This is a course on the use and abuse of medieval history by intellectuals, the political elite, and the purveyors of popular culture. The Middle Ages that we know and study today are not the Middle Ages as they actually happened. In the time that has elapsed between the end of the medieval period and our own age, the Middle Ages have been reshaped, reconstructed and re-imagined—a process known as medievalism—for myriad reasons. As I see it, part of the job of being a medievalist is being a historical archaeologist. Our goal in this course is to wipe away all the layers of myth, misinformation, anachronisms, and bias and arrive at a position where we are better able to understand the Middle Ages without all the historical sediment that has accumulated over the last five centuries. But just as much as the Middle Ages have been reshaped by our own prejudices, so too has the specter of the medieval past altered modernity. In the second half of the seminar, we will be looking at the impact that the Middle Ages have had on modern mass and popular movements and learn to recognize just how central the Middle Ages are to modern culture.

This is a graduate seminar. Students must have graduate standing in history and HIST 700 or permission of the instructor to enroll.

**Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will learn and be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of medievalism and its impact on our understanding of the Middle Ages as well as the medievalisms that are still current in modern society.
2. Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to analyze and interpret historical evidence, both primary and secondary, by their participation in class discussions and the research paper.
3. Students will have to demonstrate an ability to do extensive research in primary and secondary sources on a topic of their choice pertaining to Medievalism. They will also have to effectively communicate the results of this research in a 20-25 page research paper due at the end of term.

**Books**


Bruce Holsinger, *Neomediaevalism, Neoconservatism and the War on Terror* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2007)


**Grades and Assignments**

Class Participation: 15% (missing classes will impact this part of the grade. I expect every student to participate in every class)

Book Review: 15%, 1000-1250 words. (Select a book of your choice that you plan to use for your research paper.)

Lead a class discussion: 5%

Research Paper Abstract: 10%

Research Paper First Draft: 15%

Final Research Paper: 20-25 Pages 40%

**Disability Statement Policy**

Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472) or by email (dprc@sfsu.edu).

**Readings and Discussion Topics**

**Week 1 (Sept. 8): Introduction**

**Week 2 (Sept. 15): An Introduction to Medievalism**

Ortenberg, *In Search of the Holy Grail*

**Week 3 (Sept 22): Medievalism in the Academy - I**

Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages*, chs. 1-4, 6-7, 9-10

**Week 4 (Sept 29): Medievalism in the Academy – II**

Judith Bennett, “Medievalism and Feminism,” in *Speculum* 68 (1993) 309-331 [JSTOR]


Week 5 (Oct. 6): Medievalism in the Academy – III
Holsinger, The Premodern Condition

Week 6 (Oct. 13): Medievalism and the State – National Mythmaking
Geary, The Myth of Nations
ABSTRACTS DUE

Week 7 (Oct. 20): NO CLASS
INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

Week 8 (Oct. 27): Medievalism and the State – The Formation of Identity


**Week 9 (Nov. 3): Medievalism and the State – The Post 9/11 World**

Holsinger, *Neomedievalism, Neoconservatism and the War on Terror*


Thomas Madden, “Crusade Propaganda: The Abuse of Christianity’s Holy Wars,” in *National Review Online* [LINK THROUGH ONLINE SYLLABUS]


Jonathan Riley-Smith, “What an Osama bin Laden means by ‘Crusade’,” in *National Review Online* [LINK THROUGH ONLINE SYLLABUS]

**BOOK REVIEWS DUE**

**Week 10 (Nov. 10): Medievalism in the Romantic Age**

Marc Baer, “The Memory of the Middle Ages: From History of Culture to Cultural History,” in *Studies in Medievalism* IV (1992) 290-309 [e-reserve]


**Week 11 (Nov. 17): NO CLASS**

**RESEARCH PAPER DRAFTS DUE**

**Week 12 (Nov. 24): NO CLASS**

Thanksgiving Holiday

**Week 13 (Dec. 1): Medievalism and Popular Culture – Movies**
Nicholas Haydock, *Movie Medievalism*

**Week 14 (Dec. 8): Medievalism and Popular Culture – Mass Media**

VIDEOS (Access through online syllabus)
Corvus Corax, "Dulcissima"
Dimmu Borgir, "The Serpentine Offering"
Enigma, "Sadeness"
Enya, "The Celts"
Gregorian, "The Sound of Silence"
Mediæval Bæbes, "Adam lay Ibouneden"
Spinal Tap, "Stonehenge"
Turisas, "Rasputin"

**Week 15 (Dec. 15): FINAL THINGS**
RESEARCH PAPERS DUE