

Teaching the Middle Ages: Pandemic Lessons and Post-Pandemic Pedagogy

The 2021 New England Medieval Conference

Sponsored by the Harvard University Standing Committee on Medieval Studies and
the University of Massachusetts Boston

Saturday 6 November (Virtual)

This year's meeting of the New England Medieval Consortium will focus on lessons learned during what might be called "the long 2020", a period marked by extraordinary disruptions and difficulties but also by extraordinary resilience and creativity on the part of teachers and students of Medieval Studies. Our daylong program features three conversations on teaching literature, material culture, and history in the Age of COVID, as well as a roundtable discussion on how those experiences might continue to shape our teaching in the years ahead. Due to the continuing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's NEMC is taking place virtually on the Zoom meeting platform. Registration is free and open to the public.

Program

Welcome and opening remarks

9:00 am EST

Rajini Srikanth (Dean of Faculty, University of Massachusetts Boston College of Liberal Arts) and
Nicholas Watson (Chair, Harvard University Standing Committee on Medieval Studies)

Pandemic Lessons: Teaching Literature

9:30 am EST

Arthur Bahr (Department of Literature, Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and Albert Lloret
(Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, University of Massachusetts Amherst);
moderated by Georgia Henley (Department of English, St. Anselm College)

Pandemic Lessons: Teaching Material Culture

10:45 am EST

Megan Cook (Department of English, Colby College) and Eurydice Georganteli (Department of the
History of Art and Architecture, Harvard University); moderated by Jacqueline Jung (Department of
the History of Art, Yale University)

Lunch break (11:45 am-12:45 pm EST)

Pandemic Lessons: Teaching History

12:45 pm EST

Janine Peterson (Department of History, Marist College) and Jesse Torgerson (College of Letters, Wesleyan University); moderated by Sean Gilsdorf (Committee on Medieval Studies, Harvard University)

Post-Pandemic Pedagogy: Lessons Learned?

2:00 EST

A roundtable discussion featuring Arthur Bahr, Megan Cook, Eurydice Georganteli, Sean Gilsdorf, Georgia Henley, Jacqueline Jung, Albert Lloret, Janine Peterson, and Jesse Torgerson, moderated by Alexander Mueller (English Department, University of Massachusetts Boston)

About the speakers

Arthur Bahr teaches medieval literature at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, including Chaucer, Arthurian, and Old English; broad surveys of poetry and drama; and a co-taught, interdisciplinary Introduction to Ancient and Medieval Studies. He recently received funding to incorporate online learning modules into his Canterbury Tales seminar, and he's hoping to develop a class on Medieval Iceland and its sagas during his next sabbatical (which cannot come soon enough).

Megan Cook is an associate professor of English at Colby College, where she teaches medieval literature and history of the book. She is the author of *The Poet and the Antiquaries: Chaucerian Scholarship and the Rise of Literary History* (Penn, 2019) and, with Elizaveta Strakhov, co-editor of *John Lydgate's Dance of Death and Related Works* (TEAMS, 2019) which is freely available online for all your fifteenth-century Middle English death poetry teaching needs.

Eurydice Georganteli is an art historian, numismatist, and digital curator. Her research and teaching focus on ancient and medieval art, the archaeology of the crusades, economic history and numismatics, the curation of cultural heritage, and digital storytelling. Eurydice studied art history and numismatics at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge in the UK. Prior to joining the Department of History of Art and Architecture at Harvard University, she was the Keeper of Coins at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts and Lecturer on Byzantine Studies at the University of Birmingham, UK (2000-2016). A specialist in the arts of Southeastern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean, Eurydice uses archaeological evidence, written sources, and the changing patterns in transport geography to trace economic and cultural exchange in the ancient and medieval world. She is the Co-Director of the Harvard Medieval Material Culture Series and the Coordinator of the Harvard Summer Program in Greece.

