

Newsletter of the Medieval & Renaissance Studies Center



An illumination depicting a scriptorium in action, from a manuscript in the Biblioteca de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Madrid, Spain, c. 14th century AD

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**Editor and Layout:
Mary Mailler**



Greetings to All,

Welcome to Vol. 1 Issue #1 of the Texas Tech Medieval & Renaissance Studies Center Newsletter!

With this newsletter, we hope to provide a central source of current MRSC-related information for our community of Affiliated Faculty, Certificate Students, Board of Directors, and our MRSC mailing list. This will include upcoming events of interest; calls for papers; lists of current courses that can count toward the MRSC Graduate Certificate; and news about presentations, publications, awards, research projects, and any other relevant happenings related to MRSC faculty and students.

We invite your assistance in keeping us up to date with the abundance of news and productive output represented by TTU's MRSC faculty and students, so we urge you to send us any news you have (mrsc@ttu.edu), that is relevant to MRSC and to this newsletter, and we will try to include as much as we can. We would love to include student and faculty profiles too. We encourage you to reach out to friends, colleagues, and students who would like to be on the MRSC mailing list—it's easy to sign up; just go to the front page of the MRSC website (<https://www.depts.ttu.edu/history/medieval/>),

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scroll to the bottom of the right hand column, and add your name. All are also invited to donate to MRSC -- every donation helps, no matter what amount.

We also want to welcome our new Web/Media Assistant, Mary Mailler, who has been hard at work building and maintaining the MRSC website and expanding our presence on [Facebook \(Medieval and Renaissance Studies Center, @TTUMRSC\)](#), [Twitter \(@TTU_MRSC\)](#), and [Instagram \(mrsc@ttu.edu\)](#).

Please visit our website where you can sign up to join our newsletter mailing list. Follow us on social media, and enjoy our Texas Tech community of medieval and early-modern scholars, educators, and artists!

Happy winter break to all!

Angela Mariani



Norwich Cathedral cloisters, roof boss.
Central Norwich, England, C. 1300.

Certificate Course Offerings

Spring Semester Courses 2022

MRST 5301 Methods in Medieval and Renaissance Studies

Dr. Julie Nelson Couch

Thursdays 2:00 pm - 4:50 pm

(CRN: 45757; CRN 65523D)

Hybrid

This course introduces students to the scholarship of medieval and early modern European studies. Students will have the opportunity to learn about the common problems scholars of the pre-modern past encounter in their work, and the ethical stances and research methodologies they deploy to address these problems. [Read More.](#)

ENGL 5303 Studies in Medieval British Literature: Holy Romance!

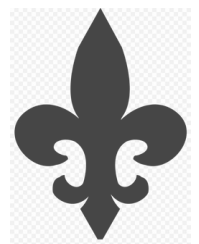
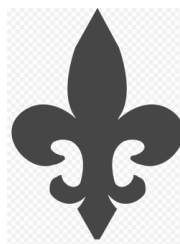
Dr. Julie Nelson Couch

Tuesdays 6:00 pm - 8:50 pm.

(CRN: 49653; 63652D)

Hybrid

In Middle English literature, genres often overlapped so that a romance would feature saint-like heroes and a saint's life would include romance type adventures. In this course we will read Middle English romances that are set within a "holy," contexts, including crusade, pilgrimage, and conversion. [Read More.](#)



**ENGL 5304 Studies in Renaissance
British Literature: Getting to Know
Early Modern Tragedy**

Dr. Matthew Hunter

Wednesdays 6:00 pm - 8:50 pm.

(CRN: 64968; 64969D)

Hybrid

This course introduces students to early modern English drama through a sustained consideration of the genre of tragedy. [Read More.](#)

**FREN 5310 Medieval & Renaissance
French Literature (in French)**

Dr. Lucas Wood

Wednesday 3:00 - 5:50 pm.

(CRN: 64687)

Face to Face

**HIST 5341 Studies in Medieval
History: Women and Cities**

Dr. John Howe

Mondays 7:00 pm - 9:30 pm.

(CRN: 59709)

Face to Face

**MUHL 5332 - Seminar in the History and
Literature of Music: Renaissance**

Dr. Stacey Jocoy

Tuesday & Thursday 11:00 am - 12:20 pm.

(CRN: 65605)

Face to Face

**MUTH 5321 History of Music Theory I:
Antiquity - 1600**

DR. PETER MARTENS

TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS

3:30 PM - 4:50 PM.

(CRN: 63672)

Face to Face

Students in this reading-intensive seminar will delve into the rich world of writings on the theory and practice of ancient, Medieval, and Renaissance music.

[Read More.](#)

**SPAN 5362 Golden Age Literature:
Cervantes**

Dr. John Beusterien

Wednesdays 3:00 pm - 5:50 pm.

(CRN: 64837)

Face to Face



Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *The Effects of Good Government in the City*, 1338-1339, Sala della Pace, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena, Italy.



Recent Publications



Brian Steele, "Giovanni Bellini's *Madonna of the Meadow*, 'Meditational Poesia', and the *Imitatio Christi*," *Paragone: Past and Present* 2, 1 (2019-2021): 3-29.

