

# MEDIEVAL STUDIES

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

## Chair and Director of Graduate Studies

Emily Thornbury

**Core Faculty** Tarren Andrews, Lucas Bender, R. Howard Bloch, Jessica Brantley, Ardis Butterfield, Stephen Davis, John Dillon, Maria Doerfler, Adam Eitel, Marcel Elias, Hussein Fancy, Paul Freedman, 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, Travis Zadeh, Anna Zayaruznaya

**Additional Affiliated Faculty** Giulia Accornero, Adel Allouche (*Emeritus*), Felisa Baynes-Ross, Gerhard Bowering (*Emeritus*), Orgu Dalgic, Carlos Eire, Roberta Frank (*Emerita*), Alexander Gil Fuentes, Walter Goffart (*Emeritus*), Harvey Goldblatt (*Emeritus*), Eric Greene, Dimitri Gutas (*Emeritus*), Valerie Hansen, Peter Hawkins (*Emeritus*), Christina Kraus, Traugott Lawler (*Emeritus*), Noel Lenski, Giuseppe Mazzotta (*Emeritus*), Alastair Minnis (*Emeritus*), Robert Nelson (*Emeritus*), Morgan Ng, James Patterson, Agnieszka Rec, Barbara Shailor (*Emerita*), Jane Tylus

## FIELDS OF STUDY

Fields in this interdisciplinary program include history, history of art, history of music, religious studies, languages and literatures, linguistics, and philosophy, among others.

## 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 in at least three disciplinary fields, 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 pre-dissertation 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 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.** Students may apply for a terminal master's degree in Medieval Studies. For the M.A. degree, students must successfully 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. Doctoral students who withdraw from the Ph.D. program may be eligible to receive the M.A. degree if they have met the above requirements and have not already received the M.Phil. degree.

For more information, please visit the program website: <http://medieval.yale.edu>.

## COURSES

### **MDVL 502b / CPLT 582b / ENGL 6545b / FREN 802b, Chaucer and Translation**

Ardis Butterfield

An exploration of the works of Geoffrey Chaucer (ca. 1340–1400), brilliant writer and translator. Using modern postcolonial as well as medieval theories of translation, memory, and bilingualism, we investigate how texts in French, Latin, and Italian are transformed, cited, and reinvented in his writings. Some key questions include: What happens to language under the pressure of crosslingual reading practices? What happens to the notion of translation in a multilingual culture? How are ideas of literary history affected by understanding Chaucer's English in relation to the other more prestigious language worlds in which his poetry was enmeshed? Texts include material in French, Middle English, Latin, and Italian. Proficiency in any one or more of these languages is welcome, but every effort is made to use texts available in modern English translation, so as to include as wide a participation as possible in the course. Formerly ENGL 545.

### **MDVL 526a / MUSI 526a, Theorizing Musical Time in the Medieval Islamic World**

Giulia Accornero

This class is an introduction to medieval Islamicate music theory, with a particular focus on the theorization of musical time, motion, and rhythmic patterns as proposed by polymath Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī. After a deep dive in al-Fārābī's music theory, we survey rhythmic theories and diagrams by Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) and al-Urmawī. While focusing on music theory, we also learn about music performance in the Abbasid caliphate, the "translation movement" and the integration of Greek music theory (with a focus on Aristoxenus) and philosophy, and discuss historiographical issues. Prerequisite: Basic music theoretical knowledge and/or knowledge of medieval Islamicate culture/philosophy is expected.

### **MDVL 537a / HIST 534a, Medieval Political History** Paul Freedman

A reading and discussion course that concerns the nature of political power in Europe between approximately 1000 and 1500. Particular attention is paid to the development

of state institutions, dynastic and territorial rivalries, the European balance of power, and the interaction of church and state.

**MDVL 571a / CLSS 601a, Introduction to Latin Paleography** Agnieszka Rec  
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 593b / HSAR 593b, The Body in Medieval Art** Jacqueline Jung  
This seminar explores the manifold approaches to the human body in the art and culture of medieval Europe (from ca. 500–ca. 1500 CE, though with an emphasis on the later end of the period). Through close consideration of works in various media—mediated to us through readings, digital images/renderings, and at least one excursion to a museum—we consider both the role represented bodies played in the social life and religious imagination of medieval communities and the implications such representations had for beholders' sense of their own embodied status. Reading knowledge of French and German is highly recommended but not required.