Sean Gilsdorf is a lecturer in Medieval Studies at Harvard University, and the Administrative Director of Harvard's Standing Committee on Medieval Studies. He received his M.A. in Medieval Studies from the University of Toronto and his Ph.D. in medieval history from the University of Chicago. Over the past three decades, he has taught courses on a wide variety of medieval and early modern topics at the University of Chicago, the University of Richmond, Smith College, Mt. Holyoke College, and Harvard University, including Western Civ and medieval history surveys as well as seminars on medieval queenship; sex, love, and marriage in antiquity and the Middle Ages; Alexander the Great's legacy in the medieval globe; and medieval palaeography and manuscript culture.

Georgia Henley is an Assistant Professor of English at Saint Anselm College. Her current book project, *Reimagining the Past in the Anglo-Welsh Borderlands* (forthcoming with Oxford University Press), examines how Anglo-Welsh families reimagined the Welsh past in order to influence the political landscape of the Welsh borderlands. She is an ACLS Fellow for the 2021-22 academic year. Her courses on medieval literature draw upon her interest in medieval book production, paying close attention to how the handmade book influences our understanding of medieval literary culture. She teaches Studies in Medieval Literature, Legends and Myths of King Arthur, Imagining the Middle Ages in Modern Fiction, and Introduction to General Linguistics. She also teaches Introduction to Literary Theory, First-Year Writing, and Introduction to Literary Studies.

Jacqueline Jung is the specialist in medieval European art and architecture at Yale. She teaches lectures and seminars at the undergraduate and graduate level on topics such as Gothic Cathedrals, Art and the Body, Representations of Others (broadly defined), Art and Emotions, and a survey called Medieval People and their Art. About ten years ago she took over the old-timey Ancient and Medieval survey course from the famous Vincent Scully, but supplanted it, about three years ago, with a broader introductory course called Art and Architecture of the Sacred: A Global Perspective. She is constantly fine-tuning it and learning more along the way. The Pandemic year brought her into the realm of video production as she converted that class into a series of video lectures involving lots of multimedia content and hours and hours of editing. She is still recovering.

Albert Lloret is an associate professor of Spanish and Catalan at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where he teaches graduate courses on topics such as early modern reimaginings of medieval texts, poetry and the production of space, and textual and editorial theories for digital environments. At the undergraduate level, he teaches courses on medieval and early modern Iberian literatures and cultures—including the survey of premodern Iberian literatures about which he will speak today—and upper-level courses on ethical readings of erotic literature, otherworldly travel, or the production of space in lyric poetry.

Alex Mueller is Associate Professor of English at the University of Massachusetts Boston, where he directs the English Teaching program and teaches courses on topics ranging from digital pedagogy to Geoffrey Chaucer to the history of the book. He recently received Mellon grant funding to develop a course on the afterlife of the medieval university and the seven liberal arts, called "Reading the University."

Janine Larmon Peterson is a Professor of History and Coordinator of Medieval and Renaissance Studies at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, NY, an Affiliated Scholar at Fordham's Center for Medieval Studies, and the Medieval Europe editor for the *Database of Religious History*, a massive international digital humanities project. Besides teaching a capstone course and the medieval, early modern, and modern survey courses for the History Department at Marist, Dr. Peterson offers seminars on specialized topics such as the "History of Witchcraft and Sorcery," "Medieval Misfits," "Medieval Cultures in Contact," and "Medieval Gender and Sexuality" for the History department, the honors program, and the First Year Seminar program. In addition to serving as the faculty advisor for the History honor society Phi Alpha Theta, Prof. Peterson has organized three undergraduate conferences at Marist, served on the steering committee of The Hudson Valley Medieval and Early Modern Undergraduate Symposium, published several pieces on medieval studies pedagogy, and produced a podcast for the Spiritual Landscapes Digital Humanities Project.

Jesse W. Torgerson received his Ph.D. in Byzantine History from UC Berkeley in 2013, and currently is Assistant Professor of Letters at Wesleyan University in the College of Letters, the Department of History, and the Medieval Studies program. He has taught undergraduate courses at UC Berkeley, San Francisco State University, Diablo Valley Community College, Amherst College, and Wesleyan University. His current teaching covers the Middle Ages broadly conceived, ranging across the worlds of the Mediterranean and Europe. Recent offerings include a lecture course on the Fall of Rome as a literary event, a digital humanities workshop called the Traveler's Lab, a seminar on Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*, and a first-year composition course on "Self and Other".