Abstract

This essay examines Giovanni Bellini's *Madonna of the Meadow* as a 'meditational poesia', focusing upon formal aspects that differentiate between embracing landscape and figural group and upon Bellini's approach to this landscape and its contrasting staffage that elicits contemplative reflection. I examine three treatises that may have stimulated the artist and contend that Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* (translated as *Imitatione de Cristo*, Venice, 1488) provides thematic structures that most closely align with those characterizing Bellini's painting and intimate its role in

articulating a meditational approach by which a viewer can effectively appraise the *Madonna of the Meadow*.



Presented at TEMA 2021 Conference

Julie Nelson Couch, PhD
Travel Makes Race: Medieval Pilgrimage as a Racializing Mode



London, British Library, MS Harley 3954, from fol. 42

Abstract

The premise of pilgrimage—going on a physical journey to pray at a shrine, touch the relics of a saint, or walk the places Jesus walked in the Holy land—is inherently problematic for a religion largely reliant on the internal experience of spirituality. At the same time, tying spiritual experience to a physical space was well-suited to effect and extend the power of the western Church. An interlace of holy events at holy places looms large in atter of earthly recognition of a superior Christian, white self. In these texts, pilgrimage, as a narrated event, a desire for m possession, and form of identity, is ultimately a racializing construct that demarcates an us—traveler, Christian—and a them—illegitimate resident of the holy land,



wrong (pagan) religion, curiosity-provoking foreigner. Pilgrimage ultimately exemplifies the invasive nature of medieval Christianity.

Katharine D. Scherff, PhD
Other from What
The Problem with “Other” in Medieval Studies

Abstract

As scholars seek to define and construct a more equitable and global understanding of the Middle Ages through research, diversified syllabi, and inclusive language we find ourselves in a “global-turn.” Medieval scholars are encouraged to cross geographic borders, to decentralize, decolonize, and diversify. Through these new methodologies, new sessions and conference themes have emerged which hinge on the ideas of “Whose Middle Ages?” -- where race, gender, religion, and orientation are qualified and grouped together as thematic alternatives in Medieval research. This point of departure and trajectory, in many cases, that has fueled the self-scrutiny of the field is thus the other and the practice of othering. The concept of the other, however, begs the question “Other from what?” For, in each position there is a contradictory opposition. This paradoxical conundrum, “other from what?” identifies a difference from what is considered normative. This highlights the opposition of the assumed white supremacy Medieval Eurocentric studies and emphasizes the historical understanding that other is everything other from the control.

This essay seeks to understand, then, what is other and othering. By discussing other do we continue to engender marginality and inequality across Medieval studies? Should other and othering fall away from medieval studies terminology; and what does this mean for the future of medieval studies?

Alfonso X (1221-1284): In Commemoration of the 800th Anniversary of the Birth of El Sabio
Organizer: Connie Scarborough (Texas Tech, TX)

The Cooperation/Conflict between Medical Treatment and Miraculous Cure in the Cantigas de Santa Maria
Connie L. Scarborough (Texas Tech University)
connie.scarborough@ttu.edu

Abstract

As would be expected in a collection of Marian miracles, Alfonso X's Cantigas de Santa Maria contain numerous cures of illness and of reversal of physical and mental impairment. The Wise King, however, does not discourage seeking qualified medical attention for ailment or disability. In fact, during the many instances of his own illnesses and recoveries recounted in the collection, Alfonso seeks medical help, although his eventual return to health is inevitably attributed to the Virgin Mary. The most famous of the miracles in which the King is sick is no. 209. In this cantiga, the king is so ill that his retinue fears for his life. His doctors prescribe various remedies, such as applying hot cloths, but he is only cured when the book of the Cantigas itself is placed on his chest. This is, however, only one of a number of cantigas that allude to sufferers seeking medical attention before turning to



the Virgin for help. We find doctors consulted in Cantigas 77, 117, 177, and 179. Even though the medical treatments in these accounts prove to be ineffectual, there is no mention that the ill or disabled individual is not justified in consulting medical authorities. Alfonso's poems do not reveal anti-medical bias or a disparagement of doctors as was common in other medieval works.



A meeting of the doctors at the University of Paris, fol. 27v, from the *Chants royaux sur la Conception couronnées au Puy de Rouen* (Paris, BnF, ms. fr. 1537), illustrated by Étienne Collault, c. 1530.

Upcoming Conferences

Spring 2022

MRSC Professional Development Day

A one-day event, targeted at both TTU and regional faculty of medieval studies, including a public presentation by the director of a major Medieval/Renaissance Studies center who will meet as a consultant with the MRSC Board, affiliated faculty, and students to advise MRSC on how to expand our activities and our outreach. We anticipate roundtable discussions of current topics related to the field of Medieval and Renaissance studies.

Spring 2023

MRSC Conference

A two to three-day event, with two keynote speakers. Paper proposals will be invited via a national Call for Papers. The conference is timed to coincide with the Texas Tech Centenary (1923-2023).