**MDVL 596a / HIST 596a / JDST 761a / RLST 773a, Jews and the World: From the Bible through 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 613b, Medieval Latin: Medieval Mystics from Bernard of Clairvaux to Thomas à Kempis** John Dillon  
This reading course in Medieval Latin is intended to help students improve their command of Latin through working directly with medieval texts. We read selections from major mystics of the Middle Ages, including works by Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), Hildegard of Bingen's *Scivias* (ca. 1151/1152), the thirteenth-century Latin translation of Mechthild of Magdeburg's *Das fließende Licht der Gottheit* (*Lux divinitatis fluens*, ca. 1250–80), and Thomas à Kempis's *Imitatio Christi* (Imitation of Christ, ca. 1418–27). Prerequisite: one year of formal study of Latin, equivalent to LATN 110 and LATN 120 or LATN 125.

**MDVL 619a / CPLT 552a / NELC 619a, The Medieval Court** Shawkat Toorawa  
What are the features of the medieval court? To answer this, we look at courts in Western Europe, Byzantium, the Islamic world, and East Asia to learn about courtly culture, court poetry, and court society. Readings include van Berkel et al., *Crisis and Continuity in the Caliphate of al-Muqtadir*; Castiglione, *Book of the Courtier*; Duinden, *Vienna and Versailles*; Elias, *The Court Society*; Maguire, *Byzantine Court Culture*; Miner, *Introduction to Japanese Court Poetry*; al-Washshā, *al-Muwashshā*. Knowledge of French desirable.

**MDVL 663a, From House Churches to Medieval Cathedrals: Christian Art and Architecture to the End of Gothic** Orgu Dalgic

This course examines the art associated with, or related to, Christianity from its origins to the end of Gothic. It analyzes major artistic monuments and movements in a variety of regions, paying particular attention to how art shapes and is shaped by the social and historical circumstances of the period and culture. The class considers art in diverse media, focusing on painting, sculpture, architecture, and decorative arts. Trips to the Yale Art Gallery and the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library are included. The course aims to familiarize students with key monuments of Christian architecture, sculpture, painting, and related arts, analyzing each within its particular sociocultural and theological perspective. The course stresses the importance of looking at works of art closely and in context and encourages students to develop skills of close observation and critical visual analysis. Additionally, students are encouraged to examine the ways parallel developments in Christian theology, dogma, and liturgy are influenced by art. Prerequisites: basic knowledge of Christian history and familiarity with the Bible.

**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 666b / ENGL 6501b, Old English II** Emily Thornbury

Readings in a variety of pre-Conquest vernacular genres, varying regularly, with supplementary reading in current scholarship. Current topic: Old English devotional literature, especially poetry; our readings explore early medieval strategies for cultivating emotion and understanding. Formerly ENGL 502.

**MDVL 668a, The *Gawain* Poet** Jessica Brantley

The course offers a contextual study of four of the greatest (and most enigmatic) Middle English poems—*Pearl*, *Patience*, *Cleanness*, and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. At its center is British Library MS Cotton Nero A.x, the single medieval book that contains them all. In addition to reading the poems closely in their manuscript context, we examine associated artworks, from the twelve illustrations in the Cotton MS that constitute a medieval reading of the poems, to *St. Erkenwald*, a poem preserved elsewhere that some argue was written by the same author. Finally, we think about the modern reception of the poems through a serious engagement with scholarly debate surrounding them, and also through comparative work with translations.

**MDVL 756a, The Cult of Mary: Early Christian and Byzantine Art** Felicity Harley and Vasileios Marinis

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 802a / NELC 632a, The Islamic Near East from Muhammad to the Mongol Invasion** Kevin van Bladel

The shaping of society and polity from the rise of Islam to the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258. The origins of Islamic society; conquests and social and political assimilation under the Umayyads and Abbasids; the changing nature of political legitimacy and sovereignty under the caliphate; provincial decentralization and new sources of social and religious power.

**MDVL 992a, Art and Ritual at Mount Sinai – Travel Seminar** Vasileios Marinis and Robert Nelson

This course looks at art and ecclesiastical and pilgrimage rituals at the monastery of St. Catherine in the Sinai. Founded by Emperor Justinian on a site already venerated by Christians as the place where, supposedly, Moses encountered the Burning Bush, the monastery is one of the oldest continuously inhabited Christian communities in the world. Its holdings of icons have no parallel and offer the opportunity to study Christian imagery in the context of both devotional use and corporate rituals, if not place of origin. This course introduces various aspects of Orthodox liturgy and religious pilgrimage relevant to the explication of the surviving church arts at the monastery and the surrounding area.