

# EL 201 Medieval Literature: The World, The Flesh and The Devil



Instructor: Dr. Ethan Guagliardo  
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Monday: 11:00-12:50  
Wednesday: 11:00-11:50  
Office Hours: TBA

This class will introduce you to the history, ideas, and literature of the so-called “Middle Ages” between classical antiquity and modernity. This period was in many ways a pre-eminently Christian age, but we will pay particular attention to the ways that Christian theological preoccupations--especially its apparently world-denying theology of sin--paradoxically laid the groundwork for secularity, whether conceived in terms of space (the world and worldliness) or time (life-span or *saeculum*).

## **Assessment**

Essays: 40%  
Midterm: 20%  
Final: 25%  
Participation: 15%

## **Weekly Schedule**

### **Week 1      The death of the classical world and birth of worldliness**

Monday (18/9): Introduction: The Conversion of Constantine, from Eusebius's *Oration to Constantine*; The Edict of Milan; The Nicene Creed

Wednesday (20/9): Selections from: The Codex Theodosianus; Zosimus, *Historia Nova*; Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans* Bk 19; Letter of Pope Gelasius to Anastasius Augustus

### **Week 2      The "Pagan-Christian synthesis"**

Monday and Wednesday (25/9-27/9): Tertullian, "On Pagan Learning"; Clement of Alexandria, from *Exhortation to the Heathen*; Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy* Bk 2

### **Week 3      Into Hell**

Monday (2/10): Urban II and the Crusades, from *The Chronicle* of Fulcher of Chartres; Frankish boors, from the autobiography of Usamah Ibn Munqidh; Marie de France, *Chevrefoil*

Wednesday (4/10): Dante, *Inferno*, canto 1

## **Essay 1 Due, Friday October 6th**

### **Week 4      The Flesh**

Monday (9/10): *Inferno*, 1-3

Wednesday (11/10): *Inferno*, 4-5

### **Week 5      The World**

Monday (16/10): *Inferno*, 6; 10-11

Wednesday (18/10): *Inferno*, 13-15

### **Week 6**

Monday (23/10): *Inferno*, 19, 26-27

Wednesday (25/10): *Inferno*, 28; 32-34

## **Essay 2 Due, Friday October 27th**

### **Week 7      The Devil**

Monday (30/10): *Inferno*, 28; 32

Wednesday (1/11): *Inferno*, 33-34

**Week 8 Exuberant Worldliness**

Monday (6/11): Chaucer, General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*; Miller's Tale (begin).

Wednesday (8/11): Miller's Tale (end)

**Week 9**

Monday (13/11): From Marguerite Porete, *The Mirror of Simple Souls*; Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale

Wednesday (15/11): Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale

**Essay 3 Due, Friday November 17th**

**Week 10**

Monday (20/11): Pardoner's Tale

Wednesday (22/11): Pardoner's Tale (Prioress's Tale if time)

**Week 11**

Monday (27/11): Prioress's Tale (if time); Nun's Priest's Tale

Wednesday (22/11): Nun's Priest's Tale; Chaucer's Retraction

**Week 12 Exhaustion**

Monday and Wednesday (5/12-7/12): Sir Thomas Malory, Sangreal, from *La Morte D'Arthur*

**Week 13**

Monday and Wednesday (12/12-14/12): Sangreal continued; The Death of Arthur, from *La Morte D'Arthur*

**Essay 4 Due, Friday December 16th**