

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
FACULTY OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

**Medieval Studies 1022**

M.J. Toswell  
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2025-2026

Mondays 2:30-3:30, Wednesdays 1:30-3:30

Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:30 - 5:30 in person or on zoom

**Academic Calendar Description**

This foundation course will over the year introduce civilization and thought in Europe and the Mediterranean between 400 and 1500, with emphasis on the medieval roots of many modern institutions and attitudes, including philosophy, technology, law, governance, courtly love and



attitudes to women, warfare, art and archaeology, Christianity and Islam, literature, music and coinage. Antirequisite(s): Medieval Studies 1025F/G, 1026F/G, Medieval Studies 1020E  
3 hours, 1.0 course

**Course Description**

This course introduces the Middle Ages, looking at the major developments of technology and ideas, of religion and the development of countries and nations.

The course this year will investigate five elements of the medieval world in some detail: the passage of the seasons and their festivals and concerns in early medieval England in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the so-called “last duel” in France in the late fourteenth century, a gender-bending and swash-buckling French romance of the thirteenth century, medieval bodies including the health and welfare of individual body parts, and the role of the university in the high Middle Ages—addressing in particular the lives and choices of students.

**Required Textbooks:**

Jack Hartnell, *Medieval Bodies: Life, Death and Art in the Middle Ages* (London: Wellcome Collection, 2019). \$27.70

Eric Jager, *The Last Duel* (New York: Broadway Books 2005). \$16.77.

Hunt Janin, *The University in Medieval Life, 1179-1499* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009). \$45.55.

Eleanor Parker, *Winters in the World: A Journey through the Anglo-Saxon Year* (London: Reaktion Books, 2023). \$20.95.

Sarah Roche-Mahdi, tr. *Silence: A Thirteenth-Century French Romance* (Ann Arbor: Michigan State UP, 1999). \$19.98.

*Further on textbooks:* I do not have a preference for paper or ebooks. These books, however, are not especially easy to track down so if you can buy from the campus bookstore, please do so. If you do buy an ebook for one or more of these texts, please remember that you will not have access to it during the in-class writing assignments (unless you print out the pages that you want).

### **Course Evaluation:**

The final grade will be calculated as follows:

Christmas exam	25%
Final Examination	35%
In-class written assignments, best 2 @ 10%	20%
Online quizzes best 5 @ 3%	15%
Participation	5%

**Christmas and Final Examinations:** The December and April examinations will have short-answer and identification questions amounting to about 25% of the total, and short and long essay questions whose value will be about 75% of the total. Sample midterms and final examinations will be posted as study aids. Both exams will be scheduled by the Registrar's office.

**In-class Written Assignments:** These in-class writing assignments will occur three times during the year, of which the best two will be counted in the final grade. You can bring and use paper notes, texts, and other written materials, but no electronic devices. We will discuss these in the class before the assignment and determine what topics you are most interested in. To make sure you do your own original writing, I will tweak the questions and give you two options to write about for an hour during class. The questions will be relevant to the material studied in class in recent weeks, but you can certainly prepare for them with extra research and reading. We will count the best two of these at 10% each.

**Online quizzes:** Seven or eight times during the year, we will have an online pop quiz during class, sometimes at the beginning, sometimes during the middle, and sometimes at the end of class. You will log into the class website and do a short quiz on the material for that day. Please bring whatever device you use for access to OWL to all classes, so that you can do the quiz as necessary. You can use your notes and other devices for these quizzes, but exchanging answers with colleagues is not permitted (obviously). However, the quizzes will be time-limited and very short, so if you are not prepped for the class, you will be hard-pressed to complete the quiz. We will count the best five quizzes at 3% each = 15%

**Participation:** These marks will be for attendance at the whole class, evidence of having completed the class preparation, and for good contributions to class discussions. Good contributions need not be lengthy or frequent; they should however be respectful of the class environment, engaged with the material, investigative in nature, and relevant to the issue currently under discussion. 5%

## **My contact information:**

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*Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:30-5:30 p.m. in person or on zoom*

I use email as my principal mode of contact, so use that to check in with me, please. Bear in mind the following points, though: the answer to your query might be in the course outline, the course outline is the final authority, you should use your UWO email as I do not want to know that you have an email address called “fluffypajamas,” you should start an email with a proper salutation, I answer quickly if an answer is needed, and you probably only get one email answered so all your points and issues should be in that email.

Most years I schedule meetings with students in the class just to check in and see how you are doing. If you do not wish to attend one of these, just do not sign up for a time when I send the info round. Also, write down the time of your booking or record it in your phone.

I am in the office at other times so do feel free to drop by, **but** avoid my office in the hour before I am teaching. That is prep and panic time. I do tend to have a lot of meetings on campus, and a lot of zoom meetings as well, so I am around a lot. If I’m available, the door tends to be open.

## **Course Syllabus:**

(This will change only if the bookstore has a problem with getting one of the course books.)

Sept 8 Introduction. Beginnings and endings

- 10 Chartres Riot 1210, timeline of the Middle Ages
- 15 Hunt Janin, Prologue, Preface, Setting the Stage
- 17 Janin, Ch I - Overview
- 22 Janin, Ch II-V
- 24 Janin, Ch VI-VIII
- 29 Janin Ch IX-X

Oct 1 Janin-Appendices, Final discussion

- 6 In-class essay
- 8 Eleanor Parker, Preface, Introduction
- 15 Parker, Winter
- 20 Parker, Winter
- 22 Parker, Spring
- 27 Parker, Summer
- 29 review of the Christian year

Nov 10 Parker, Autumn

- 12 Parker, Food and Drink, Final discussion
- 17 Christianity
- 19 Islam
- 24 Battle of Milvian Bridge, Constantine
- 26 Battle of Tours, Siege of Acre, Battle of Arsuf

Dec 1 Fall of Constantinople

- 3 Medieval Music
- 8 Christmas

Christmas Exam as scheduled by the Registrar’s Office.

Jan 5 Jack Hartnell, Introduction  
7 Hartnell, Head  
12 Hartnell, Senses  
14 Hartnell, Skin  
19 Hartnell, Bone  
21 Hartnell, Heart  
26 Hartnell, Blood  
28 Hartnell, Hands

Feb 2 Hartnell, Stomach  
4 Hartnell, Genitalia  
9 Hartnell, Feet, Future Bodies, Final discussion  
11 In-class essay  
23 Roche-Mahdi, *Silence* introduction  
25 *Silence*, ll 1-2000

Mar 2 *Silence* ll. 2-4000  
4 *Silence* ll. 4-6000  
9 *Silence* ll. 6-6706  
11 *Silence* Final discussion  
16 Eric Jager, introduction  
18 Jager, ch. 1-4  
23 Jager, ch. 5-7  
25 Jager, ch. 8-10  
In-class essay  
30 Jager, epilogue, final discussion

Apr 1 Medieval manuscripts visit to library (depending on availability)  
6 Summary discussion

Final examination as scheduled by registrar's office

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