

**AIP 344 (HP01): MEDIEVALISMS PAST AND PRESENT
FALL 2013**

Medievalisms: Past and Present (AIP 344 HP01)
Tuesdays 2:30-5:20pm

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While the image of the Middle Ages evoked in popular culture varies from credible to wildly fanciful, the range, success, and in some instances controversy of such works attest to their timeliness and to the general public's prodigious appetite for the material.

- Stephen G. Nichols

The recent trend in movies that explore medieval subjects have caused many scholars to remark that the Middle Ages are, and have always been, a useful means for examining other periods. We will explore the many ways that artists, writers, performers, theorists, political figures, and everyday people from the sixteenth century to the present have used the Middle Ages to reinvent the art and culture of their own time.

This 300-level interdisciplinary seminar-style course will take a critical look at how the Middle Ages has been interpreted and reinterpreted using various cultural forms. Through the course reading, guest lectures, class trips, and your own research you will analyze critical texts, as well as various artistic forms—films, plays, music, images, videogames, architecture, performances.

This is a 300-level Honors course that fulfills the Cultural Perspectives (CP) requirement of your General Education curriculum. I have taken the “300” and the “honors” designations seriously when designing this course. Consequently, this course will require you to engage many different genres and difficult texts. Moreover, it will require re-reading, critical thinking, risk taking, deep engagement with the material, and intensive research on your part. In order to pass this class, you must exert more effort than you have in your 200- and other 300-level courses.

Honors sections require students to engage in more academically rigorous work than standard sections of the course. I consider this an honors course because it will challenge you to examine a complicated theoretical concept from a variety of different perspectives and then to demonstrate your understanding of that concept through various written assignments, collaborative projects, and student-driven class discussions. Honors-level work necessitates self-motivation and self-direction; therefore, at times you may need to complete outside research in order to grasp a reading assignment fully. (Although, if you are doing this and still struggling with the material, please do not hesitate to contact me so that I can support your efforts.) Furthermore, at the end of the semester I will assess your learning by means of a collaborative group project, rather than a final exam, thereby encouraging you to apply your knowledge in creative ways.

At the end of this course, students will:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the ways through which culture is produced specifically as it refers to medievalism
- Demonstrate knowledge of how medievalisms reflect the ways that people participate in and are influenced by individual, group, and social action
- Recognize their contribution to the production, consumption, and reproduction of cultural medievalisms

Required Texts (all texts available at Shakespeare & Company Bookstore):

John Aberth, *A Knight at the Movies: Medieval History on Film* (Routledge, 2003)

Marcus Bull, *Thinking Medieval: An Introduction to the Study of the Middle Ages* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

Michael Cramer, *Medieval Fantasy as Performance* (Scarecrow Press, 2010).

Other reading will be on reserve in the library or available through our course blackboard

Important note on texts: You must have your own copies of all texts assigned in this class and you must bring assigned readings to class. We will nearly always refer to and use assigned readings during class. You will not be able to participate fully in class exercises unless you bring your copy of assignments to class and therefore you will lose participation credit when this happens.

Grading System:

20	Discussion Facilitation
10	Writing Assignment #1
15	Writing Assignment #2
15	Writing Assignment #3
40	Final Critical Research Paper
20	Trip to the Cloisters and Medieval Festival
30	Final Group Presentations
10	Presentation Reflection Papers
<u>40</u>	<u>Participation in class discussions, class activities, and free writing responses</u>
200	Total

I will use the following scale to calculate your grades: 100-92% A; 91-90% A-; 89-88% B+; 87-82% B; 81-80% B-; 79-78% C+; 77-72% C; 71-70% C-; 69-60% D. I will calculate your grade to one decimal point and only round up for .6 and above.

Weekly Course Schedule

Tuesday, September 3rd

First day reading due: “Introduction,” to *Why the Middle Ages Matter: Medieval Light on Modern Injustice* (emailed in advance)

Class Activities: Opening freewrite. Review syllabus. Discuss class trips. Use reading assignment to discuss historiography, the Middle Ages, & medievalism.

Tuesday, September 10th

Reading Due: Bull, “Introduction: What is ‘Thinking Medieval’” and “Chapter One: Popular Images of the Middle Ages”; Cotter, “Epiphanies In A Medieval Courtyard,” *The New York Times*, December 21, 2007 (available on NYTimes.com); “Introduction” to *The Cloisters: Medieval Art and Architecture* (BB). **This book is on reserve in the library if you wish to browse through it.**

Assignment Due: Please bring in two very different examples of medievalism that you found through independent research. You will be expected to discuss these examples and why you chose them during class.

