

HIST 701: Introduction to Medieval Studies

Spring 2012

Hamilton Hall 570: Tuesday 6.00-8.50

This class will be an introduction to key aspects of the study of the Middle Ages. The focus will be on historical inquiry, but this will be broadly defined to subsume cultural historical, literary, and art historical approaches, and there will be close attention to questions of interdisciplinarity throughout. The content of the course will comprise two main elements. The first, introductory, part will be an examination of the emergence of medieval studies as a discrete subject domain between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, looking, for example, at the work of preservation and interpretation done on the surviving records of the Middle Ages by the Maurists, the Bollandists, and the Monumentists, as well as the consequences for medieval studies of the expansion of higher education from the nineteenth century onwards. How has the study of the Middle Ages mapped onto and contributed towards broader academic trends? The second element will involve the in-depth study of a body of medieval texts from a range of methodological angles in order to explore both the technical demands involved and the potentialities of interdisciplinary research. These texts will be chosen from materials that form parts of both the 'historical' and 'literary' canons, traditionally conceived, the aim being to interrogate the value of disciplinary boundaries. There will also be opportunities to examine the visual record, including the Bayeux Tapestry, which will feature as one of our in-depth case studies. The students' final papers will be examinations of one or more texts or artifacts of their choosing, foregrounding a methodological and/or conceptual approach that can be justified as analytically fruitful. (For a sense of what can be involved, in a non-medieval context, see the range of methodological and interpretive approaches assembled in B. R. Collins, ed., *12 Views of Manet's Bar*.)

Marcus Bull

3 November 2011