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# Medieval Studies

## UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

The Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (CEMERS) offers a major and a minor in medieval studies.

### BA in Medieval Studies

The major in medieval studies is an interdisciplinary BA program in the liberal arts structured around the cultures of medieval western Europe and adjoining regions. The undergraduate curriculum is organized in four main areas of emphasis, or tracks, offering focused investigation of the history, art, and mentalities of the period c.300-c.1500, as well as insight into the development and implications of the notion "the Middle Ages" itself. Central to all tracks is the achievement of a reading knowledge of Latin, as the foundational and unifying language of literate culture in the medieval West. Two semesters of Latin are therefore required; students with a prior knowledge of the language may substitute the two-course sequence in medieval Latin literature.

Eleven courses are required for the major, including at least one seminar. Electives above the 100 level should normally be chosen from the current list of courses in medieval studies, in accordance with the recommendations for each track. In addition, certain other courses may be appropriate in particular tracks for their methodological or theoretical content, or as background for medieval studies courses. Students may also petition for courses to be counted toward their degree. The four-track structure is designed to help each student construct a coherent program of study and make informed decisions about academic or professional objectives. A major or minor in medieval studies can be readily combined with a degree in another department or program, notably women's studies.

Consultation with faculty is crucial. The director of CEMERS is responsible for general advising, but students undertaking the major are expected to work with a faculty adviser, who may be the director, through mutual agreement of the parties concerned. Students are urged to participate in a major annual conference as well as lectures and other events organized by CEMERS or MRG, the graduate students' Medieval and Renaissance Group.

### Medieval Studies Minor

The minor in medieval studies requires six approved courses from at least three different departments.

### The Medieval Studies Curriculum Required Courses

There are four core courses, two in medieval history (generally HIST 204, 205) and two in Latin. Beginners take LAT 101 and 102; students entering with an adequate command of Latin take LAT 321 and 322 (Latin Literature). LAT 321 covers the period before 1200; the emphasis is on poetry and imaginative literature; LAT 322 covers literature from 1200, and stresses philosophy and official texts (administrative, diplomatic, etc.).

### Electives: The Four Tracks

The major includes seven approved electives, including one at the 100 level. Introductory courses in medieval studies are generally offered through associated departments; students may count as an elective one of the following: ANTH 125, 126; ARTH 101, 103; COLI 110; ENG 112, 114; HIST 101; PHIL 111; WOMN 126 (HIST 126). These do not all give substantial attention to medieval material, but they are valuable for orientation in theory and methodology, and often provide a framework for students to pursue particular, including medieval, interests.

Of the other courses, at least four should be upper level (300-400), and at least one should be a seminar. Students should select courses to conform to the areas of emphasis established in the four tracks.

### TRACK A: FOUNDATIONS OF WESTERN LAW AND GOVERNMENT

This track is built around the study of legal history in its historical and cultural contexts. All students must take HIST 302 (European Law). Highly recommended are LAT 322 (for students with Latin) and advanced medieval history courses, as well as courses in the history of early Renaissance Europe and ancient and especially medieval philosophy.

This track can be combined with programs in philosophy, history, and art history. Especially recommended is a link with the "Foundations" track in Philosophy, Politics, and Law.

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## TRACK B: ENGLAND AND THE NORTH

This track provides the following options:

1. Medieval England—Language, Literature and Society: the English Department offers a range of courses in medieval English literature, which can be supplemented by courses in history, art history and related literatures (especially French) for a concentration in the study of medieval England with emphasis on the construction of national identity in language, political institutions and literary and visual culture.

Students interested in this concentration should also have some familiarity with literary and critical theory; therefore an appropriate course in English or comparative literature would count as an elective.

2. Cultures of the North—From the Atlantic Fringe to the Great Plain: comparative study of regions or distinct cultures of northern Europe: e.g., Britain (English and Celts), the Germanic peoples, Northern France and Flanders, Scandinavia and Iceland, the Slavs, Jewish communities. The time period can go back to the process of Christianization and forward to the fragmentation of the Western Church in the Reformation. Students interested in this concentration are advised to expand from a base in one of the language departments, especially English and German and Russian, or in comparative literature or Judaic studies.

3. Oral Traditions—Medievalism and the Study of Folklore: largely illiterate, medieval populations often accommodated pre-Christian practices and beliefs to the requirements of the Church. Courses including the study of folklore in the Departments of English, German, and Russian, Romance Languages and Literatures, or Comparative Literature can be supplemented by courses in history and art history covering medieval and early modern religion. A grounding in critical theory and/or historiography is highly desirable.

## TRACK C: MEDITERRANEAN CULTURES AND LITERATURES

The integrated study of the Mediterranean region is associated with the French historian Fernand Braudel, for whom a research institute at Binghamton University is named. Requirements include HIST 206 (Early Renaissance Europe, which may replace 205) and at least one course in a medieval vernacular literature (Italian, French, Greek, Spanish, Hebrew and Arabic). Consider combinations with programs in history, art history, music, classics, Judaic studies or a relevant language department. Students especially interested in literature should consider courses in ancient law, medieval law and ancient mythology and/or literature.

## TRACK D: VISUAL CULTURE IN SOCIAL CONTEXT

This track is best combined with a major in art history or history. Students should take at least three courses in art history with substantial medieval content; the introductory course should normally be ARTH 101 or 103. Also recommended are advanced courses in European history as well as courses on medieval literature, music and the major literary sources of the images in medieval art (JUST 263 and 264: The Bible; CLASS 232: Classical Mythology).

## Honors

The requirements for honors in medieval studies are:

1. A GPA of 3.5 in the major.
2. An interdisciplinary thesis written under the guidance of two members of different departments. Students writing a thesis may enroll for up to eight credits of MDVL 499. These credits will not count toward the major requirements.

## GRADUATE PROGRAMS

The certificate program in medieval studies offers an opportunity for grounding in interdisciplinary medieval studies. The requirements of the program are above and beyond those of a specific department, although work in the program may be used to satisfy a number of departmental requirements. Students with this certificate in effect have two credentials: the PhD in an established discipline and a certificate attesting to competence in the interdisciplinary studies required of the professional medieval scholar. Admission to the program requires previous admission to a department of study and approval by the director of the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies.

## Courses

Nine seminar courses are required for the certificate, as is a reading knowledge of Latin (e.g., through LAT 101/102). The certificate program is designed to introduce students to a broad array of disciplinary domains and approaches in the study of medieval societies: this interdisciplinary dimension combines well with doctoral study in a specific department. Candidates take at least one course in art history, history, vernacular literature (English, French, Italian, Spanish; also Romance philology) and philosophy, as well as five electives, as approved by the director of the center or designee. With the director's approval, 400-level courses may be used toward completion of the certificate program.

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## Examination

An oral examination is required toward the end of the candidate's residence at Binghamton University.

## Dissertation

The dissertation is written for the department of the candidate's specialization. The director of the center may appoint one member of the dissertation committee, if appropriate.

## Graduate Minor in Medieval Studies

The Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies also offers a graduate minor in medieval studies to candidates for graduate degrees. The minor consists of a coherent pattern of three courses outside the department of the degree. The three courses must be chosen from at least two departments or programs, and no more than one 400-level course or one independent study may be counted. All graduate minor programs in medieval studies must be approved by the director of the center or designee.

As the above descriptions indicate, the major and minor concentrations rely on the course offerings of departments.

Some courses of particular relevance are cross-listed and appear in course guides under medieval studies.