Class Activity: Look at websites and blogs on medievalism, and discuss how to use these as source material.

Tuesday, September 17th

Reading Due: Bull, “Chapter Two: What are the ‘Middle Ages’?”; Cramer, “Introduction” and “Chapter One: A Brief History of the SCA”

Writing Assignment #1 Due: Write a 3-4 full page essay in which you respond to the following questions: “What is the difference between the Middle Ages (or the medieval period) and medievalism? According to what you have read and discussed for class, what functions does medievalism serve and why does it persist?”

You should use and reference at least two sources in this brief essay, and include those on a works cited list at the end of your essay; these may be class sources. Please format that bibliography using MLA style. Please use one-inch margins all around. This assignment is worth 10 points total.

Tuesday, September 24th

Reading Due: Cramer, “Chapter Two: Creative Medievalism,” “Chapter Three: Interpersonal Performance,” and “Chapter Six: Conclusion”

Facilitation Group #1

***** TRIP TO THE CLOISTERS & MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29TH*****

*****MEET IN MUSEUM LOBBY AT NOON*****

Tuesday, October 1st

Reading Due: Bull, “Chapter 3: The Evidence for Medieval History”; Umberto Eco, “Dreaming of the Middle Ages” (BB).

Writing Assignment #2 Due: Potential research topics for your final paper, including list of preliminary questions you have about those topics and a two-source bibliography. The two required sources cannot be sources from our class, nor can they be web sources. However, you may list additional web sources you might use in your research on this bibliography. This assignment is worth 15 points total.

Class Activity: Discuss weekend trip. Workshop papers and discuss “best practices” for critical research papers.

Tuesday, October 8th

Reading Due: Trigg, “Walking Through Cathedrals: Scholars, Pilgrims, and Medieval Tourists” (BB); Ruskin, “The Nature of Gothic” (BB)

Class Activity: During class we will take a walking tour of local gothic revival spaces. Please arrive at class ready to walk around outside, regardless of the weather.

Tuesday, October 15th

Pre-Raphaelites Lecture by Professor Jason Rosenfeld

Reading Due: No new reading assignment. However, please review the Ruskin article from last week in preparation for the discussion with Professor Rosenfeld.

Writing Assignment #3 Due: Write a 4-5 full page critical reflection paper in which you discuss what you have learned thus far in our class. How have the course material and group trips helped you better understand medievalism and issues of historiography? What topics have most interested you? What are you still confused about with respect to the course topic and themes? Although you needn’t attach a bibliography, you must reference specific examples, sources, activities, etc. from our class. This is an opportunity for you to use writing as a means of critical reflection; therefore, although you may use a more casual tone, you still need to use sources and evidence to support your ideas. This assignment is worth 15 points total.

Class Activity: Second half of class will be devoted to research paper workshop.

Tuesday, October 22nd

Reading Due: Brooks, “Chapter Five: Monsters and Maidens” and “Epilogue: Twentieth-Century Gothic” (BB); Renée Trilling, “Medievalism and its Discontents” (BB)

Facilitation Group #2

Tuesday, October 29th

Reading Due: Aberth, “Prologue” and “Splendid in Spandex: Robin Hood Films”

Facilitation Group #3

Tuesday, November 5th

No Classes. Advisement Day.

NOON DEADLINE FOR EMAILING ME DRAFTS/PARTIAL DRAFTS FOR FEEDBACK.

Tuesday, November 12th

Reading Due: Aberth, “The Holy Grail of Hollywood”; Finke and Aronstein, “Got Grail? Monty Python and the Broadway Stage” (BB)

Class Activity: Watch and discuss *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*.

Tuesday, November 19th

Reading Due: Aberth, “Movies and the Maid”; Review biography, history, film clips, and chronology sections of Joan website (http://faculty.smu.edu/bwheeler/Joan_of_Arc/index.html)

Facilitation Group #4

Tuesday, November 26th

Reading Due: Bull, “Chapter Four: Is Medieval History Relevant?” and “Conclusion”; Keita, “Race: What the Bookstore Hid” and Lifshitz, “Women: *The Da Vinci Code* and the Fabrication of Tradition” both from *Why the Middle Ages Matter* (BB)

Facilitation #5

Tuesday, December 3rd

FINAL CRITICAL RESEARCH PAPERS DUE

Class period devoted to group presentation preparation.

Tuesday, December 10th

No Classes. Reading Day.

Tuesday, December 17th

FINAL GROUP PRESENTATIONS. REFLECTION PAPERS DUE. WRAP-UP DISCUSSION & COURSE EVALUATIONS.