST 616b, Jews and Christians in the Formation of Europe, 500–1500  Ivan Marcus
This seminar explores how medieval Jews and Christians interacted as religious societies between 500 and 1500.

MDVL 621b / CLSS 624b / EMST 621b / ENGL 521b / HIST 532b, Advanced Manuscript Studies  N. Raymond Clemens
This course builds on the foundation provided by MDVL 620 by focusing on both regional Latin hands and the vernacular hands that grew from the Latin tradition. The backbone of the course is Middle English paleography (no prior experience needed), but the course surveys French, Italian, Hebrew, and German hands as well. Prerequisite: MDVL 620 or MDVL 571 or equivalent study of Latin paleography strongly suggested.

MDVL 665a / ENGL 500a / LING 500a, Old English I  Emily Thornbury
The essentials of the language, some prose readings, and close study of several celebrated Old English poems.

MDVL 679a / NELC 669a, Near Eastern Manuscript Research  Kevin van Bladel
Introduction to research using manuscripts in Near Eastern languages. Topics include codicology, palaeography, manuscript history, textual criticism and edition, and a variety of other matters specific to Near Eastern manuscripts. Prerequisites: reading ability in one premodern Near Eastern language and permission of the instructor.

MDVL 745a, Byzantine Art and Architecture  Vasileios Marinis
This lecture course explores the art, architecture, and material culture of the Byzantine Empire from the foundation of its capital, Constantinople, in the fourth century to the fifteenth century. Centered around the Eastern Mediterranean, Byzantium was a dominant political power in Europe for several centuries and fostered a highly sophisticated artistic culture. This course aims to familiarize students with key objects and monuments from various media — mosaic, frescoes, wooden panels, metalwork, ivory carvings — and from a variety of contexts — public and private, lay and monastic, imperial and political. We give special attention to issues of patronage, propaganda, reception, and theological milieux, as well as the interaction of architecture and ritual. More generally, students become acquainted with the methodological tools and vocabulary that art historians employ to describe, understand, and interpret works of art.

MDVL 752a / ENGL 540a, Staging Mysteries: The Legacy of Medieval Biblical Drama, Past and Present  Carla Neuss
While The Phantom of the Opera holds the honor of the longest-running production on Broadway at thirty-four years, medieval mystery cycles trump it in their annual performances from roughly the eleventh to sixteenth centuries throughout Western Europe. This course traces the development and history of the medieval mystery cycle tradition, in which the biblical narrative was staged for the purpose of the
“augmentation of the Catholic faith” in order to lead “common people to devotion and sound doctrine” (Chester Cycle banns). We analyze key episodes from a variety of surviving mystery cycle manuscripts, exploring the devotional and doctrinal purposes of these plays as well as their civic, social, and, at times, subversively political valences. The second half of the course traces the legacy and afterlives of mystery cycle tradition in modern performance. We look at a range of adaptations of mystery cycles as well as modern drama that reinvents the mystery play genre for secular purposes, from the Soviet era Mystery Bouffe (1918) to Kanye West’s operas Mary and Nebuchadnezzar (2019). Through primary and secondary texts, this course explores the following questions: How did theatre emerge from liturgy and Christian ritual? How did medieval theatre embody an encounter with the divine for its audiences? What were the effects and affects that resulted from these religious performances? And how and why does the mystery cycle continue to be reinvented by new theatre practitioners for new audiences around the world?

MDVL 756a, The Cult of Mary: Early Christian and Byzantine Art  Vasileios Marinis and Felicity Harley
This course examines the origins and development of the veneration of Mary as the Mother of God, focusing specifically on the treatment of Mary in the visual and material culture of early Christianity and Byzantium. Its aim is to introduce students to key points in the history of the cult 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. This visual material is analyzed in conjunction with relevant literary, theological, and liturgical evidence for the development of the cult. It is designed as a seminar for students who have interest or background in the material, textual, and religious culture of early Christianity.

MDVL 975b / EALL 753b / RLST 955b, Proseminar for Jobseekers in Premodern Fields  Lucas Bender
This course is intended for doctoral students studying premodern cultures, who have advanced to candidacy and plan to seek employment within the academy, broadly construed. Over the course of the semester, students work with peers as well as faculty convener to build the skills they need to present their research to others in a clear, compelling way. Topics covered include genres of academic writing; modes of publication; CV building; preparing standard application materials; and interviewing. Weekly sessions generally include workshop time as well as presentations by the convener and visitors. Students work toward at least one end product relevant to their plans, e.g., a fully drafted application for a dissertation completion fellowship, job, or postdoc. This proseminar is particularly directed toward students affiliated with ARCHAIA and Medieval Studies but welcomes all those with research interests in the premodern world. The broad range of primary specialties represented provides students with experience engaging with scholars outside their field, which is increasingly essential for premodernists in the modern academic world.